

Dissonance

written by

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BLACK

EXT. FOREST- NIGHT

A circle of hooded figures stands silently in the woods, cloaked in black, cult-like garments. Five ceremonial candles burn in a ring before them. At each candle, a different face is drawn- each representing an emotion.

One snarls with furrowed eyebrows and bared teeth, seething with anger. Another grins with eyes squeezed shut, consumed by manic joy. A third frowns deeply, its brows knit in sorrow. The fourth winks playfully, its expression teasing and unreadable- mischief caught in motion. The last smiles softly, eyes open and serene with calm delight. Lines connect the candles, converging at a central circle etched into the soil- like a conceptual web.

BEAT.

Distant SCREAMING breaks the silence.

The group parts. Two members drag a woman forward- ANGELA, wild-eyed and thrashing.

As they force her closer, Angela rips a crying baby out of one member's arms, clutching it tightly to her chest. She quickly pulls a knife from her pocket.

ANGELA

Don't fucking touch her!  
I'll kill you, you hear me?  
I'll kill every last one of you!

She waves it around her slowly as she stares- eyes darting between them.

Some of the members instinctively step back.

A voice breaks through.

REVEREND CAIN (O.S.)

That's enough!

REVEREND CAIN emerges from behind some of the scared members.

He steps forward- slow, deliberate.

He reaches Angela.

He removes his hood.

Angela instantly aims the knife at him. He stares at it.

BEAT.

REVEREND CAIN (CONT'D)  
Don't make this harder than it  
already is, Angela. Please.

Angela shakes her head, eyes filled with desperation. She  
clutches the baby tighter.

ANGELA  
(pleading)  
You can't take her!  
She's just an infant Cain!  
Please!  
We can find another way!

REVEREND CAIN  
(interrupting)  
Angela.

He gently places a hand on her shoulder. A tear streams down  
his face.

BEAT.

REVEREND CAIN (CONT'D)  
This is just as hard for me as it  
is for you.  
You know there's no other way.  
We both know that.

She hesitates- almost like she's considering it. Then, she  
looks him dead in the eyes- steel forming.

ANGELA  
No.

Cain glares at her, anger seething through him as a voice  
echoes in- distorted, overlapping- like a demonic whisper  
bleeding through static.

UNKNOWN VOICE (V.O.)  
Take the child.

BEAT.

REVEREND CAIN  
Take it.

Suddenly- two members lunge in. One grabs the knife. The  
other restrains her from behind.

Angela screams and thrashes, cluthching the babe, trying to  
break free. It cries harder.

Cain steps forward and rips the baby from her arms.

She screams- raw, unrelenting- as she thrashes, helpless.

He walks toward the circle of faces and gently places the crying infant at its center.

A cult member steps forward. He pulls out a dagger and holds it within his open palms. A glint of light flashes across the blade.

Cain looks at the dagger- eyes filled with remorse.

BEAT

He slowly reaches out- takes it.

Angela thrashes harder.

ANGELA

Noooooo!

The dagger trembles in Cain's grip. He holds the knife higher, aiming it at the infant's heart.

Suddenly- the candles surrounding the faces begin to flicker, each one shifting color- yellow, orange, pink, blue, and red- one by one. As they change, the faces in front of them glow to match. The lines connecting each face to the center pulse with the same hue. Finally, the circle at the center, where the baby lies, glows white.

Then- the candles blaze. The flames intensify, growing hotter, brighter- almost alive.

He stares down at the baby. He closes his eyes tightly- takes a deep breath.

He trembles, tears welling as sorrow overtakes him. A single tear escapes- streaming down his cheek.

He starts to hesitate.

The same voice interrupts again- more aggressive.

UNKNOWN VOICE (V.O.)

KILL IT NOW!

Cain closes his eyes slowly.

REVEREND CAIN

(whimpering)

Forgive me.

