



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: Sarah Fenwick

Age: Late 40s

Occupation: Hair Dresser – Housewife

Sarah Fenwick is a very kind and sincere lady. She is a little naïve in her perceptions of life. She has a full head of red hair, is of normal build and always wears her hair perfectly combed. She often asks simple questions and is best satisfied with simple answers.

In daily life Sarah can usually be found in her hair salon, located in her family's remodeled garage for that purpose. She has a very loyal clientele who come to her for hair-dressing. She is very faithful to take a brisk walk to be sure she is healthy and in fair shape. She is very evangelistic-minded. She always seems to be inviting someone to church whom she feels needs the Lord.

She has a very sound relationship with the Lord and is quite conscious of her walk with God in her every-day life. Because of this, she is receptive to her spiritual leaders. She would trust them to help her through a legal crisis before she would trust a lawyer. However, since she is a bit naïve, she can be prone to being influenced by stronger personalities as well, especially women.

Sides

4 INT. FELLOWSHIP HALL - KITCHEN - SAME

4

SARAH FENWICK (40s, graceful, practical) kneads pie dough at along table. Flour dusts her apron. Beside her, MAGDALENA "MAGGIE" BRANT (50s, gentle yet keen-eyed) arranges casseroles with other church women. Their chatter is light, domestic.

SARAH

If the men keep building benches and tables, we'll need twice as much food.

MAGGIE

Good. A hungry church is a happy church.

They laugh. A red ribbon dangles, fluttering in the breeze from an open window, unnoticed from Maggie's Bible on the counter, brushing the floor.

Their laughter mingles with the clatter of trays. Behind them, windows glow with late sun. It feels safe, timeless.

7 INT. FENWICK HOUSE - DINING ROOM - EVENING

7

Warm light glows. A table dressed with fall leaves in a jar, a meager but carefully arranged meal: chicken thighs, bread, applesauce. SARAH serves with quiet care. ELLIOT sits stiffly, rubbing his lower back, weary from the day's work.

The mantel is trimmed with pumpkins and a harvest wreath. Norman Rockwell surface. The silence is heavy. Forks scrape. Sarah gathers courage.

SARAH

(soft, careful)

Elliot... Christi wants to go on the youth trip--A week in Mexico, building houses. The other girls are signing up. I'd love for her to go. It would be good for her, you know, and her relationship with the Lord.

She sets down her fork, searching his face.

SARAH (CONT'D)

I told her we'd pray about it. But... there's a deposit. Soon.

Elliot stops chewing. His eyes tighten.

ELLIOT

(flat, weary)

Money again. Always money.

Sarah leans forward gently, voice soft, not pushing.

SARAH

I just thought... maybe if business picks up—Vince seems to be helping...

SMASH FLASHBACK

9 INT. FENWICK HOUSE - DINING ROOM - EVENING

9

Elliot's fork clatters against the plate. His eyes burn, seeing not Sarah, but the shadow of his father.

ELLIOT

(voice rising)

So now I'm too stupid to provide? Is that it?

Sarah flinches, startled.

SARAH

Elliot—no. That's not what I—

11 INT. FENWICK HOUSE - DINING ROOM - EVENING

11

Elliot jolts back. He pushes back from the table, chair legs scraping harsh against the floor.

ELLIOT

(angry, pained)

Every time. You don't see what I do. You don't see how hard I work — just not enough.

Sarah's eyes glisten, her voice breaking.

SARAH

(pleading)

I only wanted to help Christi

ELLIOT His jaw clenches. His breath is ragged.

He can't separate Sarah's concern from his father's scorn.

He snatches his jacket from the back of the chair, storming toward the door.

SARAH

(quiet, aching)

Elliot... when did we get so far apart?

DOOR SLAMS. The sound reverberates unnaturally long, like in his flashback.

16 INT. FENWICK HOUSE - DINING ROOM - SATURDAY EVENING 16

The room glows warmly. Candles flicker in mismatched holders, and leaves and gourds decorate the table. The table is set with roast chicken, steaming vegetables, and glasses of iced tea. GUESTS laugh, chatter overlapping, and silverware clinks. Plates of steaming food are passed, laughter layered over the clink of silverware.

ELLIOT sits at the head of the table with a practiced smile. At his right is SARAH, glowing with hostess pride. Next to her is CHRISTI, hair neatly brushed, though her eyes wander, restless.

Across: PASTOR JONATHAN and MAGDALENA, genial, engaged, hands folded politely.

At Elliot's left: VINCE LUPIN. The CAMERA glides along the table, faces glowing in warm lamplight – until it finds VINCE LUPIN. A collared shirt, sleeves rolled. He carves the roast with ease, laughing at a story Jonathan tells, passing the platter with a charming nod. He sits too still. His smile is precise, his eyes calculating. A shadow from the storm-darkened window cuts across his face, deepening the hollows.

SARAH

(raising her glass, beaming)

The door shuts. Silence settles. Only SARAH, ELLIOT, and VINCE remain. A fire snaps low in the hearth.

The room looks postcard-perfect.

SARAH gathers plates, humming faintly. She glances at Elliot
– tired, but cordial.

SARAH

Well... that went well. Everyone seemed–

ELLIOT

(cutting in, flat) Sarah...could you sit down?

She pauses. His tone freezes her. She sets the plates aside, wipes her hands on her apron, and sits across from him at the table.

VINCE lingers in the doorway to the hall, silent, arms folded. Candlelight flickers across his face, unreadable.

ELLIOT

(halting)

I've... made some decisions. About the business.
About... us.

Sarah blinks, leans in slightly.

ELLIOT

I've signed papers tonight. Vince... will be half-owner. Starting now.

SARAH

(steady, low) Half owner?

ELLIOT

(pressing, sharper now)

He's earned it. He understands things I don't.
He'll help keep it afloat.

Silence. The fire pops. Sarah's hands tighten on the edge of the table.

ELLIOT

(voice tightening)

And... I can't go on here, Sarah. Not like this.
I'm filing for a divorce.

Her breath catches — but she does not flinch.

ELLIOT

I'll come back for the rest of my things tomorrow.
And you'll need... to sign these divorce papers.

The word lands heavy.

Warm lamplight, autumn décor, a family home glowing. But behind Elliot, VINCE stands like a shadow sentry, the wolf already inside. Behind Sarah, the fire flickers like a host of unseen wings.

Sarah exhales slowly. When she speaks, her tone is calm, impossibly even.

SARAH

You waited until tonight. You could not even let me have this night.
You had to... If that is your choice... then take leave.

Elliot rises too quickly, relief almost visible. He avoids her eyes. Vince steps back, clearing the hall like a bodyguard. Elliot passes, gathers a duffel, returns.

Vince waits at the door.

Elliot hesitates, guilt flickering. He bends, brushes Sarah's cheek with a stiff, cold kiss.

ELLIOT

(quiet, hollow) Goodnight.

The front door opens – WIND gusts. For an instant, VINCE turns back. The light fractures his grin into something sharp, feral.

The door SLAMS shut.

SARAH'S hand rests on the table beside the unsigned divorce papers. Behind her, the family photo hangs: Sarah, Elliot, Christi, frozen in happier summer light.

A single tear swells, but does not fall. SFX –The CLOCK
TICKS, louder and louder.

Sarah reaches, lifts the phone from the cradle. Her lips move into the silence.

We hear only muffled fragments of her broken words.

CAMERA PUSHES IN on her face – drained, hollow, but holding.

FADE TO BLACK.

20 INT. CHURCH SANCTUARY – CONTINUOUS

20

The sanctuary doors stand unlocked, always open. Silence presses, deep, reverent.

Sarah enters, walks the aisle slowly, as though under invisible weight. At the altar rail she sinks to her knees.

The divorce papers tremble in her hand. She lays it beneath the open Bible, like an unwanted offering.

SARAH

(whispering, breaking)

Lord... what do I do? He says it's finished. He's given himself away. Signed his name beside another's. And I—I don't know if I'm wife... or stranger now.

Her voice trails off into silence. FOOTSTEPS. Shadows moving.

MAGDALENA appears first, shawl wrapped tight, followed by PASTOR JONATHAN. They approach softly.

MAGGIE

We heard the door. Knew it was you.

Jonathan kneels beside Sarah at the rail. His eyes search hers.

JONATHAN

Tell us.

Sarah steadies herself, voice low but unflinching.

SARAH

After everyone left... he said he's leaving. He wants a divorce. And Vince—(beat, forced steady) — he's made him partner. In the business. In everything.

A long silence. Maggie presses her hand over Sarah's trembling one. Jonathan's voice carries, quiet, measured — the first taste of his inner narration.

JONATHAN VO

CHRISTINA appears in the doorway, jacket draped over one arm, face flushed 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.

CHRISTI

(pleading, furious) Please...don't preach at me.
Not tonight. I don't believe it. I can't, not sure I ever did.

She storms upstairs. Each footfall echoes like a verdict.

On the table:

- A half-eaten CAKE, untouched.
- Two mugs of coffee, cold.
- A folder of CHRISTI'S NOTES, edges curled, ink jagged.

SARAH sits rigid, hands folded tight in her lap. Across from her: PASTOR JONATHAN and MAGDALENA. Their coats still on, as though they came running.

For a long beat, none speak.

Jonathan picks up the notes, scanning quickly. His eyes darken.

Jonathan exhales, voice quiet but edged.

JONATHAN

This isn't just sin. It's siege.

Sarah's lips part, trembling.

SARAH

He... he comes and goes. Not always when I'm here. Sometimes... when Christi is.

Her hand shakes as she gestures toward the back door. Mud tracks streak the linoleum. They fade halfway across the floor, vanishing into shadow.

Maggie leans forward, steady, luminous.

MAGGIE

He wants you afraid. Small. That's his hold. Don't give it to him. This house is yours. Your daughter is yours.

Sarah clenches her jaw.

SARAH

He's already taken too much. But I can't lose Christi. She is so confused now. She doesn't know if she should blame Vince, her dad or God. But mostly her dad and God seem to be her preference now.

Jonathan lowers the notes, his voice shifting – half reflection, half prayer.

JONATHAN (V.O.)

How did we miss him?

He smiled in our pews. Broke bread at our table. And I... I thought Vince was a lost man. But, there are shadows that wear borrowed light.

JONATHAN

Lord... unmask the lies of the enemy. Guard your people. Scatter the shadows.

A silence falls. The CLOCK ticks.

SARAH and JONATHAN sit at the kitchen table, heads bowed,
MAGDALENA "MAGGIE" BRANT is about to join them in prayer.
TheFRONT DOOR creaks. CHRISTINA "CHRISTI" FENWICK slips in,
damp from the night air, face drawn tight.
Sarah rises half a step, but Maggie catches her arm.

MAGGIE
Let me.

Sarah nods, sinking back down. Jonathan watches as Maggie
ascends the stairs.

31 INT. CHURCH STUDY - MONDAY MORNING

31

SUPER: DAY THREE - MONDAY

A wall CLOCK ticks, loud in the stillness. PASTOR JONATHAN
sits behind his desk.

MAGDALENA works in the outer office, Bible open on her
desk.

The door creaks. SARAH slips in. She doesn't sit
immediately- just stands, hollow-eyed, arms crossed, then
forces herself into the chair opposite Jonathan. MAGDALENA
follows her in. A long pause. The ticking clock.

SARAH
(voice low, frayed)
I think... there's more. Vince isn't just living
with him. He's controlling Elliot.

Jonathan leans forward, pen poised over a yellow pad.

JONATHAN
Controlling-how? What did you see?

32 INT. FENWICK HOUSE - DINNER - SATURDAY NIGHT

32

FLASH IMAGE - Sarah's memory, Saturday night:

Elliot at the dinner table, glancing sideways to Vince before
he speaks. Vince gives the tiniest nod. Elliot answers. Words
inaudible.

SARAH

After dinner—he wouldn't answer me. Not until Vince gave him permission. Jonathan writes a single word: permission.

JONATHAN

And what else did you notice?

FLASH IMAGE — living room, later: Elliot's eyes cling to Vince. Vince never looks at Sarah. He only watches Elliot.

SARAH

When they came back from being outside. Elliot's eyes stayed on him. And Vince—he watched every word. Like a guard.

Maggie's knuckles whiten on her Bible. Jonathan underlines "guard".

JONATHAN

Christi's seen this too?

SARAH

She told me herself. Said Vince is always... there. Hovering. Wedging himself between them. And Elliot—he didn't fight. He's always been fierce for Christi. But this time... he was soft. Afraid.

Jonathan hesitates—Father Brown investigator faltering into pastor.

JONATHAN

It could be shame. Different choices. Or... something more.

Sarah steadies herself, then leans in, urgent.

SARAH

Jonathan—yesterday. The dentist's office. He called. Whispered fast.

FLASH IMAGE — an answering machine spinning: Elliot's hissed whisper.

ELLIOT (V.O., recorded)

Vince has my phone. Won't let me out of sight. He listens when I call. So I can't say what I want—only what's safe. Only what he wants.

Back in the study, Jonathan stiffens. He writes one word: "possessed".

A silence. Sarah forces the final words, trembling.

SARAH

When Vince is there...nearby, close. Elliot speaks with another man's voice. I don't need to see them. I know.

The room holds still. The wall clock ticks louder.

Maggie lowers her eyes to her Bible, fingers pressed to Romans 8. Jonathan sets down his pen.

JONATHAN (V.O.)

I asked myself, Did nothing seem unusual?
No...except his eyes.

34 INT./ EXT. FENWICK HOUSE - FOYER / PORCH -

34

Muted light spills across scuffed tile. The house holds its breath.

In the HALLWAY MIRROR, SARAH stands half in shadow, arms braced, eyes fixed.

ELLIOT stuffs shirts into an open DUFFEL. His movements are hurried, jerky.

VINCE fills the doorway behind him, body blocking half the light, his stillness coiled, watchful. The ZIPPER rasps shut. Elliot glances up—via reflection. His broken half-smile flickers like apology.

Sarah doesn't move. Her hand presses flat against the wall, knuckles white. Finally, she steps into the open. Voice low, firm.

SARAH

Not him. Not in my house. I want him out of my house.

Elliot falters, duffel half-slung. Vince tilts his head, faint grin curdling.

VINCE

(soft, mocking)

This is Elliot's house too. He wants me here. Not you.

SARAH

(locks eyes, cold)

Elliot! He is the other woman. A thief. A homewrecker. Step across this threshold—I call the police.

A silence, taut as wire. Wind rattles the shutter.

Vince freezes. Rage flickers—then something else, a flicker of fear. He recalibrates. Retreats a step. Begins to PACE on the porch, circling like a caged animal, boots crunching leaves.

Elliot slips inside the door, trembling. His whisper cracks.

ELLIOT

(hoarse, breaking) Sarah... I do love you.

Sarah steadies, breath catching. She presses a folded NOTE into his palm—scripture verses, handwritten.

SARAH

Keep them. Read later.

Elliot tucks it into his pocket, eyes shining, then glances toward Vince's pacing shadow across the glass.

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-scribbled: "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.

SARAH

(blurts, low)

Do you think we need the police? If Vince is pressing Elliot... won't it make things worse?

Jonathan leans forward, urgent but measured.

JONATHAN

Sarah... the police have power we don't. He's on parole. Maybe breaking it now. One word—one violation— and he's back inside.

Sarah's gaze flicks to the curtained window. Leaves scrape siding.

SARAH

And Christi... Before we do anything... I want her voice in this. She's his daughter.

Jonathan exhales, fists curling, then unclenching.

JONATHAN

This feels dangerous.
Too dangerous for silence.

Maggie covers Sarah's trembling hand.

MAGGIE

And too dangerous for you to carry alone.

A faint CRACK outside — like glass breaking. The three glance toward the window. Only shadows. Jonathan steps out onto the patio. He pulls out his phone, considering calling the police. From the woods — a RUSTLE. Birds erupt skyward, wings thrashing. Between the trunks: a darker SHAPE. Still. Watching. Then gone. Jonathan grips the phone tighter, heart pounding.

JONATHAN

(whisper, to himself)
...what was that?

He stares into the trees — empty, indifferent — then turns back inside, shutting the door soft. He sets the phone on the table beside Sarah, conceding.

JONATHAN

(quiet, conceding) OK, we'll wait for Christi.

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.