EXT. CEMETERY NIGHT

A small, well-kept cemetery off a deserted road. An AUTUMN WIND BLOWS through the trees bordering the graveyard, scattering dead leaves over the graves.

A red Mini Cooper SCREECHES INTO VIEW, veers off the road and CRUNCHES to a stop amidst some bushes.

A spirited young woman, RAVEN, gets out of the driver's side and spreads her arms out so that the cape she's wearing billows out dramatically.

From the passenger's side emerges a petite, middle-aged woman. MISS DEVERE is well-dressed, attractive, and sophisticated.

    MISS DEVERE
    That was an entertaining ride, Raven.

    RAVEN
    Thanks, Miss Devere. I still can't believe you don't have a car.

    MISS DEVERE
    I manage to get about.

Raven reaches into the back seat and pulls out a gym bag.

    RAVEN
    Some people think you can just pick up a book, say an incantation and shit happens.

    MISS DEVERE
    It doesn't?

They walk onto the cemetery grounds.

    RAVEN
    You have to be born a witch. Or a warlock.

    MISS DEVERE
    It's in the DNA?

    RAVEN
    I guess. We're descended from gods or something. Pretty cool, huh?
MISS DEVERE
Really? A god advertising her services on Craigslist?

They stop at the grave of a recent burial, its cement marker gleaming dully in the moonlight.

RAVEN
Actually, I'm supposed to be working for this Wall Street guy—I was basically sold to him when I was born, if you can believe that! He's supposed to be my "patron." Ha! Slave is more like it.

MISS DEVERE
There are usually good reasons even for customs that may seem odious at first.

Raven stoops to read the inscription.

RAVEN
Well I think it stinks. Yeah, this is it: "Ashley Michaels. Beloved daughter." Nice name. Oh, she was only 19, like me.

Raven sets the gym bag down and pulls out five candles. While Raven proceeds with her preparations, Miss Devere will circle the grave, intently studying Raven's every move, every expression.

MISS DEVERE
Have you done this before, Raven?

RAVEN
Raising the dead? This will be my first human. But I have done some animals. Dogs, birds, rats. You know.

MISS DEVERE
Were they already dead?

Raven arranges the candles around the grave.

RAVEN
Well, no. I had to deaden'em some.

MISS DEVERE
Isn't that how serial killers get their start? Jack the Ripper got his start that way, I hear.
RAVEN
What? Hey, now! They were just little animals. And if I hadn't practiced on them, I wouldn't be able to help you, right?

MISS DEVERE
Touche.

Raven reaches into the bag again and pulls out a small brass urn.

RAVEN
This was the hardest ingredient to get. The ashes of a deceased female. It we were trying to raise a man, I would've had to use a man's ashes.

Raven carefully connects the five candles with a thin line of the ashes.

MISS DEVERE
You stole the remains of someone's loved one?

RAVEN
Hey, you can't make an omelette without breaking some eggs, right?

MISS DEVERE
I suppose a little theft and animal slaughter is small potatoes compared to raising the dead.

RAVEN
I should really be making a pentagram, but Mrs. Simkov--that's the lady here--wasn't very big, so I'm just making the outside of the pentagram.

MISS DEVERE
A pentagon.

RAVEN
No! Those guys are into death. I don't like the association.

MISS DEVERE
You are a sensitive girl.
RAVEN
Thanks. Say why do you want to raise this chick for, anyway?

MISS DEVERE
I have a feeling Ashley still has a valuable contribution to make to society if given the chance.

RAVEN
Wow, that's so cool, Miss Devere. But I can probably only hold her spirit for one or two questions.

MISS DEVERE
That should be long enough.

Raven tosses the empty urn away and it CLINKS off a neighboring headstone.

RAVEN
That gives me an idea: giving the dead a second chance! We could go into business together! How many people would pay big bucks to ask their loved one some questions?

She dances a jig on the grave in her unbridled enthusiasm, then stops in mid-jig.

RAVEN (CONT’D)
Hey, I've got a slogan for our company: “We raise hell to raise your dead.” Huh? What do you think?

MISS DEVERE
That's just lovely. But you might run into problems with the authorities.

RAVEN
Yeah, probably... Hey, we'll form a political party and change the laws! We'll call it the “Dead Party.”

MISS DEVERE
I believe that party already exists, if not by that name.

RAVEN
Excellent!
Raven once more digs into the gym bag and pulls out a glass vial. She holds it up for Miss Devere to admire.

MISS DEVERE
Let me guess: holy water.

RAVEN
Yep. Plus the secret ingredient: urine!

MISS DEVERE
Yours?

RAVEN
Well, duh.

Raven uncorks the vial and sprinkles the water over the grave, making an “X” as she does so. Finished, she re-corks the vial and tosses it away.

MISS DEVERE
Tell me, Raven. Does the ethics of what you're doing ever bother you?

Raven pulls a lighter out of the gym bag and lights the candles.

RAVEN
Oh come on, Miss Devere. No one has ethics anymore. They just say they do, but they're lying. They're all hypocrites. And how come you're like all judgmental? It was your idea to do this.

MISS DEVERE
True. But I'm wondering if the ends justify the means.

RAVEN
Whatever. I'm a witch, not a philosopher.

She steps away from the grave, tosses the lighter into the gym bag, and admires her handiwork. The wind kicks up, billowing her cape.

RAVEN (CONT'D)
Do you see that? The wind doesn't touch the candle flames at all. I wind-proofed them. I came up with the spell on my own.

Miss Devere stares at the unwavering flames and nods.
MISS DEVERE
I'm impressed. Did you also come up with your own invocation to raise the dead?

Raven takes off her cape and drapes it over the gym bag.

RAVEN
No, I don't go in for no mumbo-jumbo. I just think real hard about what I want to happen and it works like magic.

She chuckles at her joke and proceeds to take off her clothes and lay them atop the cloak. Like the flames, the wind doesn't even ruffle them.

RAVEN (CONT'D)
I have to get totally naked, now, so if you're gay, you might want to turn around. Not that I have anything against gays! It's just that strong thoughts--like you wanting to jump my bones--can interfere with the spell.

MISS DEVERE
I'll try to restrain myself.

Raven takes off her top, revealing the tattoo of a cat's face on a shoulder.

MISS DEVERE (CONT'D)
Not too many people have cat tattoos.

Raven continues disrobing.

RAVEN
That's Rosie. She was my special little girl.

MISS DEVERE
Did you deaden her, too?

RAVEN
Oh my god no! I love cats. She got run over by a drunk in a Tesla. She was as flat as a Mickey D pancake.

MISS DEVERE
Shocking. Did you raise her from the dead, too?
RAVEN
Oh, yeah. Last I saw of her she was at the Old Town Bridge, waiting to ambush the Tesla that killed her. Man, that’s one angry cat-squirrel.

MISS DEVERE
How's that again?

RAVEN
Just before I rescued her spirit, this squirrel came running up to me, so without even thinking about it, I put her spirit into the squirrel's body. You should've seen that squirrel jumping around! What's wrong?

She gives Miss Devere a quizzical glance, because the other woman's jaw is hanging open. Miss Devere shuts her mouth.

MISS DEVERE
You’re just one surprise after another.

RAVEN
You bet. Hey, I’ve come up with a name for our company: “Raven and Devere Deathworks, Incorporated.” Pretty awesome name, huh? Or we could put your name first, if you want.

MISS DEVERE
What exactly would be my function in this “Deathworks” corporation?

RAVEN
You're a sassy, snazzy lady. You bring the customers in and I bring up the stiffs.

Raven positions herself at the head of the grave and throws her arms out.

RAVEN (CONT'D)
It's showtime.

MISS DEVERE
Aren't you going to slather some rancid fat or something on your body?
RAVEN
No way. I just like taking my clothes off.

She shuts her eyes and lines appear on her forehead as she concentrates. After a few beats she opens one eye.

RAVEN (CONT’D)
It might help if I knew how she died.

MISS DEVERE
Erotic asphyxiation.
(on Raven's blank look)
Her boyfriend strangled her while they were having sex. He's out on bail now.

RAVEN
Damn, that's some heavy shit.

She shuts her eyes again, concentrates, and her body starts vibrating as if she's touching a live electric wire. She moans as if she's in pain and her fists clench but she stays with it.

Miss Devere moves up next to her and stares down at the grave. Raven suddenly goes rigid and her eyes snap open.

At their feet, the ground trembles slightly and a white vapor starts rising from the ground.

RAVEN (CONT’D)
It's working...!

Miss Devere lays a gentle hand on Raven’s shoulder. Raven shivers and a big smile appears on her face. Miss Devere drops her hand.

RAVEN (CONT’D)
What did you do to me? It feels great!

Without warning, Raven throws herself to the ground and holds her arms up beseechingly.

RAVEN (CONT’D)
Take me! Please take me!

MISS DEVERE
Be careful what you “witch” for.
Miss Devere waves a hand and Ashley Michaels’ spirit starts seeping into Raven's body. Raven’s body starts spasming and she yelps in alarm.

MISS DEVERE (CONT’D)
I’m sorry, Raven. I really like you, but you're a danger to humans and to yourself. But more importantly, you’re a danger to our race. We don’t need another Inquisition.

RAVEN
Help me, Miss Devere--this really hurts!

She wails pathetically.

MISS DEVERE
You’re going to have to fight for your soul, Raven, because the soul that’s moving in is hungry for life. Very hungry.

Raven’s quivering body levitates several feet into the air then snaps to its feet. Raven gives Miss Devere a piteous look before the spirit that now possesses her takes control and sends her running to the Mini Cooper.

Raven jumps onto the hood of the car.

RAVEN
I need a man between my legs, now! Or a broom!

She flings her arms up and attempts to fly but instead plants herself on the road with a THUMP.

Instantly Raven’s back on her feet and running down the middle of the road in all her glorious nakedness.

Miss Devere walks out of the cemetery, shaking her head.

MISS DEVERE
Witches can't fly.

She points to the sky and a LIGHTNING BOLT BLASTS down and disintegrates her.

FADE OUT:

THE END

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