



Grace in the Shadows

A Groundbreaking Faith-Based Noir Film

Grace in the Shadows is not just another faith-based movie—it's a daring reimagining of Christian cinema. Shot in a striking **noir style**, this powerful film exposes the depths of human sin while revealing the unstoppable light of God's grace in a way never before seen on screen.

Inspired by the true events chronicled in *Murder in the Church*, this story ventures where most Christian films refuse to go—into the raw, unfiltered darkness of deception, betrayal, and brokenness.

At its heart lies the personal testimony of **Pastor Chris J. Schimel**, who courageously shares the painful struggles within his own church community. Through shattered trust and spiritual warfare, his journey reveals a single, timeless truth: **only the love of God can redeem what sin has destroyed.**

Grace in the Shadows is more than a film—it's a wake-up call, a testimony, and a cinematic experience that will challenge and inspire audiences to see God's grace in places they never imagined.

Character Profile: Christina “Christi” Fenwick

Age: 19

Occupation: Clerk – Recent High School Graduate

Christina Fenwick’s first impression is confident, perhaps a bit arrogant. She has dark blonde hair and is about 5’7”. She is outgoing, pretty and desirable for dating by boys her age. And she knows it. She has a wide spectrum of friends. She can be snotty, and is often quick to speak her mind. But she is also very personable and people like to be around her. She would be the leader of any group of girls she was a part of.

Christi is very devoted to and protective of her family. In daily life, she is fun loving. Her life revolves around relationships. She commands attention in any room of her peers. When she isn’t working, she is with friends. She comes home late every night from being with her friends, and goes immediately to bed. She has an artistic ability. She hopes to save money for a year then go to art school. She can be over-confident, and appear over-knowledgeable.

Beneath the surface, perhaps because of the confidence she carries, exists anaivete about the dangers that exist in our world. Or, perhaps she doesn’t want people to think she carries fear. When in fact, what may have been true was, she was very afraid of things. It would seem that the emotional fear that existed in her father, was translated into her outward fear. And, her unwillingness to admit it, was in itself, a kind of fear.

Sides

2 EXT. CHURCH YARD - LATE AFTERNOON

2

Golden light washes the foothills. Maples flame red, aspens quivergold. The church steeple rises modestly, framed by mountains dusted in early snow.

Children chase one another through piles of leaves. A banner flaps across the lawn: Evensong Harvest Celebration.

CHRISTI

Careful, - that guitar's older than you.

FRIEND#1

Yeah, but she still sings. Like me.

They laugh. Friend#1 leans in, fixing the string. Christi's face glows with laughter, youth and possibility.

FRIEND #2

What are we opening with?

CHRISTI

Blessed Assurance. Easy chords. Everybody knows it.

FRIEND#1 strums, her voice rising. Her friends join in, the harmonies sweet and unpolished. The air fills with song - innocent, alive.

Christi breaks into laughter again, tossing her hair. For a moment, she is the Norman Rockwell teen: bright-eyed.

21 INT.- FENWICK KITCHEN, AFTER MIDNIGHT SATURDAY NIGHT 21

Silence reigns, heavy and unyielding.

SARAH stands at the sink, sleeves rolled, rinsing a plate longafter it is clean. Water streams over her knuckles, dripping intothe basin like a metronome. She glances toward the kitchen table.

Elliot's CHAIR sits pushed back, a crumpled napkin abandoned. Thetable still bears the afterglow of the dinner

party – autumn centerpiece, guttered candles, dishes half-cleared.

The scene is at once warm and haunted.

The FRONT DOOR clicks faintly. Footsteps.

CHRISTINA appears in the doorway, jacket draped over one arm, faceflushed from late laughter. Her smile falters at the sight of her mother.

SARAH wipes her wet hands on a towel, gestures to the empty chair.

SARAH

(soft, controlled) Sit down, Christi.

Christi hesitates, arms crossed, then slowly lowers herself into the chair – not Elliot's, but beside it. Her eyes flick to the abandoned napkin, then back to her mother. Sarah sits across from her, folding her hands. Her voice is quiet, deliberate – as if speaking the words aloud makes them real.

SARAH

Your dad... has made his choice. He's leaving. He signed things over to Vince. He won't be coming back.

The kitchen clock TICKS, louder than breath. Christi's eyes widen. She shakes her head hard.

CHRISTI

No. Not Dad. He wouldn't –
He promised families don't quit. He said that,
Mom.

Her voice breaks on the last word. She bites it back.

Christi grips the edge of the table until her knuckles whiten.

Sarah steadies her voice, though her eyes glisten.

SARAH

I know. I wish you were right.
But this time... he didn't choose us. People break
promises. God doesn't.

A silence. Candle wax pools, red against the tablecloth.

Christi rises abruptly, shoving back her chair.

Jonathan swallows, grips the mic tighter. His hand TREMBLES.

JONATHAN

Well... sometimes God lets us walk through the valley of shadows, because that's where the still waters are.

The room stills. Christi lifts her eyes, her voice quiet, trembling at the edges.

CHRISTI

But... why does He let it hurt so much... first?

A ripple moves through the teens – an uneasy shifting of chairs. Jonathan exhales, his voice soft, almost prayer.

JONATHAN

Well...the Bible says he is always near. That means, He is with us in our pain...which probably also means, He feels it with us.

Christi bites her lip, nods faintly – not convinced, not combative.

CHRISTI

I just... wish He'd fix it sooner.

Jonathan lowers his eyes. The MIC HUMS faint feedback.

JONATHAN

So do I, Christi. So do I.

The silence thickens. Christi looks down at her folded hands
– fragile, restless.

Sarah sitting across from young Christi moves over to her pew and puts her hand on her back. Sarah's voice steady, warm.

SARAH

Honey, He hasn't forgotten us. The Lord is close to the brokenhearted. If we lean on Him – we won't fall.

Christi's eyes glistens, and she softly, whispers:

CHRISTI

But Dad doesn't believe that. Why should I?

A shabby living room: ashtray, drawn blinds. ELLIOT FENWICK sits rigid on a sagging couch. VINCE LUPIN looms just behind him, one hand casually resting on Elliot's shoulder – possessive, proprietary. The other hand lifts the RINGING PHONE.

Vince answers, hits SPEAKER, never losing the smirk. His hand tightens slightly on Elliot's shoulder.

VINCE

(smooth, mocking) Well...good morning.

Christi's eyes narrow.

CHRISTI (A)

I'm not talking to you. Put Dad on.

A beat. Vince says nothing – just watches Elliot. Elliot swallows. His voice trembles.

ELLIOT (B)

Christi... Honey, this isn't–

Christi cuts him off, her tone hard but steady.

CHRISTI (A)

No excuses, Dad. I'll see you alone.

On B, Elliot's eyes flick toward Vince. Vince doesn't move, but his smirk thins to a cold line. The hand on Elliot's shoulder squeezes once – firm.

Elliot stares at the phone, trapped. A long silence.

Finally, he nods – small, almost imperceptible – under Vince's gaze.

ELLIOT (B)

(barely audible)

Okay.

Christi hears only the hush of the line. Her jaw clenches. She grips the cross tighter.

SPLIT SCREEN HOLDS – the distance between them, the choice made.

CUT TO BLACK.

27 EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX PARKING LOT – SUNDAY AFTERNOON 27

Heat shimmers over cracked asphalt. The low-rise BLOCK looms heavy, balconies cluttered with towels, beer cans, forgotten toys. TRAFFIC roars beyond the fence, relentless.

CHRISTINA's compact car SCREECHES in. Tires bite gravel. She slams the door — BANG — and strides across the lot, keys clenched like a blade.

By a dented VAN:

ELLIOT stands rigid, eyes darting.

VINCE leans against the sliding door, arms folded — a wall of muscle and stillness.

His smirk is faint, hungry.

A SEMI blasts past — HOOONK — rattling the air.

CHRISTI

(shouting, pointing) Back off!

Vince doesn't flinch. He shifts one deliberate step, planting himself squarely between father and daughter.

Christi closes the distance, breath sharp, eyes locked on Elliot.

CHRISTI

Dad. Tell me. What's going on? Why him? Why now?

Another TRUCK ROARS past — drowning Elliot's silence.

CLOSE ON: Elliot's face — sweat beads his temple. His lips move, but his eyes flick sideways to Vince.

CHRISTI

(pleading, louder)

Say it to me. Look me in the eye — I need to hear it from you.

Elliot's jaw works. His voice cracks, thin.

ELLIOT

I... don't know who I am anymore. But when he's here... I feel less... lost.

Vince's hand slides onto Elliot's shoulder, slow, possessive. His eyes never leave Christi.

Christi steps forward, fearless, voice breaking.

CHRISTI

He's not saving you, Dad. He's stealing you.

Pain flickers in Elliot's eyes. He half-lifts a hand toward her.

ELLIOT

You were always my brave one.
I wanted to protect you... but now—

Vince leans, shadow falling across them both. His voice low, silken.

VINCE

Careful, little girl.
The world's not always what it seems. Lets just leave it there for all of our sake.

Christi's chin lifts. She refuses to break.

CHRISTI

Dad?

The word hangs. Elliot's face collapses – torn between daughter and predator.

ELLIOT

(whisper, ashamed) I'm sorry, Christina.

The line lands like a slap. Christi's face crumples. She reaches–But Elliot recoils. For a heartbeat, he forces a stiff, empty hug. Then peels away.

Vince slides the VAN DOOR – SHHHUNK. He climbs in, smirk thinning, eyes still on her. Elliot follows, head bowed.

Christi SLAMS her fist against the metal – THUD. Her mouth opens in a scream, but a PASSING TRUCK devours the sound.

ENGINE IGNITES. The van lurches, spraying dust. Taillights smear red through the haze.

Christi stands alone in the settling dust, trembling. Small. Defiant. Silent.

HOLD – until the lot is empty, traffic rushing on indifferently.

CUT TO BLACK.

29 INT. FENWICK HOUSE – CHRISTINA' S BEDROOM – SUNDAY NIGHT 29

A small lamp glows. Posters quilt the walls.

The CROSS NECKLACE rests against Christi's collarbone.

She sits at her vanity, brushing her hair in mechanical strokes.

The BRUSH ticks like a metronome.

In the MIRROR: her face split by a hairline crack – brave on one side, fragile on the other.

Maggie appears in the doorway, her reflection hovering over Christi's shoulder.

CHRISTI

(flat, bitter)

He left us. Just... walked away.

She doesn't look at Maggie – only at her fractured reflection.

MAGGIE

(quiet, steady) And how does that feel?

Christi snorts, brushing harder.

CHRISTI

Like we were never enough. Like he chose... everything else over us.

The brush slows. Christi studies the crack in the mirror.

CHRISTI (CONT'D)

Maybe Mom saw it coming. But me? I feel stupid. I never thought he'd... quit.

Her hand trembles, bristles scraping louder. Maggie crosses the room, perches gently on the bed.

MAGGIE

Sometimes people wear masks. Strong. Certain. Content. But underneath – there's fear. And fear makes liars of us all.

Christi's lip quivers. She won't let tears fall.

CHRISTI

Then what's real? If everything's a mask... what's left?

Maggie leans closer, voice calm, low.

MAGGIE

What's real... is love. Your mother's for you. God's, for you. That's a cord no storm can cut.

Christi's free hand curls on the vanity edge, knuckles white.

CHRISTI

Dad's always there. Even when he's gone – I feel him. Like a shadow I can't escape.

Maggie sets a hand on her shoulder – anchor, mentor.

MAGGIE

Then we'll watch together. You don't have to carry this alone.

For the first time, Christi's reflection glistens – the fragile side breaking through. She brushes again, slower, steadier.

Maggie rises, slips quietly to the door. Christi's reflection follows her –

two versions of herself caught in the crack of glass. The brush's rhythm softens.

The lamp hums. Shadows stretch long across the floor.

37 INT./ EXT. FENWICK HOUSE - LIVING ROOM- MONDAY AFTERNOON 37

Flat daylight filters through blinds. The kitchen is too still. A wall CLOCK ticks loud. On the table: SARAH FENWICK's yellow PAD. Words half-scrawled: "Vince controls him. Elliot whispered: won't let me out of sight." The pencil TIP SNAPS. She drops it.

A KNOCK rattles the back door. Sarah jumps.

She opens it. JONATHAN and MAGDALENA step in from the path, coats damp with wind. Jonathan carries his notebook; Maggie her bag. They join Sarah at the table. The PAD lies face-down.

The CLOCK ticks, relentless. Outside, unseen: VINCE paces into and out of frame, a dark metronome.

HOLD on the three of them at the table, listening to the silence they've chosen.

SARAH
Christi... we need your voice in this.

CHRISTI
(bristling) Why? You're the mom.
If you want the police—call them.

Jonathan steps forward, voice low, pastoral but urgent.

JONATHAN
We see something else, Christi. Vince is tightening his grip.
Your father—he isn't himself. We don't know this man. We don't know what he's capable of.

Christi smirks faintly, arms crossed.

CHRISTI
I'm not afraid of him.

Sarah's hand trembles at her side.

SARAH
But I am. And I need you to stand with me.

Christi exhales sharply. Her smirk falters.

CHRISTI
Fine. Call the police.

She storms past, yanking her backpack free from the couch.
Jonathan's eyes flick toward Sarah. Sarah rises to follow.

CUT TO:

38 INT. FENWICK HOUSE - CHRISTINA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS 38

The hallway light slices SARAH's face in half as she sits on the edge of the bed. Posters loom muted in shadow.

Christi lies on her back, eyes fixed on the ceiling.
Silence hangs heavy.