

Abacadabra  
By Darren J Seeley

SUPER: 1787 - LYTHALIA

FADE IN:

EXT. CEMETARY - NIGHT

A picket fence surrounds an army of wooden crosses and stone markers.

ANTON (30s), dressed in black, looks down on an empty grave.

The CARETAKER (60s) hands Anton a scroll.

Caretaker lumbers in for a closer inspection. Shock fills his eyes.

Anton breaks the seal, unravels the message. Reads it.

JOHN (V.O.)

"Dear Sir Irving, you have called us frauds yet never witnessed any demonstrations regarding our contact with the other side.

LEO (V.O.)

Our previous requests, even those that offered you a payment to come, were met with silence.

JOHN (V.O.)

Therefore, we had to resort to more persuasive manners.

MARY (V.O.)

You know where to find me.

Anton folds the note, shakes his hand twice.

CARETAKER

What do intend to do, Sir?

The message slips up into Anton's sleeve.

CARETAKER

Bring her back if you can. I loved her too.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - NIGHT

Moonlight shines down a small European village town off in the distance.

His sight guided by a half-moon, Anton's gaze to the ground. Leaves scatter away from him.

Heavy wind sifts through his dark coat, the tail ends flap like a raven's wings.

EXT. WOODEN BRIDGE - NIGHT

Anton's view fixed to the ground as he approaches an old bridge, whose screams rattle off in an inhuman cadence.

Rotted wood beams accept him. Anton steps around a hole.

Two men on the other side, LEO (50s) and JOHN, (20s) Leo, a portly short fellow with bad teeth, holds up a lantern. Steps forward. Squints.

The wind and the creaking bridge drown his own voice out.

LEO  
(some distance away)  
Been meaning to fix her up.

Anton glances up, sees the lantern pulse with light.

JOHN  
(mumbles)  
Take an axe to it, start again.

John leans forward, squints.

Anton takes a step forward, comes off the wooden death trap, onto mud and grass. Anton's gaze cuts into the two men. John backs up a few paces.

Leo raises his light for a better look.

LEO  
That's him. On time.

Leo and John turn, head towards the town of stone walls and the center Cathedral. Anton follows.

John glances back, Anton's head down, watches his walk.

Leo brushes alongside John. John shrugs, follows his friend.

INT. CATHEDRAL - BALCONY - NIGHT

Her white gown stands out of the darkness and candlelights -

MARY : Mid-20s, peers out of a church window.

Watches John and Leo stumble outside on the stairs. Anton, perfect balance. One step at a time, lumbers up. Dust scatters around his feet.

Mary places her hand over her heart.

EXT. CATHEDRAL - MOMENTS LATER

Anton halts his cadence walk. His neck creaks with the wind. Head tilts up.

Leo opens the door to the church.

LEO  
Come, come.

Anton's gaze falls back to Leo. Leo's has his back on him. John dares to look back part-way. Leo shoves John further inside, out of Anton's view.

LEO (O.S.)  
(quick)  
Told not to look at him.

JOHN (O.S.)  
(fast)  
Just a man.

Anton approaches.

JOHN  
This isn't right -

A hand smacks across a face. Loud enough it cracks like thunder.

LEO  
Know your place.

Leo steps out back into Anton's view. Chuckles. Wide smile.

LEO  
Come on, then.

Anton stops. His gaze hunkers down to his feet. One more step and he's in the church.

JOHN (O.S.)  
 (whisper)  
 You're looking at him directly!

LEO  
 I know what I'm doing. We are in  
 the church.  
 (to Anton)  
 You have been invited, kind sir.

Anton takes a step forward. His foot slow to land on the church floor. Leo's eyes spy on that foot.

Anton leans in, steps in.

LEO  
 Mary's expecting you.

Doors shut behind Anton.

INT. CATHEDRAL - SANCTUARY - MOMENTS LATER

On the left: A wooden maze of disorganized pews block the Priest confession box.

Church windows filled with spiders that feast on mummified victims.

Anton observes such surroundings. His eyes fall to his right.

A statue of a beheaded saint. Candles lit all around him. Leo blocks the horrific view.

LEO  
 She's upstairs.

JOHN (O.S.)  
 They say you're a magician. But we  
 are the real thing. Real magic.

Leo's bug eyes shoot arrows into his colleague.

ANTON  
 People say lots of different  
 things.

Leo smiles.

LEO

Excuse the mess, Sir Iving. Some vandals...

ANTON

Bad people.

LEO

Not just here, in this holy place, but a few -

ANTON

A few should be thankful to God then.

Leo's smile disappears. His eyes avoid eye contact with Anton, only to fail.

ANTON

That they don't live in France.

John breaks in between them.

JOHN

May I take your coat, Sir Iving?

ANTON

Please, call me Anton. "Sir Iving" - quite a mouthful, don't you think?

LEO

The lady is waiting, Sir Iving.

Anton takes off his coat, hands it to John.

As Leo leads Anton to a stairway, John drapes Anton's coat over one of the pews.

In the seat, the head of the saint stares back. John re-arranges the coat, covers the stone face.

John hurries to re-join Anton and Leo. He sees Anton, already going up. Leo stays at the bottom of the stairs.

LEO

Your payment is up there with the lady, sir.

ANTON

I'm not here for money.

LEO

Always about money, sir.

John comes up behind Leo.

LEO  
Never know when to finish it.

JOHN  
I wanted to be sure it was him.

LEO  
Who else would it be?

BALCONY

On a wooden altar, a red silk sheet covers a woman's curved figure. Anton gazes upon her, closes in.

Mary emerges from deep shadows, her face pale as her dress. She looks into Anton's eyes. Anton pays her little attention.

LEO (O.S.)  
Let us know if you need any  
assistance, sir!

ANTON  
I'll be fine.

Leo's chuckles echo out.

LEO (O.S.)  
We're here to help!

Anton glances down to a white chalk line. His eyes follow the line. He backs up a few paces.

Mary stands in the circle. Anton cocks his head, cautiously steps inside the circle.

MARY  
I've been here for days.

Anton's focus shoots up directly to her. Anton's snap attention scares her. Anton jumps too, more from surprise.

ANTON  
What is the meaning of this  
sacrilege?

## SANCTUARY

Leo and John fumble around the labyrinth of pews, reach the priest's confessional box.

Leo sets his lantern down.

Both men scramble to get the confessional door open.

LEO

On one - two -

They open the door. A wrapped up body slums out, smacks on the floor, kicks up dirt.

Leo bends down, tears the bandages off the corpse.

## BALCONY

Without taking his gaze off Mary, Anton backs up to the body next to him.

MARY

They're mad. Don't trust them.

ANTON

They did this?

MARY

Everything.

Anton's attention goes back to the body. He pulls back the sheet -

## SANCTUARY

A goat, under torn bandages -

## BALCONY

A partially decomposed eyeless woman.  
Red ants scurry from her open sockets.

## SANCTUARY

John digs away in his jacket, strips out a dagger. Raises it.



Leo grabs him, holds him back.  
Shakes his head. Raises a finger.

BALCONY

Mary comes closer to Anton.

MARY  
I don't want to go back, Anton.

ANTON  
They offered me money, what was  
that about, if they know -

MARY  
They were hoping to bribe you, get  
you to go away.

ANTON  
Why did they keep you here?

MARY  
Once they awaken the beast, they  
will feed my soul to it. They  
didn't tell you that, did they?

Anton : fascinated with the dead woman's face.

ANTON  
Then I should take you away from  
here, before they act.

MARY  
If it was anyone else they would  
have went with the plan blindly.  
But not you, Anton.

ANTON  
I'm just a magician, ma'am. A  
superstitious one, but nothing  
more.

MARY  
You're more than that.

Mary pulls Anton away from the study of the corpse, and into  
her lips.

During the kiss, Anton shakes his left wrist. A folded note  
zings out into his hand.

With a handsome smile, he gives Mary the note.

ANTON

For you.

MARY

I've always wanted you, magician.

Her hands caress Anton's chest.

MARY

Always.

LEO (O.S.)

Now!

#### SANCTUARY

John plunges the dagger into the throat of the goat. It squeals in protest. Blood sprints out of the wound, peppering the two men.

Leo gets baptized with carnage. Inhales. Excited satisfaction creeps over his face. Exhales.

John rips the dagger out.

Hesitates. Takes a deep breath.

A cascade of sweat forms on John's brow. Grits his teeth, howls as he thrusts again into the animal.

#### BALCONY

Mary and Anton continue the passion.

The dead body slow to sit up. Ants drill out of the eye sockets, until a set of goat's eyes fill them.

Mary moves out of the circle, away from Anton.

Wipes her mouth with her sleeve.

Anton gives her a puzzled look. Mist rises from the edges of the circle.

ANTON

Mary, what have you done?

MARY

A deal. One spirit for another.

ANTON

It won't work.

MARY

The Dark One only needs one soul.  
That's you. A fraud and a fool. In  
return, I become something more.

ANTON

I'm no fraud. And this is not  
right.

MARY

Your soul for mine. I will no  
longer roam this place, I will be  
one with the beast, and you will be  
trapped here forever.

SANCTUARY

Leo, his lantern. Bloody John beside him, base of the  
stairway.

LEO

It is done, my lady!

BALCONY

The mist surrounds Anton in the circle.

MARY

Not yet, my brothers.

Mary grabs the corpse by the shoulders. The paper feather-  
falls to the floor.

MARY

Give me your dark power! Come into  
me!

Mary's skin goes chalk- white.

## SANCTUARY

Wind finds a way within the cathedral. Loose cloth flaps around. Leo pays it no mind.

John turns to look towards the source. His eyes squint to see a dark form on the floor rustle around on the floor. The strange mass hesitates.

## BALCONY

Mary's eyes close. She meditates, moves with the reanimated body.

The mist in the circle fades out, reveals Anton as a skin and bones body, his clothes hang off his wiry frame.

The skeleton collapses to the floor. On impact, it shatters into dust and a hundred maggots.

The corpse's goat eyes sink back in.  
Mary opens her eyes, goat's eyes now hers.

## SANCTUARY

The dark mass springs forward. John's eyes go wide. Anton's coat wraps around John's face and blinds him. John stumbles backward, arms windmill.

Leo shoots around, watches as John grabs at the coat.

Leo lumbers forward, John accidentally kicks him, knocks him away. Leo loses balance, drops the lantern. The lantern rolls along the floor, until -

A BARE FOOT stops it.

Leo stares at the foot. Looks up to the owner.

## BALCONY

Mary hears the commotion downstairs. Spots the note on the floor. She looks closer.

LEO (O.S.)  
My lady! Something's -

Glass shatters downstairs.

SANCTUARY

Surrounded by a small fire, Leo, his face adorned with fresh blood, bits of glass in his face, moans. His jaw shakes.

LEO  
It's just wrong. It's wrong.

Anton's bare feet stroll past him.

John twitches once more, his body goes limp.

The coat flies up, into Anton's hand. Leo forces himself to look over to Anton, who slides on the coat.

LEO  
(soft)  
He's alive.

BALCONY

It's true. A fully recovered Anton, all dressed as he was, head to toe, approaches Mary.

LEO (O.S.)  
Alive!

Mary's goat eyes glance to the circle. Anton's clothes - and his dust remains, not there.

MARY  
So close...

EXT. CATHEDRAL - NIGHT

Mary crashes out of the church window. Anton reaches fast, grabs her arm.

ANTON  
It doesn't have to be like this,  
Mary. I can help you. I can save  
you.

MARY

You couldn't even save yourself,  
magician. Let the ritual continue,  
I could fly.

ANTON

Is that what the devil told you?

MARY

What I wanted!

ANTON

I forgive you. Let me -

MARY

No! No! No!

Mary lets go, falls to her death. Anton's hand expands. Fists  
up.

INT. CATHEDRAL - BALCONY - MOMENTS LATER

The corpse lies down on the altar. Anton picks up the piece  
of paper

INSERT

*A newspaper clipping dated 1777. "Anton Iving, stage magician  
and hypnotist found dead" Scribbled on the story in a  
triangle formation: "ABRACADABRA"*

BACK TO SCENE

Anton leans over the corpse, kisses it full on the mouth.

The skull's face changes into that of Mary.

SANCTUARY - MOMENTS LATER

Leo stares out. Matches a stare with the saint's head.  
The dead goat lays beside John.

EXT. CATHEDRAL - NIGHT

Anton carries the dead Mary in his arms.

A red raindrop falls on Anton's face. Trickles down his cheek.

Anton walks on, leaves swirl away from him.

Cathedral doors close behind him.

FADE TO BLACK.