

NEPENTHES

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. CHURCH - DAY (DUSK)

An old abandoned building away from any highway.

Bare trees scratch and claw toward the sky.

Crows perch the roof of the church. One CAW here and there.

Dusty dark windows. Sun-faded wooden sidings. A boarded up front entrance.

Dead grass surrounds the area, as if anything in the vicinity has succumbed to death.

An old stone WATER WELL, about six feet in diameter, sits nearby the church.

Two people walk past the church toward the well: BEN (18) and SUSAN (18), a couple meant to be, but alas they haven't tried shit.

Harnesses wrap around them, with coiled rope hanging from carabiners, among other tools. They wear helmets with headlamps.

SUSAN

Fuck, I forgot my gloves.

Ben points beyond the church, at the water well nearby.

BEN

That is what we're here for.

SUSAN

Really? A well? I think the inside of the church would be more interesting.

BEN

You heard what happened to Mark and Kathy.

SUSAN

Yeah. A little girl? In a well? What is this, *The-fucking-Ring*?

BEN

Stop.

SUSAN

Do you really think there will be something worth going down there for?

BEN

There could be treasure down there for all we know.

The crows CAW a warning call, either to each other, or the two intruders who just invaded their space.

They walk past the church, toward the--

WATER WELL

The two push the lid across the stone surface of the well.

A slow grind, as if the lid weighs a million pounds.

Ben digs his shoes into the dirt. Susan bears her teeth.

Just then, the lid slides effortlessly across the top of the well, with an opening just large enough to fit either one of them inside.

The crows EXPLODE from the church and trees in a cacophony of CAWS and CRIES, disappearing into the distance.

Ben and Susan retch back in disgust as a stench of something erupts from the well.

Susan watches the birds fly away, her mouth and nose covered. She turns back to the well.

SUSAN

Fuck this. There's no way in Hell I'm going in there. I'm leaving.

Susan turns to walk away. Ben turns after her.

BEN

Susan, wait--

GIRL (O.S.)

(faint)

--Help--

Susan and Ben stop in their tracks. She slowly turns back to face Ben.

BEN

I heard it too.

They both look back at the well.

GIRL (O.S.)
 ...Help...

Susan SHIVERS.

Ben steps forward, toward the well. Susan can't help but follow.

They walk up to the well and look down into the abyss below.

Ben turns on his helmet light, but the black hole of the well swallows the light up.

BEN
 Turn on your lamp.

Susan turns her headlamp on. The combination of the two lights shine at the bottom of the well.

Something moves at the bottom. Small. Pale. Wet, black hair. A ghostly FACE snaps up to look at them--

Susan GASPS, pushes herself away from the well.

SUSAN
 Oh my God, oh my God!

Ben turns to her, grabs her arms to calm her down.

SUSAN (CONT'D)
 Was that real? Is that real?!

Ben attempts to shush Susan, but to no avail.

SUSAN (CONT'D)
 Did you see that, Ben?!

BEN
 Yes!

SUSAN
 There is a little girl trapped down there! We need to get help!

Susan pulls her phone out of her pocket. Her face drops.

SUSAN (CONT'D)
 I don't have signal in this god-forsaken place!

Ben pulls his phone out and his shoulders slump in defeat.

BEN
Yeah, me neither.

SUSAN
We have to get help.

Susan turns toward the direction of the car when Ben snatches her arm.

BEN
Susan, just hold up for a second!
It's getting dark. We can't leave
her down there. Look where we are!

SUSAN
What do you suggest we do, Ben?!

Ben stares into her eyes with a thought.

SUSAN (CONT'D)
Wait, you're not thinking of going
down there, are you?!

BEN
Who knows how long she's been down
there, Susan? Someone obviously
trapped her in there, the fucking
well was sealed shut!

SUSAN
We need to call the police, the
fire department--

BEN
It'll take them forever to get out
here. That water is probably
freezing. She needs help now.

SUSAN
And you think a couple of kids can
save her?

Ben looks at Susan with his best attempt of a reassured facial expression. Susan SIGHS, looks past him and at the well.

BEN
One of us rappels down there, ties
the girl up, and the other pulls
her out.

SUSAN
Who's going down there to get her?

Ben looks at her intently. Susan steps back, arms out.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

No, no Ben. I don't want to go down there!

BEN

There's no time to argue about this! Now, no offense, but I'm stronger. I can pull the girl out once you've secured her with the rope. It's the only way!

Susan thinks, then hesitantly looks back at the well. The faint SOBS of the girl are barely audible as she CRIES softly at the bottom of the pit.

SUSAN

God-fucking-dammit.

MOMENTS LATER

Ben uncoils the rope while Susan preps her harness on her.

Ben ties and clips the rope to a nearby tree.

Susan looks down the well and listens to the weakening CRIES of the small girl.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

(half-ass reassurance)

It's okay...we're gonna get you out of here...Just be brave!

GIRL

Please, help me.

SUSAN

Are you hurt?

GIRL

Please, help me.

SUSAN

We're gonna try! Are you able to move?

GIRL

Please, help me.

The girl sounds like a broken record. Susan stares into the well, unsure.

Ben joins her.

BEN

My friend Susan here is going to come down and get you, okay? We're gonna get you out of here!

The girl only SOBS. Susan notices that her SOBS also sound like a broken record...

Ben throws the rope into the well. He looks at Susan.

BEN (CONT'D)

Okay, you ready?

SUSAN

No. This fucking sucks.

BEN

I know. You can do this. You know you can. Remember all those times we rappelled down the cliffs of the greenbelt.

Susan looks at the well.

SUSAN

(to herself)

This isn't *The-fucking-Ring*.

She climbs over the well lip and squeezes through the opening into the well.

INT. WATER WELL - DAY (DUSK)

Susan begins her rappel down the well. Carefully, she places her footing on the safest stones as she disappears into the gullet of the well.

She looks back up at Ben, who stares at her, his headlamp blinding her.

The SOBS and CRIES of the girl grow louder.

Susan COUGHS from the suffocating stench.

Her bare hands squeeze around the rope as she continues to lower herself.

Susan looks up at the distant opening of the well as she reaches the never-ending bottom.

She looks back down the well. Her headlamp shines on the girl.

The girl looks up.
Hollow eyes. Black. Devoid of life.
Susan GASPS--
Her foot SLIPS--
The rope SIZZLES into her hands!
Susan SCREAMS as she FALLS--
SPLASH! Susan falls into the water.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY (DUSK)

Ben, at the well.

BEN

Susan!

Without hesitation, he clips the rope to his harness, climbs over the lip of the well and slips inside the darkness.

INT. WATER WELL - DAY (DUSK)

Ben rappels quickly down the well toward the bottom.

SUSAN

Explodes from the murky, dirty water. She grips onto the side of the well, onto a stone that juts from the wall. The water is too deep for her to stand.

She looks up at Ben, who is halfway down the well.

SUSAN

Fuck! Ben, get me out of here!

BEN

I'm coming!

SUSAN

Shit! What the fuck is this?!

She grabs her helmet that floats nearby, shines the headlamp in front of her. It flickers. She bangs it but it continues to malfunction.

Susan's grip SLIPS, and she falls back beneath the water.

She reemerges, and the bottom of the well has become a haze. Susan grabs another stone on the well wall.

The girl's CRIES echo in the well. It's disorienting.

Through the haze, she sees the GIRL.

BEN

Halfway down the well, suddenly looks up at the opening of the well.

The lid closes, ON ITS OWN.

SUSAN

Pushes herself off the wall of the well, slowly swims toward the girl, who CRIES like a broken record.

Susan reaches for her.

BEN

Continues to watch the well lid close on its own.

BEN

Susan...?

SUSAN

Rests her hand on the girl's shoulder.

The girl turns around.

Susan SCREAMS--

BEN

Looks down the well just as the lid closes shut. It grinds against the rope. The rope fibers explode to shreds.

He FALLS.

SPLASH!

Ben sinks in the water, but Susan grabs his shirt and pulls him up.

He spits out the water, splashes until he grips the wall of the well.

SUSAN

Ben! Ben!!

BEN
The lid! It's fucking closed!

SUSAN
Ben!

Ben snatches his helmet, sets it on sideways on accident.

BEN
The girl! Where is she?!

SUSAN
That wasn't a fucking kid down
here!

Ben straightens his helmet and the two look around the hazy well.

BEN
Where the fuck did she go?!

SUSAN
What the fuck! Jesus Christ, her
face! Oh my God, it was--it was--

BEN
We have to get out of here!

Ben lifts the frayed rope up, slaps it back at the water in frustration.

BEN (CONT'D)
Fuck!

SUSAN
Oh my God, Ben, the girl...
something was wrong with her face!

BEN
What the hell is wrong with this
water?!

SUSAN
--fucking deformed, like her mouth
was fused shut--!

BEN
Susan, we need to climb out of
here. Something's seriously not
right!

Ben looks at his hands. Steam slithers off his skin.

SUSAN
--God, her eyes?!

BEN
What the fuck?! What's wrong with
my skin!?

SUSAN
Her skin! It was...I could see
inside of her?!

Ben looks at Susan, then at her clothes.

BEN
Susan...your shirt! What the...
What the fuck!

Her shirt **MELTS** off of her. Holes grow bigger as the fibers
twirl apart into a liquid goop.

The two **COUGH** at the growing haze, much like a steam room at
this point.

BEN (CONT'D)
What the fuck is happening!?

SUSAN
It's getting hard to breathe! I
can't...I can't feel my fingers!

Susan grabs at the walls of the well.

SUSAN (CONT'D)
Get me out...Get me out!!!

She grabs at one stone. Her nails **SNAP OFF**--

She falls into the water.

BEN
Susan!

Ben continues to grip the wall of the well. He splashes
through the water as he attempts to fish for Susan.

BEN (CONT'D)
Susan!

He runs his fingers through his hair, looks at his hand.

Clumps of hair tangle around his fingers.

He grabs more of his hair and pulls it out with ease.

Ben attempts to SCREAM, but only a horrified WAIL escapes instead.

The stone he hangs onto dislodges itself from the wall and he falls into the water.

He emerges from the water, helmet still on his head. He looks up at the well walls.

They've transformed into a slick, skin-like material. Veiny. ALIVE.

The walls undulate in a peristalsis-like manner.

Ben SCREAMS!

Susan SPLASHES out of the water and LATCHES onto Ben. She grips him with the bones of her fingers. Her skin and muscle and fat drip off her like melting candle wax.

She emits a shriek of absolute agony, her face elongated and monstrous as it melts into goop. Blood pours from her nose and eyes and mouth like a faucet.

Ben can't even taken in a breath as Susan pulls him under the steaming "water". His headlamp light disappears beneath the surface, and everything--

CUTS TO BLACK.

THE END.