

TAUGHT BY EVIL

Written by

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Dedicated to Pedro Lira

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INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Big crowded classroom. The class has just ended and students are packing their bags.

LEILA, 19, dark-haired, cheerful and a bit chubby, is wearing a crocodile costume. She is trying to put her numerous textbooks in her backpack, but they keep on falling out as the backpack is too small. She also has a lunch box filled with sliced onions. She notices FELIX, 20, a tall and athletic ginger-haired guy passing by, and grabs his hand.

LEILA

Hey Felix!

FELIX

Ahh! Holy shit, Leila, you scared the hell out of me! Why do you look like a giant crocodile?

LEILA

Oh sorry! I'm performing in my nephew's kindergarten graduation show tonight. Do you wanna come?

(beat)

We can hang out after.

FELIX

I would love to, but I can't. I have to do something for Professor Sharma.

LEILA

I haven't seen you in ages! It seems like you always hang out with this creepy professor!

Leila angrily resumes her attempt to fit the textbooks in her backpack.

FELIX

Oh she is not creepy and yes we are very busy, working on some "special project."

Felix starts helping Leila with textbooks and easily gets all of them inside her backpack.

Leila notices a doodle resembling a capybara on Felix's hand.

FLASHBACK

A bloody body of a dead man lays on the ground. A close up on the man's hand reveals the same doodle of a capybara as Felix has.

BACK TO PRESENT DAY

LEILA

(worried)

What is it on your hand?

Suddenly, PROFESSOR SHARMA, 70, enters the room. She is an innocent-looking old lady. She is dressed in a long black skirt, a blouse with some symbolic ornament and has a turban on her head.

SHARMA

Felix, here you are. Ugh what's this smell?

(beat)

Do you need a ride to my place?

FELIX

Sure, that would be great! Bye Leila! I'll talk with you later. Good luck with your performance!

Felix and Sharma leave.

INT. HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY

The living room is small, but cozy.

Leila is sitting on the sofa and looks nervous. Her GRANDPA RAMON, 75, is making her tea.

GRANDPA RAMON

Are you sure it was a capybara though? Maybe it's just a coincidence...

LEILA

Yes! I'm telling you the doodle looked exactly the same as the one Uncle Alfredo had, when he got... killed.

(beat)

Can you tell me more about this... cult? What's its name again?

GRANDPA RAMON

El Culto del Capibara Fenesta. I don't know all the details, but it originated in Bolivia. Its followers worship large capybaras. According to a legend one day capybaras will enslave human kind, and only the worshipers of the cult will retain their freedom.

Leila chokes on her tea.

LEILA

It's ridiculous...

GRANDPA RAMON

To please the capybaras, the cult members conduct cruel rituals. The most famous is called "capybarization." Every five years they find a new victim, who must be a virgin.

LEILA

Oh, Felix!

Close-up on Leila's face. She looks worried.

GRANDPA RAMON

Then in the first night of the full moon the victim gets killed by a special knife in a bloody ritual. The knife must be brand new. If it cuts into anything other than the flesh of a victim-virgin, the ritual won't work. Then the members of the cult drink the victim's blood. They believe it makes them stronger.

Close up on Leila's face. She is about to faint. Grandpa looks at her in realization.

LEILA

(quietly)

When is the next full moon?

Grandpa Ramon looks at the calendar on the wall.

GRANDPA RAMON

(quietly)

Next Monday. In three days...

Close up on Leila's face. Her pupils dilate.

INT. COLLEGE'S CORRIDOR - DAY

Felix and Leila are walking towards the camera, arguing about something. Leila is eating some onions from her lunch box. As they get closer we can hear...

FELIX

Leila, Professor Sharma won't kill me! She is the sweetest grandma-like person! All we do is just research!

LEILA

Felix, you can say whatever, but she is evil!

Felix doesn't look convinced.

FELIX

Why do you always eat these onions?

LEILA

I have a weak immune system.
(beat)
Anyway, if you are just doing research as you said, it won't hurt talking with her!

Felix and Leila reach the door, which says "Professor Sharma, Religion Department" on it.

FELIX

I'll wait outside.

Leila knocks and enters.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Sharma's office is very dark, smoky from incense and rather creepy. There are many decorations, such wooden masks, paintings and amulets scattered around. There is a white bone on the professor's desk. Meditation music (binaural waves) is playing in the background.

SHARMA

Leila Rojas? How can I help you?

LEILA

(hesitantly at first, but getting more confident)
I know you are the Elder of El Culto del Capibara Fenesta!

And I know that you are trying to kill Felix as your new victim! So leave him alone, or...

(beat)

Or you will get into serious trouble!

Sharma starts laughing.

SHARMA

I appreciate your erudition, Rojas, but I'm afraid you watch too many horror movies! Felix and I are indeed involved in the research of El Culto del Capibara Fenesta. However, unfortunately, nobody will die.

Sharma twists a bone in her hands.

SHARMA

We might recreate some rituals, though. But solely for educational purposes. Nevertheless it's none of your business.

LEILA

I don't believe you!

Leila walks closer to Sharma, looking aggressive. Sharma makes a wry face and tears up.

SHARMA

Rojas, step back! Damn I'm strongly allergic to onions! Oh God I can't see anything!

Sharma pushes Leila away from herself.

SHARMA

(strictly)

Rojas, stop wasting your and my time. The conversation is over, just leave.

LEILA

But...

Professor Sharma, still tearing up, pushes Leila out of her office. Leila tries to resist, but without much success.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

Leila is energetically looking through the bookshelves. Her friend SOPHIE, 20, is waiting for her in boredom.

SOPHIE

Leila, you are wasting your time and your nerve cells! Professor Sharma might not be the most pleasant person on Earth, but she is not a murderer!

LEILA

You don't understand! You haven't seen her face, when she was saying it!

Leila picks up a huge book from the shelf titled "Cults and Religions of Bolivia". She opens it and leafs through it.

SOPHIE

You are overreacting!

LEILA

Anyway, it's better be safe than sorry! I already lost my uncle...

(beat)

Oh I found it! "El Culto del Capibara Fenesta - an ancient cult known for its cruel rituals..."

SOPHIE

(quietly)

Leila.

Sophie is terrified, looking somewhere behind Leila's back.

LEILA (CONT'D)

"During its active years in the U.S. alone, the cult has been responsible for deaths of 50 people, mostly young men, as well as thousands of animals."

Professor Sharma approaches Leila from behind.

SHARMA

Rojas, I see you are highly interested in my class even though your grade doesn't necessarily reflect it!

Leila winces and closes the book quickly. Sophie stares at her phone and slowly walks away.

LEILA

I'm just... I'm just... I mean I am interested in your class!

SHARMA

After you left yesterday, I looked at your records and it appears that you're actually failing my class!

LEILA

Really? I thought I was doing pretty well.

SHARMA

(ignoring Leila)

But since you seem so hard-working, I'll let you write me an extra-credit paper. Give me 6000 words on the topic of African religions.

(beat)

Due next Tuesday.

Leila gives Sharma a hateful look. Professor Sharma leaves. Sophie, who was hiding behind the shelves, comes back.

SOPHIE

Oh my, Leila, you might be right. This woman is insane! What are you gonna do now? You can't really fail this class.

Leila seems deep in her thoughts.

LEILA

Same thing. I'll try to save Felix from this bitch! Felix means so much to me. He was my first friend here and you know...

SOPHIE

Yeah, he is such a nice guy. I wonder why is he still a virgin?

Leila stares at Sophie in realization.

INT. STAIRS INSIDE A HOUSE - NIGHT

Leila, wearing a very revealing dress and tons of makeup, is going up the stairs. She can barely walk in her high heels and looks rather ridiculous. Professor Sharma suddenly appears going down the stairs towards her. As she tries to pass by Leila in the narrow staircase, they lock eyes. We HEAR intense MUSIC starting to play in the background.

MONTAGE - VARIOUS

A) INT. OUTSIDE OF THE APARTMENT - NIGHT

Leila knocks on the door. Felix opens it. Felix seems pleasantly surprised by Leila's looks. Leila points at something downstairs. Felix explains something to her.

B) INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Leila gets two bottles of red wine from her bag.

C) INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Felix and Leila are watching TV laughing. The first bottle of wine is entirely empty.

D) INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Both bottles of wine are empty. Felix puts his arm around Leila.

END OF MONTAGE

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

The light is off. Leila and Felix are on the bed. Above them there is a wooden cross on the wall. Half undressed Leila is sitting on Felix, unbuttoning his shirt. The WINDOW is OPENED, despite a thunderstorm outside.

Music gets quieter and turns into something rather romantic.

FELIX

(breathing hard)

Leila stop. I can't... I'm Catholic! I don't want to have sex before marriage.

Leila doesn't stop.

LEILA

So what? Being Catholic hasn't stopped you from being part of Sharma's cult.

(playful)

And I'm even more innocent than her bullshit organization.

FELIX

What do you mean?

Ignoring him Leila fully unbuttons Felix's shirt and puts her hands in his chest. He stops resisting and kisses her.

The couple kisses passionately, when a WET DEAD CROW flies inside the room through the open window and noisily lands right on Felix's pillow.

The romantic music stops.

Both Leila and Felix stop kissing and look on the floor. The camera reveals a wet dead crow.

LEILA
What the hell?

FELIX
It's a sign from Heaven, that we shouldn't do it.

Felix stands up.

LEILA
(angrily)
Felix, it's a coincidence! The bird was probably killed by lightning. It has nothing to do with us.

Leila gets back on Felix and tries to resume kissing him. Felix resists.

FELIX
Leila, No! God doesn't want me to lose my virginity tonight.
(beat)
You should probably go. I'm sorry.

Leila is frustrated, but Felix looks determined. Felix tries to get the bird off of his pillow. Leila, her face full of anger, looks out the window and sees a silver BMW pulling out of the driveway.

INT. "EVERYTHING FOR AGRICULTURE" STORE - DAY

Leila is looking at the shelf, clearly choosing something. She then picks up a bottle, which has a "Rat Poison" label on it.

INT. CLASSROOM - EVENING

Leila enters the classroom and walks towards Sharma. She is grading some papers.

SHARMA
How can I help you, Rojas? I have to leave in 10 minutes.

LEILA

I just wanted to say I'm sorry. For intervening in your and Felix's research.

Sharma stares at her in surprise, sneezes, gets up and walks towards the window away from Leila.

LEILA

I know you like Felix and you would never harm him. Once again I'm sorry.

SHARMA

Right. What made you change your mind?

LEILA

I just saw how you looked at him in class today, with so much love and respect. I felt very bad for my behavior, so I baked you a cake.

Leila gets a cake from her bag. It looks a bit messy. Professor Sharma looks very flattered and surprised.

SHARMA

Thanks Leila, I really appreciate it!

Sharma cuts herself a piece of cake, and starts walking around the classroom.

SHARMA

(slowly)

I always wanted a son. When I finally got pregnant, my husband and I, we were so happy. We decided to call him Thor after the Scandinavian god. When Thor was born I couldn't stop looking at him. So pretty. Every day I used to sing to my baby. I looked at him for hours, imagining him as a grown man.

Sharma starts crying.

SHARMA

Once we went for a walk. Thor was two. He just learned how to walk. I... I looked away just for three seconds and...

he got hit by a truck... I could never get pregnant again.

Sharma cries very hard. Leila looks uncomfortable but has some tears in her eyes too.

SHARMA

When I met Felix, he reminded me so much of the grown-up Thor from my dreams. I feel so fulfilled when Felix is around. He is like my son, whom, I thought, I had lost forever...

Sharma gets a a piece of cake with the spoon and brings it close to her mouth. Leila grabs her hand.

LEILA

No! Don't eat it!

(beat)

I just realized I forgot to add any sugar... You probably won't like it.

Leila grabs the whole cake and throws it in the bin. Shocked, Sharma looks at her watch, stands up and walks towards the door.

SHARMA

Anyway, thank you! Forgive my excessive sentiments. I have to go now.

Professor Sharma leaves. Leila sits for a while thinking about something. She then walks towards the window and looks outside.

HER POV THROUGH WINDOW

Felix and Professor Sharma stand next a SILVER BMW. Felix gets in the car. Professor Sharma pulls a knife from her bag and puts it in the trunk. She then looks up and locks eyes with Leila. Professor Sharma gives her the creepiest smile and gets in the car.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Two cops, BOB and ROB are playing cards in the lobby. Leila runs into the station, breathing hard.

LEILA

I need to report a crime! ASAP!

Bob stands up and slowly gets a piece of paper.

BOB
What happened?

LEILA
Nothing. I mean not yet. A creepy professor is planning to kill my friend in a cult's ritual tonight.

BOB
I'm sorry, what are you saying?

LEILA
I'm saying if you don't do anything my friend will be sacrificed to a capybara tonight! A giant guinea pig!

Both policemen start laughing.

ROB
Girl, April Fools' Day is next week. And we are doing serious business here! Go home unless you want to be arrested for loitering!

BOB
Or slander!

Both policemen laugh.

LEILA
(very quietly to herself)
Idiots.

Leila leaves.

INT. HOUSE - EVENING

Leila is frantically looking through the closet, throwing clothes on the floor. She is stressed.

Grandpa Ramon appears on the stairs.

GRANDPA RAMON
What are you doing?

LEILA
Grandpa, do you remember what were they wearing when they...
(pause)
When they killed your son?

Grandpa Ramon is silent for a while.

GRANDPA RAMON

The white cloaks. You aren't going to the ritual, are you?

Leila ignores him and grabs a white sheet.

GRANDPA RAMON

(in understanding)

Oh... Don't forget some onions. You need to eat them regularly!

Leila gets some onions from the fridge and leaves the house.

EXT. A FIELD ON TOP OF A HILL - NIGHT

The beating of leather drums is heard. Leila, with the white sheet wrapped around her body, is looking at the field through the bushes. It's a full moon. She sees people in white cloaks standing in a circle around the fire. They play the drums and produce a weird "mmm" sound.

Leila gets out of the bushes and walks towards the people. When Leila is close enough to see well, her face reflects horror.

She sees Sharma, all covered in blood, playing a drum and howling in an agonizing manner. On a wooden throne next to her lays the capybara.

Shirtless Felix is tied to the pole. He looks scared and miserable. There are some weird blood-colored symbols drawn on his chest.

Professor Sharma raises her hand and everyone is silent.

PROFESSOR SHARMA

Hermanas and hermanos! It's the full moon of a Golden Year! Which means we are gathered here to bless the mating season of our Capybara Fenesta. It's time to inspire our idol! Let us start the sacrifice!

She picks up a knife from her pocket and walks towards Felix. Everyone else resumes playing drums.

FELIX

No, professor! I trusted you! I really liked you, I even loved you...

(pause)
Platonically!

Professor Sharma stops and looks at Felix. Her face reflects internal doubts.

SHARMA
(very quietly)
I'm sorry, boy...

She raises the knife targeting Felix's chest.

Leila looks around in panic. She then jumps inside the circle and walks towards Sharma.

LEILA
Wait! I'm also a virgin! Kill me
instead.
(beat)
Please!

Everyone stares at Leila. Felix is shocked.

SHARMA
Rojas? Actually, why not? Grab her!

But before other cultists have a chance to do anything, Leila suddenly kicks Sharma in the shins, so she falls. The women wrestle in the dirt until Leila gets the knife away from Sharma.

Leila then gets an onion from her pocket and quickly cuts it in half with the knife. The face of Sharma, who tries to stand up, reflects a silent scream. In SLOW MOTION we see how Leila throws a half of an onion at Sharma, which smashes into Sharma's face. Some pieces of the onion get into Sharma's opened mouth. She falls back to the ground, coughing in tears.

SHARMA
(crying and coughing)
You ruined it! You defiled the holy
knife with your fucking onions!

Leila ignores her and cuts the ropes on Felix. He looks thankful, but a little embarrassed.

FELIX
(quietly)
You never told me, you are a virgin
too...

LEILA

I just thought... you might not like it.

We hear police sirens. The cultists start leaving quickly. Sharma remains rolling on the ground helpless and pathetic.

LEILA

Let's get out of here.

Felix, who is still in shock, nods. Leila takes his hand and they leave the scene.

INT. HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Leila's living room is full of light. It's a very sunny day outside. We hear the doorbell ringing. Leila gets up and opens the door to reveal Felix.

FELIX

(timidly)
Can I come in?

LEILA

Sure.

Both them sit down on the sofa. There is an awkward silence.

FELIX

Hey, Leila, I just wanted to say...
I'm sorry! I should have believed you! It's just the way Sharma affected me. Like, I wasn't myself. Please, forgive me. I really appreciate everything you've done and...

(beat)
And you in my life...

Leila takes Felix's hand, smiling.

LEILA

It's all good now!
(beat)
Look what I got you.

Leila leaves the room for a minute and comes back with a cage. Inside the cage there is a very cute guinea pig.

LEILA

(laughing)
You can call it Sharma.

Felix laughs and hugs Leila.

FELIX
You are the best!

Felix kisses Leila.

We see the happy face of Grandpa Ramon secretly observing the couple from the stairs.

FADE TO BLACK.