

THE WITCHFINDER

by

KIP HALL

Registered WGA WEST:  
Number: 1487016

[kip@kiphall.com](mailto:kip@kiphall.com)

EXT. FIELD - DUSK - END OF SUMMER

THE WITCHFINDER is dressed in black.

Black hat, black boots, black cape, black cane.

A cross hangs from his neck, and as he slowly lifts his head, we see his face: pockmarked and gaunt, a goatee shaping his chin.

But it's his eyes that really disturb.

Piercing, and unrelenting in their cruelty... as they cut right through us.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. FIELDS - END OF SUMMER - AFTERNOON

Sunburnt fields stream by...

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

We see the face of LOUISE (16), her blue eyes staring at the same space, the sky, the sheer emptiness.

Driving is her sister, RACHEL (30). Her dark hair brushes her shoulders. There's a dreaminess to her.

RACHEL  
(glancing over)  
Are you okay?  
(concerned)  
It's just you haven't said  
anything all day...

Louise finally turns...

LOUISE  
Is she coming?  
(looking at her)  
Because you promised.

After a moment...

RACHEL  
She's coming...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They reach a crossroads. Rachel stops, pulling out a map. They turn left and hit a dirt track.

Trees shade the road. They drive on, it's bumpy, isolated. Rachel stops again and glances over her shoulder. She starts to reverse, there's a sign nailed to a tree. It reads 'FENRIS HOUSE'.

They drive on until a gate blocks their way. Rachel gets out and drags it open.

They continue... finally reaching an Elizabethan house.

Neglected and half choked by ivy, the classic timber front seems crushed by the weight of the roof. They get out.

EXT. FENRIS HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

RACHEL  
(unfolding letter)  
The key should be over here.

They wander to the side. Jammed against a wall is a steel bound barrel. Rachel slides the lid off and peers at the inky black water. We see a flicker of fear from Louise.

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
(worried)  
It's okay, I'm sorry. I'll get it.

Louise heads to the front door, but can't resist glancing back. And as her sister's hand plunges in, Louise looks like she may faint...

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
(turning to Louise  
with key)  
Got it.

Louise snaps out of her memory, shaken. Rachel unlocks the front door, and they enter.

INT. FENRIS HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Deep slits disfigure the beams of the old low ceiling.

A hallway leads to the back garden, and on the left is a staircase. Tucked underneath is a small toilet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Rachel wanders to the kitchen, as Louise passes in front of the stairs to the sitting room.

INT. SITTING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A blackened fire place is gouged into the facing wall. Worn sofas flank the sides, paintings clutter the walls, windows expose both front and back gardens.

Louise wanders across to a doorway at the other end, and heads through.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Light spills in from the back garden, streaking across a large wooden table. Dried flowers, pint jugs and rusty farm implements hang from the ceiling.

Rachel heads to the sink, briefly glimpsing her car through the antique windows. She turns a tap on. Nothing. Suddenly brown liquid spurts out. Slowly it starts to lighten.

GEORGIE (O.C.)

I SO wouldn't drink that...

Rachel turns and smiles. Standing by the door is GEORGIE (29), tall, black, trendy.

GEORGIE (CONT'D)

(playful)

Is this officially the most remote fucking house in England?

MIA (O.C.)

It's so her boyfriend can't find her.

Just behind is MIA (28), blonde, hot as, dressed for town.

MIA (CONT'D)

(teasing)

What I wanna know, is what it's like marrying someone you've just met?

RACHEL

(equally sarcastic)

Really good thanks.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
Probably almost as fulfilling as  
*shagging* someone you've just  
met...

Georgie lets out a spurt of laughter... Mia smiles,  
grabbing Rachel's hand, inspecting her engagement ring.

MIA  
(having fun)  
Is that it? How long have you  
actually known him? Three weeks?

RACHEL  
(retrieving her hand)  
Hilarious, eight months. And  
believe it or not He has a name.

Mia whispers in Georgie's ear.

GEORGIE  
ADOLF?

And Mia's amused...

RACHEL  
Yes that's right, his parents  
named him after the fucking  
Fuhrer.  
(sarcastic smile)  
Try John.

GEORGIE  
Accountant?

RACHEL  
(sarcastic)  
If you must know, he's a grave-  
digger.

MIA  
Sex-yyy.

GEORGIE  
(motioning)  
Photo...

RACHEL  
God...

She pulls out her phone and selects a picture. Georgie  
commandeers it, Mia crowding round.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GEORGIE

Christ he really does look like a  
grave digger.

RACHEL

(snatching back her  
phone)

Remind me why you're my friends?

MIA

(hugging her)

Coz we love you...

RACHEL

(noticing how dressed  
up she is)

You do realise there's nothing  
here? No bars, no clubs, and  
definitely no men.

MIA

(mischievous)

There're always men.

INT. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A huge oak table lies in broken strips propped against  
the far wall. On both sides of the room heavy curtains  
shield the windows. Louise draws the set nearest to her.

Blinding light sears in from the front garden.

She turns, covering her face, briefly choking on the veil  
of dust, wandering past a suit of armour, its hands  
wrapped round an axe. Finally she stops, her eyes  
settling on an old map hung from one of the walls.

CLOSE: We can see the outline of the house, and below,  
shapes of a church and village. Louise traces her finger  
over the curve of a nearby RIVER...

Suddenly there's a noise. She turns to the window  
behind...

EXT. FENRIS HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Two more women wander to the front door: RUTH (31),  
rotund, short black hair, kind, moral, courageous.

And BETH (29), auburn, willowy, but behind her pretty  
green eyes there's a profoundly damaged person.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ruth searches for some phone reception.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Rachel glances towards the window having heard the car.  
Georgie's nearer but can only see Ruth.

GEORGIE  
Who's that with Ruth?

RACHEL  
Beth.

GEORGIE  
You're shitting me! I swear if she  
tries any of that God bothering  
shit on me I'll...

BETH (O.C.)  
You'll what?

Georgie turns, caught out.

BETH (CONT'D)  
Actually find some meaning in that  
frivolous life of yours, Heaven  
forbid.  
(beat)  
How's the girl band going? Slept  
with your manager yet?

Mia smirks, as Georgie flashes her best 'go fuck  
yourself' smile.

Ruth enters, slightly flustered, looking for Rachel.

RUTH  
I don't suppose there's a land  
line? I've got absolutely no  
reception and I promised I'd say  
good night to the boys.

RACHEL  
Er, no...  
(beat)  
But I'm sure someone's got a  
signal.

They all look. Nothing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GEORGIE

(playing)

So how the fuck are you Ruth?

RUTH

(serious)

I'm fine, but d'you have to swear?

GEORGIE

Sorry Miss, forgot we were all  
still in fucking kindergarten.

RUTH

(a little annoyed)

It's just that some of us believe  
there are more than three words in  
the English language to express  
our excitement Georgie.

RACHEL

(exasperated)

Jesus, will everyone please try  
and be nice to each other!

An awkward beat.

MIA

(enthusiastic)

Hey where's little sis?

RACHEL

(turning/unsure)

Exploring I think...

RUTH

How is she?

RACHEL

(lying)

Okay...

She's got Rachel thinking now...

GEORGIE

So is this it?

RACHEL

(vague)

I don't know.

MIA

(confused)

You don't know?

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (2)

GEORGIE

What the fuck's that mean?

RACHEL

It means I don't know if they're going to come.

RUTH

Who?

And everyone's looking at Rachel...

INT. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Louise carefully draws the remaining set of curtains, then using her sleeve she cleans a hole in the glass, revealing a garden segmented by low stone walls.

Beyond that she can make out the crumbled spire of a ruined church, and in the distance fields, surrounded by woodland.

She tries to open one of the windows. It lifts a few inches but is then locked rigid by a pair of bolts.

Resting nearby is a key.

She sticks it in, but it falls, disappearing through a crack in the floor boards. She crouches down to reach it, her fingers brushing the top. Suddenly she hears a dog barking.

She looks up, staring through the window. Another bark, and we see her whole face illuminate, the first time she's smiled. She gets to her feet and rushes to the door.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Stunned silence. Faces fixed on Rachel.

GEORGIE

Are. You. Mental?

(beat)

Why the fuck would you invite your ex to your hen do?

RACHEL

(defensive)

She's not my ex, she's my best friend.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
 (like it's nothing)  
 Anyway we've spoken, it's fine...

RUTH  
 (still shocked)  
 Your EX?

RACHEL  
 (passionate)  
 Look, the fact is my sister's  
 barely said a word to anyone in  
 the last six months, and when she  
 did it was to ask for Lakshmi.  
 (beat)  
 And because I... and because I  
 miss her and haven't seen her in  
 over a year.  
 (beat)  
 And like I said I doubt she'll  
 come.

They can all hear voices coming from the back garden.

MIA  
 I think she just did...

And a dog barking.

BETH  
 (anxious)  
 Was that a dog?

EXT. BACK GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

Walking to the backdoor is LAKSHMI (29), long dark hair,  
 cool as hell, beautiful.

And Wolfie, a five year old HUSKY DOG.

Wolfie races up to Louise, licking her face.

LAKSHMI  
 (smiling)  
 Hey you.

Lakshmi casually drops her rucksack as Louise hugs her  
 like a long lost sister.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Lakshmi, Louise and Wolfie walk in. Lakshmi immediately making eye contact with Rachel.

GEORGIE

(bemused)

Did you walk here or something?

LAKSHMI

(casual)

Car's down the hill. Thought this was the way in.

BETH

(anxious)

Why have you brought a dog Lakshmi?

LAKSHMI

(alpha female)

Coz she's my bitch Beth.

(beat)

Any way relax, Wolfie only bites bad people.

They stare at each other, past tension surfacing...

GEORGIE

(moving swiftly on)

So what's the plan for tonight then? Local strip joint?

RACHEL

There's a fair.

MIA

A fair? Like a fun fair?

RACHEL

No like a shit fair. You know, old fashioned, bobbing for apples.

LAKSHMI

They're gonna love us. A Hindu, a Jew, three Pagans, and a Christian...

MIA

What are you Lou?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUISE

I dunno...  
 (beat)  
 Human?

All but Beth smile.

GEORGIE

Is Mia allowed to fuck a bumpkin?

RUTH

You really are disgusting aren't  
 you Georgie?

GEORGIE

You should see me when I'm  
 horny...

Ruth sighs.

GEORGIE (CONT'D)

Anyway, I thought this was  
 supposed to be a hen-do?

LAKSHMI

(provocative)  
 Yeah Rache, we're meant to be  
 celebrating your engagement to Mr.  
 Random Fuck.  
 (trying to shock)  
 It's not like the last time we saw  
 each other we'd just had sex or  
 anything...

And Lakshmi smiles obnoxiously at Rachel, the others now  
 wanting the walls to swallow them.

MIA

I think we should get our bags...

GEORGIE

Yeah...  
 (beat)  
 Why don't you take Wolfie for a  
 walk Lou...

She nods, and they all head to the door, leaving Rachel  
 and Lakshmi to their confrontation.

EXT. FENRIS HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Georgie heads to her car with Mia.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GEORGIE

Cluster...

MIA

Fuck.

Beth pulls a bag from Ruth's Volvo. Ruth fiddling with her phone again, marching further away, Louise following Wolfie to the church.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Lakshmi smiles at Rachel.

LAKSHMI

You know you look different with your clothes on...

RACHEL

(very uncomfortable)  
Don't.

LAKSHMI

(spiky)  
Don't what Rache? Don't remind you of what happened? Don't question what you're doing? But that's why you invited me. To tell you it's all bullshit. Coz it can't have been just to humiliate me...

RACHEL

(out of her depth)  
You said you were happy for me.

Lakshmi smiles, her face full of mischief.

LAKSHMI

Well... maybe I lied.  
(beat)  
Besides, we both know the real reason I'm here.  
(beat)  
Guilt.

RACHEL

(getting angry)  
What?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LAKSHMI

That's right. Guilt for what  
you've done to me, and guilt for  
what happened to your sister...

Rachel shakes her head in shocked disbelief.

EXT. RUINED CHURCH - A FEW MINUTES LATER

The broken foundations of a long dead village sketch  
shapes across the earth. Nearby, a road winds past an  
ancient stone cross towards the fair.

Hidden beneath a tree Louise can see Lakshmi's scratched  
out Land Rover. Shadowing the land opposite is a ruined  
church, a graveyard spilling into the woods.

Wolfie has started to sniff around the entrance of the  
crypt. Suddenly she disappears down the stone steps.

LOUISE

Wolfie. Wolfie...

But someone is watching her from the bushes. A YOUNG MAN  
(25). His face is thin, his eyes marked by some long  
buried obscenity.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Unrelenting tension as Lakshmi glares at Rachel:

RACHEL

(betrayed)  
...that is not fair.

LAKSHMI

(explosive)  
Fair? What the fuck would you know  
about fair? I have spent the last  
year watching my friends get blown  
to pieces, while the closest you  
get to stress is banging out a few  
words of your non existent novel.

Rachel can't believe this is happening.

LAKSHMI (CONT'D)

(unrelenting)  
You know what I think. I think  
it's all about having the perfect  
excuse to give up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RACHEL

What?

LAKSHMI

(dissecting her)

Yeah that's right. Get married,  
have kids, then who can possibly  
call you a failure anymore?

And that's really hurt.

RACHEL

(dismayed)

How can you say that? You know  
what I've been through.

(beat)

You know I'd almost forgotten how  
cruel, how arrogant you could be.

LAKSHMI

No, that's you Rache.

RACHEL

(angry)

If all you want's a fight then why  
did you come?!

LAKSHMI

(like a sledge  
hammer)

Why did I come? I came because you  
begged me to. Pleaded with me.  
Wrote me a ten page fucking  
letter.

(pulling it from her  
pocket)

Said I was your best friend. That  
little sis needs me. That only  
Lakshmi could sift through the  
bones of your fucked relationship.

(twisting the knife)

Because we both know I'm the  
sister she never had...

RACHEL

(on the verge of  
tears)

What's happened to you?

LAKSHMI

(staring at her)

Oh everything Rache.

(ominous)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LAKSHMI (CONT'D)

Everything...

(beat)

And they even pay me to do it.

(nonchalant)

I think I'll unpack now.

And she scoops up her rucksack and heads to the door, leaving Rachel in a state of despair.

EXT. RUINED CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

The young man continues to watch Louise, closer than before, his face riddled with anxiety. Scars pierce the centre of his palms.

RUTH (O.C.)

(buoyant)

Has she gone inside?

Louise turns, startled.

The young man runs, trampling through the undergrowth.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Sorry. I didn't mean to creep up on you.

(looking at crypt)

I wonder where it leads?

Then a bark, and Wolfie reappears, padding up to Louise. She recoils at the smell.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Maybe it connects to the sewer?

Hold on Louise as we fade out...

FADE IN:

INT. RUTH AND BETH'S ROOM - EVENING

Beth looks towards the fields, to the fair. She closes her eyes, praying to a silent God.

INT. MIA AND GEORGIE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Georgie is fashioning the biggest, baddest hair she can muster.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

GEORGIE  
(admiring herself in  
the mirror)  
Cool, that should scare the shit  
out of 'em.

INT. STAIRS - CONTINUOUS

Ruth is struggling with several bags as Mia comes down,  
dressed in a 1920's Charleston dress.

MIA  
Need a hand?

RUTH  
(stopping)  
Why don't you just say it, you  
think I'm fat?

MIA  
(shaking her head)  
No...

RUTH  
Yes you do, and I make no apology  
for not being a scrawny stick  
insect either. In fact I bet I'm  
the fittest one here. Well maybe  
not Lakshmi, but you certainly. I  
swim, I stretch and I pick up  
babies. D'you have any idea how  
heavy babies are?

And Mia's lost for words.

INT. LAKSHMI'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lakshmi's alone in her room, unpacking. She unwraps  
something from a piece of black cloth...

A GUN.

She stares at it, her intentions unclear.

INT. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Louise tries the handle to the final room, following  
Wolfie inside.

INT. OLD STUDY - CONTINUOUS

Books and antiques litter the wood panelled room. A sixteenth century wardrobe is sunk deep into an alcove.

Louise stares at it, intrigued. Wolfie starts to bark, sniffing round the edges. Louise opens one of the doors.

LAKSHMI (O.C.)  
Careful, might be a witch  
inside...

Louise turns. Lakshmi's standing there, calmer, like there's been some schizophrenic shift in her mood.

LOUISE  
(smiling)  
Or a lion...

A beat.

LOUISE (CONT'D)  
(hopeful)  
Are you coming to the fair?

LAKSHMI  
If you want.

Louise nods, partially closing the wardrobe.

LAKSHMI (CONT'D)  
So big sis's getting married then?

Louise looks away.

LAKSHMI (CONT'D)  
She love him?

LOUISE  
I think she wants a baby...

LAKSHMI  
(half smile)  
That so?

Louise shrugs her shoulders.

LAKSHMI (CONT'D)  
(gentle)  
Hear you've been having a rough  
time...  
(beat)  
Wanna talk about it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Louise shakes her head. Lakshmi smiles, understanding.

LAKSHMI (CONT'D)  
 (glancing at Wolfie)  
 Well you can always tell her.  
 She's a great listener.

INT. SITTING ROOM - A LITTLE LATER

All seven women are there, some holding glasses. Lakshmi winks at Rachel, tension festering...

RACHEL  
 (awkward)  
 I just wanted to say thank you all  
 for coming.  
 (beat)  
 It means everything to me.  
 (beat)  
 I know you've all come along  
 way...

GEORGIE  
 Couldn't be any fucking further  
 from humanity.

Laughter.

RACHEL  
 I'd also like to thank Beth, who  
 found this place.

Rachel nods to her, the others less convinced. They all drink apart from Beth and Ruth.

GEORGIE  
 Come on Beth! You can't pussy out  
 from your own toast.

BETH  
 (emphatic)  
 I don't drink.

LAKSHMI  
 (aggressive)  
 It's a bloody hen do!

But Beth is adamant.

GEORGIE  
 Come on Ruth.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RUTH  
(relenting)  
Oh what the hell...

And she sinks the shot.

MIA  
(presenting a box)  
And this is from us...

RACHEL  
(hesitant)  
Oh God...

GEORGIE  
Stop being so bloody posh and open  
it!

And she does. Inside is a crown of white summer flowers.  
Beautiful.

MIA  
You're our May Queen.

RUTH  
It's August Mia...

RACHEL  
She-Ra more like.

EXT. RUINED CHURCH - A LITTLE LATER

We watch the seven women stroll towards the fair. Some holding hands, others enjoying the warm summer air. Wolfie trails behind with Lakshmi and Louise. The sun is starting to dip, turning the sky into a blood red.