

Annis

By

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Based on:

The Folklore Tale of Black Annis

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FADE IN:

EXT. WEDDING CEREMONY - DAY - AUTUMN OR WINTER

The end of a wedding ceremony where the groom kisses the bride. Both very happy and very much in love. They walk away through a few villagers who are smiling and happy for them.

ROBERT, a mid-late twenties, slender, handsome, cleanly dressed peasant about 6'0 tall.

ANNI/BLACK ANNIS, a 5'6, petite and moderately attractive woman.

INT. FARMHOUSE BEDROOM - NIGHT

We see ROBERT and ANNI in bed on their wedding night exchanging some deep, meaningful dialogue that further increases the depth of their happiness, love and devotion to the audience.

EXT. WHEAT FIELD - DAY - SPRING

Scene portrays ROBERT and ANNI working hard in the spring, sowing a small field. Smiling at each other as they do so.

EXT. WHEAT FIELD - DAY - SUMMER

More happy times as ROBERT and ANNI feed their pigs and/or chickens. Maybe a light-hearted clip where one of them falls in the mud with the pigs and he/she pulls the other in and in a carefree manner they end up laughing, kissing and rolling in the mud together.

EXT. WHEAT FIELD - DAY - LATE SUMMER/AUTUMN

Reaping the harvest and a love scene in the hay (or pig sty or other fun/unusual place?)

INT. INN - NIGHT

It's been a good harvest. ROBERT is in the town inn, treating himself to some ale. Some dialogue with LOCALS to show that he isn't capable of holding his drink.

INT. FARMHOUSE - DAY - CHRISTMAS

Some dialogue and the exchanging of gifts between ROBERT and ANNI. In particular, ROBERT gives ANNI something very special which will be seen later or at various points throughout.

INT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

ANNI gives birth or the scene of a baby several months old. Here we see how much more the family is complete and how much more devoted the couple are.

INT. INN - NIGHT

ROBERT is in the inn celebrating. Still not too capable of holding his drink, he upsets another customer or accidentally spills his ale on him or something and a fight breaks out. (Maybe the customer is gentry who is appalled by the peasant, or there's a gambling or LOAN SHARK situation with the ROBERT). The groom manages to flee the inn.

LOAN SHARK, Tall, slender, long black hair. Cocky, Mutton dressed as lamb in appearance.

EXT. PATH TO FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

ROBERT staggers up the path to the farmhouse in the distance, looking behind him as he goes.

CUT TO

Scenes of the LOAN SHARK and his ACCOMPLICE chasing after the groom at quite some distance behind.

REPEAT SHOTS AT VARIOUS STAGES

ACCOMPLICE, a tall slim man. sickly-looking with a blemished face. Someone who enjoys the power he thinks he has due to his position with the LOAN SHARK.

INT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

ROBERT staggers to bar the door and lock the window shutters. He grabs ANNI and BABY, getting them to lock themselves in the bedroom. The LOAN SHARK and his ACCOMPLICE manage to break in and begin severely beating ROBERT.

(CONTINUED)

BABY (O.S.)
Continued screaming.

ANNI sneaks out of the bedroom and hits the ACCOMPLICE over the head with a log from the fire. ROBERT also goes down, the LOAN SHARK grabs the log, forcing it's (spikey/splintered) burning end into ANNI's (left)face. ANNI screams, stumbles and crawls off to the bedroom where the BABY is. ROBERT jumps the LOAN SHARK and they struggle. The LOAN SHARK draws a knife and brutally stabs ROBERT repeatedly. ANNI, with BABY in arms at the doorway, sees this and screams.

The LOAN SHARK grabs ANNI by the arm and swings her around from the bedroom doorway into the room, knocking her BABY out of her arms as he does so. The BABY falls into the fire and ANNI screams. She leans out towards the fire with her left arm whilst the LOAN SHARK pulls her towards him with her right arm. They struggle for a moment and LOAN SHARK loses grip. ANNI falls into the fire with her left body, arm and face in the flames. ANNI retrieves the screaming BABY, yanking it, and it falls along the floor to lay near ROBERTS body. ANNI looks on in horror as the BABY's screams fade.

The LOAN SHARK grabs ANNI, throwing her over the table and begins to rape her. The eyes of her smoldering, disfigured face staring blankly into nothingness. Annoyed by ANNI's lack of reaction to his raping, the LOAN SHARK begins beating her with clenched fists. ANNI continues to stare blankly, totally oblivious to anything in her surroundings.

FADE OUT

EXT. PATH TO FARMHOUSE - DAWN

Through stalks of wheat the burning remains of the farmhouse can be seen in the early morning light.

CAMERA SLOWLY RAISES:

To reveal the mud-soaked front yard and the half naked form of ANNI in her few remaining, torn and burnt clothes.

ZOOM IN TO HEAD AND TORSO:

ANNI groggily raises her head, revealing a bald patch and the left side of her face, all burnt and sore. Gasping for breath, coughing slightly and her eyes red and sore, she slowly sits up to face the aftermath. Deep in shock, slowly the look of her devastation crosses her face before once again turning to the oblivious look once more. She slowly and awkwardly staggers to her feet, struggling to keep her balance, never once taking her eyes off the farmhouse.

(CONTINUED)

She walks into the remains and seeks out a box in a smoldering cupboard. She sees the burnt remains of the baby and weeps. She stretches her arms out as though to pick the baby up. Even though she knows the baby is dead, she's afraid she might hurt the child if her hands touched its burnt body. She gives up the idea of picking the baby up. She returns to her search for the box, finds it and sits in the smoldering ashes. From it she removes the special gift given to her by her husband, fondly fondling it.

QUICK CUTS: FLASHBACKS OF THE HAPPY TIMES TO END WITH HARD, SHOCKING IMAGES OF THE PREVIOUS NIGHTS HORRORS.

A brief look of insanity crosses her face as she sways from side to side a little and smoke wafts by her. She gets up, turns and walks out of the ashes like a zombie and walks off down the farmyard path.

FADE OUT

EXT. HILLS AND FIELDS - DAYS & NIGHTS

Several shots of ANNIS in different (woods & fields) locations, trudging obliviously to nowhere in particular. Odd noises (such as birds or strong breezes), grab her attention, she turns her head sharply towards them, with a manic/insane look in her eye. (Her left face his left hidden from camera for most preamble scenes and is only shown in the horror/scary moments).

EXT. FOREST - RAINING - DUSK

In the dim light ANNIS fights her way through a thick, leaf-bare forest. She hears voices in the distance and quickens her pace, frequently looking behind her. This goes on for some time, her already exhausted body and mind failing her more and more.

EXT. FOREST - MIDNIGHT - RAINING

By midnight a couple of days later, she is totally exhausted and falls on to a mound of soft earth where she weakly starts clawing at the over-growth and begins to bury herself so as to hide from her (imaginary?) followers. her eyes close for the first time in days, and she opens her mouth to catch the rain to quench her thirst and then passes out.

FADE OUT

EXT. FOREST - MORNING

ANNI'S FACIAL DISFIGUREMENT IS OUT OF SHOT

ANNI wakes with the sun shining through the bare branches and onto her face. She blinks and squints and sits up, looking sane and normal. She sees some mushrooms near her and eats them hurriedly before wandering off to a stream in the distance.

She kneels at the stream, cups her hands and begins drinking and washing. After a moment she opens her eyes and screams in shock at her reflection and falls back on her hands.

BIRDS SCREECH AND FLEE IN THE DISTANCE

ANNIS rests her head on her knees, folding her arms over head to hide from the world and weeps.

FADE OUT

EXT. FOREST - DAYTIME

ANNIS is back at the mound, slowly, steadily clawing away at it as though she has nothing better to do.

FADE OUT

EXT. FOREST - DUSK - RAINING

MOUND TO BE DUG OUT TO ABOUT TWO FEET IN DEPTH WITH ANNIS SITTING HUDDLED IN IT.

A SMALL FIRE, ALMOST OUT, HISSES AS DROPS OF RAIN HIT IT.

ANNIS spots a rabbit nearby and tries pouncing on it but it escapes.

FADE OUT

EXT. FOREST - DAYTIME

THE MOUND, LOOKING MORE LIKE ROCK INSIDE, IS NOW ABOUT THREE FEET DEEP.

CLOSE UP: OF FIRE LOOKING DRENCHED.

ANNIS tries catching another animal again, and fails. She is left looking, angry, frustrated, desperate and slightly manic again.

FADE OUT

INT. BOWER - NIGHT

ANNIS, starving and unable to build a fire, sits in her bower, huddled, trying to find comfort from the special gift her husband gave her. She rocks to and fro as her sore fingers and moderately long, broken finger nails stroke it in comfort.

A rat pauses in crossing the bower entrance. ANNIS's head and eyes twist sharply in its direction. ANNIS leaps, dropping the gift without noticing as she pounces on the rat. It squeaks and squeals in her hands briefly, then falls silent. ANNIS loosens her grip on the animal to find her nails stuck in its throat. With a look of horror at what she has done, she drops the rat and falls from her crouching to fall back on her hands. She gasps and looks around in horror, calms herself and then looks at the dead rat on the ground. Desperately hungry, she lunges back towards the rat, grabs it and begins sucking the blood from its neck before gnawing at its flesh.

FADE OUT

EXT. FOREST - DAYTIME

Looking 'normal' again, ANNIS is walking from her bower down to the stream. She looks stronger but is holding her stomach and looking ill. She pauses by a tree and vomits and then continues her journey.

She reaches the stream, drinks and washes her face. She looks more closely at her scarred face in the reflection, less horrified and a slight, insane look on her face. She begins stroking her hair with her broken nails as though as to comb it.

FADE OUT

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

A MOTHER kneeling by an open fire notices the wood pile getting low. She calls to her daughter, ELIZABETH and waits for her to appear.

ELIZABETH stands beside her mother. The mother tells the child to fetch some wood quickly, before it gets dark. ELIZABETH hurries off, quite happily.

(CONTINUED)

MOTHER, a late 30's/early 40's woman with long, dark, straight, straggly hair. Well built and wearing a medieval style brown dress and an apron.

ELIZABETH, a 7/8 year old girl also with long, dark hair.