

'The Devil in Her Eyes' - Grad Film Outline (2nd Draft – 8/5/23)

Genre: Period Drama

Setting: Scotland 1662

Loosely based on the true story of female witch-pricker Christian Caddell, who dressed as a man in order to take on the job, and one of her rumoured victims, Isobel Gowdie, infamous 'witch' whose confessions were among the first to circulate the idea of a coven.

ACT I:

- Christian Caddell (aka John Dickson), infamous witch-pricker, enters the candle-lit office of local power-broker, John Innes, dressed as a man. John Innes, the Baillie of Spynie, is the one who initially contracted Christian (under the fake identity of John Dickson) as a witch-pricker for the year in North-East Scotland.

- She drags along behind her the latest victim of her witch-pricking campaign; a young woman, bound by her hands with rope, pleading her innocence in the hope of being set free. Christian pushes the young woman towards a small table, where John sits staring at a stack of papers. As they approach the table, a pair of brooding guards appears to take the young woman from Christian's custody. They drag her away as Christian leans on the table, and John Innes drops a small bag for her payment in front of her.

- John Innes tells Christian that he has another job for her, if she's up for it. Infamous witch Isobel Gowdie is wanted for questioning about her probable involvement in the mysterious deaths of several young children in her village, as well as being 'Queen' of one of the first known witch covens. Another witch-pricker had previously been sent out to fetch her, but hasn't been seen or heard from since he left. The price on her head has gone up due to the serious nature of her alleged crimes, instead of the usual six pounds for her capture, Christian would be paid ten. She contemplates only a moment, the temptation of the large payment overriding any hesitation about the potential danger involved.

ACT II:

- Christian, still dressed as John Dickson, goes searching for Isobel Gowdie in the last place she was rumoured to have been seen. (either a forest or cemetery, preferably the latter, depending on location availability.) By the time Christian reaches the overgrown cemetery, night has fallen, and she can only see by the light of her lantern.

- After searching the cemetery for only a little while, Christian comes across Isobel, cast in moonlight and chanting, performing what she can only assume is a dark ritual of some sort. As

Christian approaches, Isobel suddenly stops and turns slowly to look at her. They lock eyes for a moment, before Isobel smiles and takes off into the shadows of the cemetery.

- Christian gives chase, and they dance around the cemetery for a few moments, Isobel taunting Christian all the while, repeating a chant which is meant to transform her into a hare. Every now and then, Isobel reappears from behind a tree or headstone, almost impossibly far from where she had only just popped up seconds ago.

- Eventually, Isobel slips up, and Christian seizes the opportunity to subdue her. She binds her hands behind her back and forces her to walk, pushing her back in the direction of the cemetery's entrance and onward to the Baillie's office.

- Along the way, Isobel goads Christian about when she is going to be pricked / searched for the devil's mark, but Christian tells her she doesn't need to prick her to know that she's a witch, she can see the evil in Isobel's eyes, and that is proof enough. Isobel condemns Christian for betraying 'her own kind', and curses her to a lifetime of unhappiness. Christian tries to continue ignoring her, but eventually snaps and fires off a string of excuses for why she does what she does.

ACT III:

- They finally exit the dark cemetery, and the lights from the nearby village can be seen in the distance. Just as the pair seem to be reaching a breakthrough in their arguments, almost connecting on a human level, and we think Christian might change her mind about turning Isobel in, she lets her guard down and Isobel takes advantage. She hits Christian over the back of the head with a large branch (or rock) she'd managed to grab in the cemetery, knocking her unconscious.

- Christian awakens some time later, when the sun is now starting to rise again. Her vision is blurry, and she struggles to sit up but ultimately fails. In the distance, she hears muddled voices shouting, and sees lanterns moving steadily closer to her. She tries again to sit up, as the same pair of brooding guards from the Baillie's office cautiously approach. One gestures sharply at her and says something she can't quite make out;

- Only then does she realize that her disguise has been ruined in the struggle with Isobel. Christian, Aka John Dickson, now sits there, very obviously a woman, and the guards glare down at her as she stumbles for an explanation. The guards haul her to her feet and begin dragging her back towards the town, pleading her innocence the same way her victims did. All the while, Isobel Gowdie watches with an ominous smile of satisfaction from the shadows at the edge of the cemetery.