

The Last Confession

Written By

James (D)

A village priest grapples with a dark secret after a killer begins targetting his parishioners, forcing him to confront his own past.

WORD COUNT: 1624

ACT I

FADE UP FROM BLACK:

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

The camera pans over a village bathed in golden sunlight. Lively MUSIC plays in the background as people move about cheerfully, the peaceful atmosphere fills the screen.

Suddenly, a DISTANT SCREAM cuts through the air.

CUT TO:

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

A dimly lit chapel with stained glass windows, lining the walls and nave. **FATHER LUCAS**, Mid 40s-50s, kind but worn out, haunted by the past. Running his hand through his greying hair when deep in thought, he tends to rub his thumb against his worn wooden crucifix whenever he is anxious. His face carries the weight of unspoken sins, deep lines around his eyes hint at years of guilt. His voice is warm and reassuring, but when he speaks about faith, there's an underlying tremor, a man trying to convince himself as much as others.

Lucas stands near a grieving family: a MOTHER, FATHER, and CHILD, all huddled together in tears.

Father Lucas, calm and composed, places a hand on the father's shoulder. His voice is soft but reassuring.

FATHER LUCAS

We must find solace in God's plan,
even in times like these...

The family nods, clinging to each other in grief. The mother sobs into her hands. A ray of light shines through the stained glass window, illuminating Lucas' face, which is growing ever so worried. His eyes reflect that of a thousand-yard stare.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS - DUSK

Yellow Police tape fills the screen, blinding red and blue lights flash from the surrounding police cars, the crows cawing, the sirens blaring. A lifeless corpse lays on the damp forest floor, soon to be inspected by DETECTIVE TOM, mid-30s, clean-shaven, methodical, and determined. Always wearing a tailored, spotless suit.

He kneels beside the lifeless BODY sprawled on the damp forest floor. The victim's clothes, once white, are now stiff with dried crimson, the fabric clinging to his form in twisted, wrinkled folds. The stale scent of iron lingers in the cold night air. A disturbing detail stands out, a cross-shaped smear of blood, deliberately drawn across the victim's pale, rigid chest. The mark is uneven, as if made with a trembling hand.

Tom clenches his jaw, a habit when he's deep in thought. He cracks his knuckles absentmindedly, his sharp eyes missing nothing.

Tom's brow furrows as he stands, nodding a hint to the FORENSIC OFFICERS nearby.

TOM

(To Forensic team)

Bag everything, I want every inch of this place combed.

He pulls off his gloves, staring down at the gruesome biblical display on the body.

TOM

(Whispers, under his breath)

What the hell is going on here?

His PHONE BUZZES. He slowly reaches into his left breast pocket, pulls out his phone, his hands trembling. He answers with a tense and uneasy tone.

(into phone)

I'll be right there.

CUT TO:

INT. FATHER LUCAS' OFFICE - NIGHT

The sound of lightning strikes and rain are prominent. Father Lucas sits alone in his small but snug office, fireplace lit.

He sits at his dark oak desk, staring at a photograph of himself and a young girl from a church service many years back. He traces the image with his fingers, his face darkening with guilt. He picks up a crucifix from the desk, holding it tightly, steadying himself.

FATHER LUCAS

(whispers, softly to himself)

I failed you... I'm sorry... so sorry.

He quickly sets the photograph down, his hands trembling slightly. He notices a SMALL NOTE on his desk, his eyes fixate on it. He unfolds it, his knuckles white from gripping it too hard.

On the note, hastily scribbled in red ink: "CONFESS"

Father Lucas stares at the note, his face pale and full of dread. He crumples it in his fist, his breath shaky and shallow.

There's a sudden KNOCK at the door. Father Lucas flinches.

FATHER LUCAS

Come in.

The door creaks open, revealing MR. HAYES, Late 70s, frail but sharp, an old man who knows too much, and an old friend of Father Lucas. He takes slow but deliberate steps, leaning heavily on his aged wooden cane, he pauses before speaking, as if every word is carefully weighed. His cloudy blue eyes have seen generations come and go, they are filled with a mix of concern and knowing.. His brown tweed jacket though old, is always immaculate, a man who clings to dignity in a crumbling world.

Deliberately, he comes in, sniffs, scrapes his shoe, shuts the door, hangs up his jacket on the coat stand, and takes a seat at Father Lucas' desk, keeping his cane in his trembling hands.

MR. HAYES

Have you heard what's happened,
Father?

Lucas nods, folding his hands together on the desk.

FATHER LUCAS

(quietly)
Another Soul lost.

Mr. Hayes steps closer, his tone at almost a whisper.

MR. HAYES

It's happening again. The sins of the past... you can't hide from them forever, if you want this to be the last corpse to appear you know what you must do.

Lucas stiffens, trying to maintain composure.

FATHER LUCAS

I'm doing all I can to keep this
village safe, Mr. Hayes.

Mr. Hayes leans in, his voice barely audible.

MR. HAYES

You can't keep secrets from the Devil,
Father. He knows... And he's here.

Slow push in on the fathers distraught face. His face tightens with the weight of his past creeping up on him.

FADE OUT:

ACT II**FADE IN:****EXT. VILLAGE SQUARE - DAY**

The next morning, the village is quiet, the sky is grey, and an unsettling stillness hangs in the air. A aggressive breeze blows against the police tape that surrounds the murder site. Villagers whisper to one another, fear is evident in their faces.

CUT TO:**INT. CHURCH - DAY**

Father Lucas stands at the altar, delivering a sermon. His voice cracks under the weight of his inner guilt.

FATHER LUCAS

(Nervously)

We live in uncertain times, where we must hold on tight to faith, but we are not without sin. None of us are.

His eyes dart toward the back of the chapel between the pews, where Detective Tom stands, arms folded, observing him closely from. A Stare-down ensues between them.

FATHER LUCAS

(stumbling)

We must believe in redemption, in forgiveness, for we are all in need of it.

His voice trails off, lost in thought. He stares down at the pulpit, visibly unsettled.

CUT TO:**INT. DETECTIVE TOM'S OFFICE - LATER THAT DAY**

Tom is at his desk, pouring over files. Photographs of the crime scenes are spread out in front of him, each peeking out of a manila document file. The biblical references etched into the bodies - crosses, thorns, demonic symbols, all of the evidence leads Tom to believe the murders are connected to Father Lucas one way or another. He skims through a file labeled "CONFESSIONS," noticing a disturbing pattern, each victim had recently confessed their sins to Father Lucas, his face visibly uneasy.

CUT TO:

EXT. MR HAYES' COTTAGE - NIGHT

The wind howls. A singular CANDLE flickers in the cracked. Through the window, Mr. Hayes is seen sitting by the fire, blowing dust off his old leather journal, it looks like a relic, as if it had been kept for decades, his hands shaking slightly. The pages are filled with notes, scribbled names, accounts of things long buried.

A SHADOW looms outside his window. The candlelight flickers violently. He freezes, sensing something. His body stiffens. A heavy CREAK on the wobbly wooden floor boards behind him startles him.

MR. HAYES

(whispering, breathless)

No... not now...

The shadow grows larger, swallowing the dim candlelight until...

A LOUD THUD.

CUT TO BLACK:

INT. DETECTIVE TOM'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Tom sits at his desk, trying to piece the files together when his phone RINGS. He answers without hesitation.

TOM

(into phone)

Detective Tom.

ANONYMOUS VOICE

(whispering)

Mr. Hayes is dead. Go see for yourself.

CLICK. The call disconnects. Tom exhales sharply, his grip tightening on the phone. He calls for backup, jumps up from his desk, slides into his clean black overcoat and dashes out of his office within seconds.

CUT TO:

EXT. MR HAYES' COTTAGE - NIGHT

Blinding red and blue lights flash, illuminating the cottage as a swarm of troubled, shook-up police officers and forensic teams work the scene. Detective Tom steps out of his old junkbox silver car, at least 20 years old. His eyes narrow as he takes in the sight of the lifeless old man through the cracked window. The crows caw relentlessly. Upon entry, Tom creaks the floorboards with every step he takes.

He hurries over to the corner of the room, where Mr. Hayes sits motionless in his chair, his head tilted unnaturally to one side. His dead eyes stare blankly into the void, his mouth slightly agape as if caught mid-sentence. A deep, gruesome gash runs across his throat, the blood now a dark stain on his wrinkled shirt.

His leather journal rests on his lap, its pages marked with frantic handwriting and passages from scripture, the last entry hastily scrawled:

"HE KNOWS. GOD HELP ME."

Pinned to his chest with a rusted nail is a YELLOWED NOTE, the jagged and erratic words are written using Mr. Hayes own blood:

"SEEK HIM IN THE HOUSE OF GOD. THE SIN REMAINS."

A SHADOW looms in the doorway. A villager, one of the few remaining friends of Mr. Hayes stops by. She GASPS and drop her lantern, The glow flickers wildly, casting chaotic shadows across the walls as the scream of another witness echoes through the quiet night.

