

THE QLIPPOTH

kennethdraconian@gmail.com

A horror treatment

by Kenneth Draconian

Written by Kenneth Draconian
kennethdraconian@gmail.com

Eleven adults. Eleven shells. No one walks out.

Title

THE QLIPPOTH

Working title. A demonic horror film. Written by Kenneth Draconian.

Logline

Eleven adult friends descend through the eleven shells of the Qlippoth to drag one of their own back from a ruined ritual, and a woman who calls herself Lilith offers the six women a way out. Every man is killed in a shell. Every woman is taken. The last woman reaches what looks like the exit and is handed to a demon as the screen goes black.

Tone and Theme

Supernatural horror with a ritual, body-horror finish. The image is wet stone, black oil, red lamp-light, and bodies marked by shells that look like burned Hebrew letters. The sound is breath, chain, and a woman's voice that always arrives one step before the slaughter. There is no score swell for a rescue. The theme is false shelter: the friends trust a woman because she is a woman, and that trust is the lock. Survival is a costume the film lets the audience wear until the last moment, then takes away. The sexual enslavement is shown as horror, not as romance. No one under eighteen appears.

Character Breakdown

ADELINE ROSS, 34, the organizer. She found the rite in a dead uncle's trunk and talked the others into a weekend at his coastal house. Goal: prove the rite is a hoax and get everyone home by Sunday. Flaw: she needs to be the competent one, so she believes the first kind female voice she hears.

PRIYA SHAH, 29, a paramedic. Goal: keep the injured breathing. Flaw: she triages strangers before friends, and Lilith sounds like a patient who still has a pulse.

LENORE PIKE, 41, a divorce lawyer. Goal: read the rules and find the clause that lets them leave. Flaw: she trusts a woman's counsel over a man's warning.

SOFIA MARTEL, 27, Adeline's younger sister. Goal: stay next to Adeline. Flaw: she copies whoever sounds calm.

JUNE HARROW, 32, a sculptor. Goal: document the shells on her phone so the outside world will believe them. Flaw: she frames horror as an image and steps closer to get it.

TESSA QUINN, 36, the last woman standing. A harbor pilot, practical, hard to rattle. Goal: walk the group out the way they came. Flaw: she believes a door that opens for her alone is an exit. The film lets the audience believe it with her.

OWEN BRIGGS, 35, Adeline's boyfriend. Goal: drag her out the moment the house misbehaves. Flaw: he thinks force can close a door that already opened.

FELIX DAWSON, 31, a cook. Goal: keep people fed and joking. Flaw: he laughs at the first omen and is still laughing when it takes him.

MARCUS ELLERY, 38, a high-school history teacher. Goal: name what they are in, as if a name is a map. Flaw: he corrects Lilith out loud.

NATE COBURN, 28, Sofia's friend from work. Goal: protect Sofia and get a signal. Flaw: he runs toward light.

IVAN PETROV, 40, Lenore's brother, ex-army. Goal: be the last man between the women and whatever is hunting. Flaw: he accepts Lilith's directions because the women do.

LILITH, ageless, appears as a barefoot woman in a stained white slip, then as a crowned shape when the last shell opens. She is not a friend. She is the warden.

The Narrative Summary

Act One — The House and the First Shell

Rain pins eleven adults inside a shuttered house above a black cove. Adeline lays out her uncle's papers on the dining table: eleven names of the Qlippoth, eleven shells under the world of ordinary things, and a warning written in the margin that a woman will offer water. Owen wants the cars. The cars are already full of seawater. Phones show full bars and connect to nothing. The cellar stairs are gone. In their place is a throat of stone with eleven marks cut into the lintel. June films the marks. Marcus reads them aloud and wishes he had not.

They go down because the house will not let them go out. Windows open onto the cellar. Doors open onto the cellar. The first shell is Nahemoth, a night beach under the floor, littered with the shells of crabs and the shells of radios. A woman's voice moves along the waterline and tells the women to walk where the foam is thin. She says she is Lilith, and she says she was trapped here by men who mistook a queen for a wife. Adeline, Lenore, and Sofia believe her because the voice is tired and female and does not bark orders. Owen calls it a lure and steps between Adeline and the surf. The beach opens under him. Something with too many hands pulls him down and leaves his jacket folded on the sand, sleeves tucked, as if he had meant to go swimming. Five men remain. Lilith tells the women she can still lead them if they stop listening to the men. Tessa looks at the folded jacket and does not drink the water Lilith offers. The others do.

Act Two — The Middle Shells

Gamaliel is a brothel built from church pews. The obscene ones wear the faces of people the friends have slept with, and then the faces slip. Priya is separated behind a beaded curtain while she is still checking Felix's pulse. The audience sees her held on an altar-bed by figures that are not human, collared in a band of wet gold, kept for the shell rather than killed. Her voice still answers when Adeline calls, which is worse. Felix tries to drag the curtain down and makes a joke that dies in his teeth. The shell closes on his mouth and he drops, already finished. Lilith stands in the aisle in her slip and tells the women Priya is only being hidden until the path is safe. June films Lilith. Lilith lets her. Sofia asks if Priya can hear them. Lilith says yes, and that hearing is a kindness.

Samael is a field of black grain that smokes when touched. The poison is in the air and in the advice. Marcus names the shell and names Lilith a liar in front of the women. She does not argue. She looks at Lenore, who looks away. The grain takes Marcus at the knees and he is gone before the lesson finishes, a teacher erased by the subject he came to explain. A'arab Zaraq splits the group under a sky of ravens. Nate sees a stair of light and runs for it with Sofia's wrist in his hand, sure the signal lives at the top. The ravens take the hand, then the man. Nate dies on the stairs with his phone still searching. Sofia is carried the other way, into a rookery where winged jailers pin her, strip her, and use her while she screams Adeline's name. The camera stays long enough to show she is alive and owned. Lilith tells Adeline the rookery is a shelter from the birds. Adeline repeats that to the others, because a woman said it.

Tagiriron is a court where every friend is accused by his own voice. The clerks are wax. The gallery is full of empty dresses. Ivan keeps them moving and will not enter a plea. June is pulled onto the bench because she raised the phone, and the shell treats a witness as a defendant. She is kept there, passed from

demon to demon as a sentence that does not end when the gavel does. Lilith sits in the gallery and nods like a translator. She tells Lenore the court only punishes people who fight. Lenore sets the phone down and tells June, through the rail, to stop struggling. June does not. The shell does not need her to.

Golachab burns. The shell is a furnace room with no walls, only heat in the shape of men. A burner takes Lenore by the hair and drags her into the fire-mouth. She lives. The fire does not kill the women. It brands a shell-letter into the shoulder and chains them to the room they fell into. Ivan goes in after his sister with his coat over his head. The burners close the mouth. He does not come out. His coat does, empty, smoking, folded like Owen's jacket. Four women remain walking. No man remains. Lilith puts a hand on Tessa's arm and says the men spent themselves on heroics, and that is why the women are still here.

Gha'agsheblah is the smashers' hall, a corridor that shortens every time someone tells the truth. The walls piston in on the word 'help.' June is still alive somewhere behind those walls, answering Lilith and not her friends, the phone on the floor filming nothing but her own chained ankle. Satariel hides the path. Fog in a library. Every book is the uncle's rite, rewritten so Lilith is the victim in every chapter. She walks beside Tessa and Adeline and speaks only to them. She describes an exit above Thaumiel. She describes the dead men as the reason the shells closed. Tessa does not love the speech. She follows it anyway, because every other road is a wall, and the only map left is a woman's mouth.

Chaigidel hinders. Doors lead back to doors. A staircase deposits them in the foyer of the cove house, then the foyer peels and is Gamaliel again. Adeline finally sees Priya and Sofia and June and Lenore alive in side cells, collared, used by the things that keep the shells, and still calling Lilith by a woman's name when they are afraid. Adeline breaks the line to reach them. The shell rewards the break. Hands pin her to the same row. A collar closes on the organizer, the one who promised Sunday. Lilith watches with a patient's face and tells Tessa that Adeline chose to stay. Tessa calls her a liar. Lilith nods, almost pleased, and points up.

Act Three — Thaumiel and the Last Door

Tessa climbs alone into Thaumiel, the twin shell, where two giant crowned heads share one neck and argue over a single throat. The last male friend is already dead in the shell below; his body is nailed to the argument as a period. The twins offer Tessa a bargain in two voices: leave the other women, and the upper door opens. Lilith stands between the heads and says she will hold the door. Tessa does not take the bargain. She demands the cells opened. For a moment the film looks like it will give her that. Chains fall. A stair shows daylight. The cove house is visible at the top, ordinary, raining.

Tessa puts a foot on the stair. Lilith's hand closes on the back of her neck, gentle, the way a friend stops a friend from falling. The daylight is a painting. The stair ends in a bed of black salt under the twins. Lilith speaks, at last, without the slip and without the kindness. She says the women were never being led out. They were being sorted. A demon larger than the door comes up out of the salt, patient, already wearing a collar sized for a human throat. Lilith gives Tessa to it. The audience sees the collar lock, sees Tessa understand, sees the other five women still alive in the shells behind her, kept, not killed. No rescue enters. No man is left to die for her. The demon bears her down into the salt.

The stair, the house, and the rain fold shut. Fade to black. End credits.

End Note

Eleven spheres: Nahemoth, Gamaliel, Samael, A'arab Zaraq, Tagiriron, Golachab, Gha'agsheblah, Satariel, Chaigidel, Thaumiel, and Lilith's last door under the twins. Five men die, one to a shell, until none remain. Six women are taken and sexually enslaved. Five of them trust Lilith because she comes as

a woman who says she will help. The sixth, Tessa Quinn, is staged as the survivor. She is not. The last image before black is the collar and the handoff.

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