

## "The Rite," or, "The Exorcism of Hannibal Lector"

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Michael Kovak (Colin O'Donoghue), in an attempt to leave behind the family business of being a mortician, decides to get a free ride through college by attending seminary school. As he is about to graduate however he finds out that there is a catch: if Michael decides not to become a priest, his "free ride" turns into a \$100,000 loan. Not particularly faithful but not wanting to pay off such a hefty loan, Michael is unsure of what to do until a member of the college recommends Michael for a special program on exorcism taking place in Italy. After a few days attending the course, the priest in charge, Father Xavier (Ciaran Hinds), decides to cure Michael's skepticism by sending him to Father Lucas (Anthony Hopkins), a particularly capable exorcist. Trailed by a curious reporter named Angeline (Alice Braga), Michael eventually regains his faith after witnessing the possession of a young pregnant woman and confronting a demon that transfers itself to Father Lucas (apparently possession transfers like a disease). After a long drawn out duel of wits with the demon, Michael forces the demon to reveal its name and drives it out of Father Lucas' body.

Michael's doubts and stubborn logic provides a contrast to the piety and firm belief in demons displayed by the priesthood and makes the initial part of the movie much more interesting than the rather generic ending. O' Donoghue is good at brooding, and the many explanations that he uses to explain away the film's symptoms of demonic possession keep the audience leaning towards a more skeptical view point despite the fact that we know, since *the Rite* is a horror movie, there has to be an actual demon in the movie somewhere. Hopkins' performance as Father Lucas resembles a demonically possessed Hannibal Lector while Braga does not receive enough screen time for a viewer to make any judgments about her acting abilities.

By passing on the overt horror and gore displayed in many other movies in the genre, *the Rite* manages to make itself stand out but not enough to warrant any special attention. With more talk and less action than what the average audience wants out of their horror flick, the movie (supposedly based on true events) lacks any real sense of weight. *The Rite* is perhaps a good rental choice for the future but not worth shelling out the money it takes to see it on the big screen.