

CONVENT OF THE HANDMAIDENS OF THE HOLY MARTYR,  
LOCATED IN NORTHERN FRANCE.



"MARY, MOTHER MOST PURE, AND  
JOSEPH, CHASTE GUARDIAN OF THE  
VIRGIN, TO YOU I ENTRUST THE PURITY  
OF MY SOUL AND BODY..."



I BEG YOU TO PLEAD WITH GOD FOR ME THAT  
I NEVER, FOR THE REMAINDER OF MY LIFE, SOIL  
MY SOUL AND BODY BY ANY SIN OF IMPURITY.  
I EARNESTLY WISH TO BE CHASTE IN THOUGHT,  
WORD, AND DEED IN IMITATION OF  
YOUR OWN HOLY PURITY...



PROTECT MY EYES,  
THE WINDOWS OF MY SOUL, FROM ANYTHING  
THAT MIGHT DIM THE LUSTER OF A HEART  
THAT MUST MIRROR ONLY CHRIST-LIKE  
PURITY--?



Meet Me In The Chapel.  
Midnight





Ever since she was a very young girl, all Celine wanted was to become a nun. When she told her parents she intended to take the vows, her mother cried and her father begged her to reconsider, fearful they would never see their daughter again. But despite their tears and apprehension, she remained steadfast in her dedication to God...



She was in the second year of her novitiate—soon she would be taking her final vows. But now, for the first time since entering the convent, she found herself...conflicted.



Recently her closest friend and confidant had revealed a desire to take their relationship beyond the platonic. But what truly surprised Sister Celine was not her friend's confession of love, but the realization that it was not unwelcome...

She had been praying for hours, hoping for divine guidance. But the only words that came to her were those of St. Augustine: "Lord, make me chaste—but not yet."



SISTER RITA...?

And who was she to argue with a saint?



IS THAT YOU?







*Sister Celine's mind reels in horror  
at the blasphemous sight before her.  
She is too terrified to even scream...*









*As Sister Celine turns to flee the robed figures emerging from the shadows, it feels as if she's in a dream...*



*One where no matter how hard she tries to run, she cannot move—as if her feet have been nailed to the floor.*



*But the horror of it all is that it's not a dream, but a nightmare...*



*One from which there will be no waking.*





IT'S BEEN WONDERFUL CHATTING WITH YOU, MONSIGNOR, BUT I MUST BE OFF! I'M SCHEDULED TO HEAR CONFESSION AT THE CONVENT.

IT IS NOT HOW I WOULD CHOOSE TO SPEND SUCH A GLORIOUS DAY, BUT WE ALL MUST PLAY OUR PART, EH?



I SEE THE REVEREND MOTHER IS PROMPT AS USUAL. STAY WITH THE CAR, MICHEL.

OF COURSE, YOUR EXCELLENCY.



WILL YOU BE BREAKING BREAD WITH US THIS EVENING, YOUR GRACE?

REGRETTABLY, NO, REVEREND MOTHER. THERE IS A FUNDRAISER FOR THE DIOCESE THAT COMMANDS MY PRESENCE THIS EVENING.




I TRUST THAT THINGS ARE OPERATING SMOOTHLY--NO RUNAWAYS, I TAKE IT? %CHUCKLE%



ALL THE SISTERS ARE PRESENT AND ACCOUNTED FOR, YOUR EXCELLENCY...

%AHEM% YES, WELL...VERY GOOD.






I LEAVE YOU TO YOUR WORK, YOUR GRACE. SISTER URSULA WILL NOTIFY THE OTHERS THAT YOU ARE READY TO RECEIVE CONFESSION.

THANK YOU, REVEREND MOTHER.



Once a month Bishop Lamont serves as confessor to the cloistered nuns within his diocese. Which means, once a month, he is bored to the point of tears as he listens to a couple dozen nuns sniping about which sister ate more than one slice of bread at dinner, or failed to scrub the floor of the sacristy properly...

After all, the majority of the Handmaidens of the Holy Martyr have spent their entire adult lives behind the walls of the convent. Their knowledge of sin, and opportunity to do so, is far different from that of the general population...



Still, he wouldn't mind a nice, juicy confession...If just for a change of pace...



BLESS ME, YOUR GRACE, FOR I HAVE SINNED. IT HAS BEEN THIRTY DAYS SINCE MY LAST CONFESSION.

WHAT ARE YOUR SINS, SISTER?

I HAVE HAD IMPURE THOUGHTS, YOUR GRACE—AND HAVE TRIED TO LEAD ANOTHER INTO SIN.

WOULD THIS "ANOTHER" BE ONE OF YOUR FELLOW NUNS, SISTER?

YES—I MEAN, NO. SHE IS A NOVICE, AND HAS YET TO TAKE THE VEIL. BUT THAT IS NOT THE WORST PART...







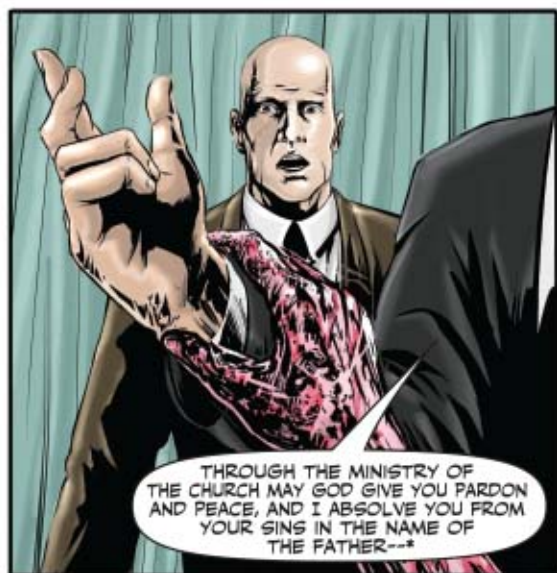
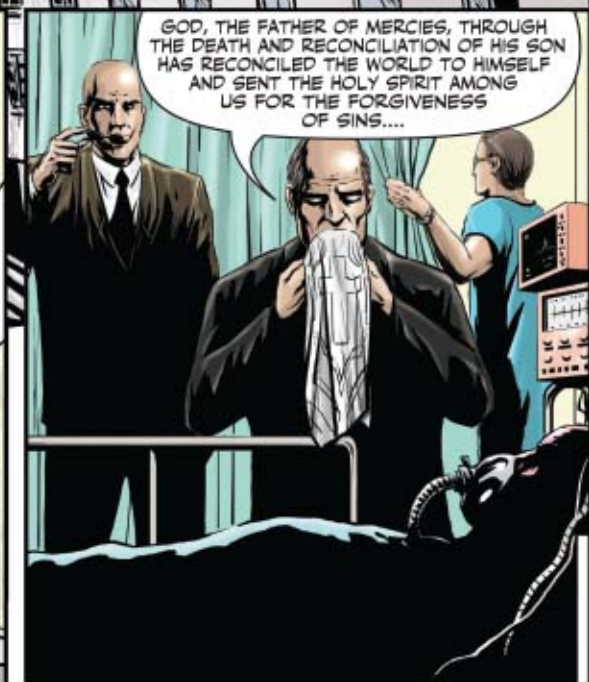


YAAAAHHH!

GARO



**ISTITUTO PER SACERDOTI,  
VATICAN CITY:**





SO SATAN'S MISTRESS HAS FINALLY MADE GOOD ON HER PROMISE AND RETURNED TO WREAK HER VENGEANCE. DID THE BISHOP REVEAL WHICH NUN IS POSSESSED?

I'M AFRAID NOT. HE DIED BEFORE HE COULD SAY ANYTHING MORE.

THEN WE HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO PUT THE ENTIRE CLOISTER TO THE QUESTION...

NO! I FORBID IT! THAT'S WHAT STARTED THIS WHOLE MESS IN THE FIRST PLACE! THIS ISN'T THE 15<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY, NICODEMUS!

THEN HOW DO YOU PROPOSE TO HANDLE THE MATTER? BY SENDING IN YOUR TRAINED MONSTER?

SHE'S THE ONLY ONE OF OUR AGENTS WHO STANDS A CHANCE. HOLY WATER AND THE POWER OF PRAYER ARE WELL AND GOOD, MY FRIEND, BUT SOMETIMES YOU HAVE TO FIGHT HELLFIRE WITH HELLFIRE!

ACT AS YOU SEE FIT, MONSIGNOR— BUT DO NOT BE SURPRISED WHEN YOUR PET VAMPIRE TURNS ON YOU! AFTER ALL, IT'S IN HER BLOOD TO DO SO!

**SEATTLE, THIRTEEN HOURS LATER:**

YES—WHO IS IT--? MONSIGNOR! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

HELLO, MY DEAR. MAY I COME IN?

OF COURSE! MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME—AFTER ALL, YOU'RE PAYING FOR THE PLACE!





I'M HERE BECAUSE CESTUS DEI HAS WORK FOR YOU OF A NATURE SO DELICATE I DEEMED IT WISER TO DISCUSS IT IN PERSON. IT IS A VERY DANGEROUS MISSION.

AREN'T THEY ALL?

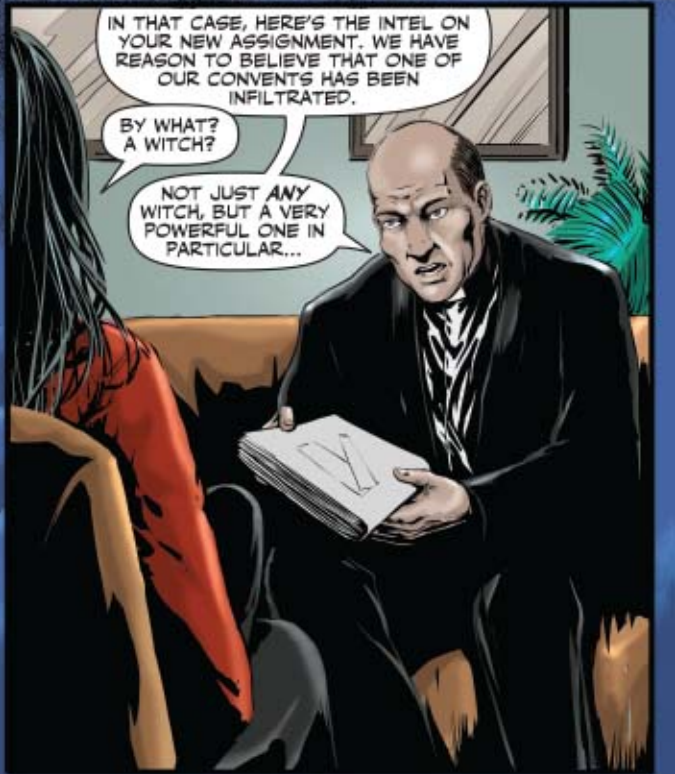


"I'VE BEEN BATTLING EVIL, IN ONE FORM OR ANOTHER, FOR AS LONG AS I CAN REMEMBER... DANGER IS ALWAYS PART OF THE EQUATION."

"AND THE CHURCH VALUES YOUR BRAVERY AND DETERMINATION VERY HIGHLY, VAMPIRELLA...BUT WE ALSO VALUE FREE WILL. YOU ARE NOT OBLIGATED TO TAKE ON A MISSION SIMPLY BECAUSE I ASK YOU TO."



"I OWE YOU MUCH, MONSIGNOR. AFTER I LOST MY BOYFRIEND, ADAM VAN HELSING, I WAS DESPAIRING AND Rudderless--UNTIL YOU APPROACHED ME ABOUT BEING AN OPERATIVE FOR CESTUS DEI. YOU GAVE MY LIFE NEW PURPOSE AND STRUCTURE--I CANNOT THANK YOU ENOUGH."



IN THAT CASE, HERE'S THE INTEL ON YOUR NEW ASSIGNMENT. WE HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE THAT ONE OF OUR CONVENTS HAS BEEN INFILTRATED.

BY WHAT? A WITCH?

NOT JUST ANY WITCH, BUT A VERY POWERFUL ONE IN PARTICULAR...



"METIFA:  
SATAN'S MISTRESS"

