THE EXORCISM DESCRIBED IN JAMES WAN’S FILM THE CONJURING

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Abstract: The paper entitled “The Exorcism described in James Wan’s Film, The Conjuring” has an objective to describe a problem dealing with demonic possessed and exorcism. The object used here is a horror film, since the whole tension of the story is about misery and haunted. Exorcism is a spiritual practice used to help people who experiences demonic possessed. Lorraine and Ed as the main characters here are described as demonologists or paranormal investigators who help the Perron’s family from the demonic possessed. The terror happened in the old haunted house in Rhode Island brings Carolyn, Peron’s wife into a mental illness and it cannot be handled by a doctor’s hand except a spiritual practice like exorcism. After it has been approved by the Priest of the church, finally the exorcism was done by the demonologist or paranormal investigators Lorraine and Ed. They are described as the main character of the story. During the exorcism they experience both internal and external conflict and it develops becomes the potential conflict. The tension of the story is finally resolved when the main characters did the spiritual practice/the exorcism well. Finally it can be seen that problems dealing with the demonic possessed only can be handed by the spiritual practice like exorcism

Key words: exorcism, demonologist, demonic possessed,

Nowadays, many people still believe in supra-natural, like fortune telling, spirit calling even exorcism. It happens not only in an uncivilized society, but also happens in a modern society. They do still believe that the exorcism can solve the problems related to the demonic possessed. Usually, a person who is in a demonic possessed will do everything unconsciously. He or she doesn’t realize what he or she is doing, and it is dangerous since it can give a bad impact towards people around him or her. Exorcism is needed to overcome the problem dealing with this mental or psychological illness.

Based on Catholic Encyclopedia the exorcism “is the act of driving out, or warding off, demons, or evil spirits, from persons, places, or things, which are believed to be possessed or infested by them, or are liable to become victims or instruments of their malice; (2) the means employed for this purpose, especially the solemn and authoritative adjuration of the demon, in the name of God, or any of the higher power in which he is subject” (Catholic Encyclopedia). In the exorcism people usually experiences some
psychological symptom like mental or psychological illness. Exorcism also brings a person into unconsciousness which lead him/her to be the one outside him or her. Exorcism can be dangerous not only for the victim, but also for anyone in the room. Exorcism must be done with paranormal investigators who know well about this ritual. When exorcism is not well done, it will give a bad impact especially towards a person who is influenced by devil or Satan.

*The Conjuring* is a film which tells the reader or viewers about the exorcism. The genre of this film is horror, since this film exposes much about something dealing with Satan, demonic possessed, so that is why the exorcism is needed to overcome the demonic possessed. Based on [www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com) this film won many awards, like Best Horror Film from Academy of Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror Films, USA, 2014; won as The Best Wide-Released Film, James Wan and Best Supporting Actress, Lily Taylor given by Fangoria Chainsaw Awards, 2014. It also won best make up, best special effects, best actress, Vera Farmiga, and best actor, Patrick Wilson.

The fact that happened in 1971 inspired James Wan to produce this film as the main topic, and it shows that *The Conjuring* is a movie adapted from the true story and presented into a horror imagination. The story began when a couple, Carolyn and Roger moved their family into an old farmhouse in Rhode Island with their daughters Andrea, Nancy, Christine, Cindy and April. They seemed happy for the first time they moved to that old house, until one day the family found a hidden basement whose the entrance was locked by planks. They also found another strange things happened around them, besides they are also haunt by strange noises and ghost. Carolyn started feeling uncomfortable because of the haunted. Carolyn met the famous paranormal investigators, Lorraine (Vera Farmiga) and Ed (Patrick Wilson). Together with their friends Drew and Brad, Lorraine and Ed collected the evidence to convince the church that it was necessary to do an exorcism to save the Peron Family from the evil. ([www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com)).

This film presents the story with a good plot which is composed into a good sequence or order into one thematic level. *The Conjuring* gives us the fact dealing about the haunted, demonic possessed and the exorcism could happen around us. This mental or psychological illness cannot be handled by the doctor’s help or another paramedic. This demonic possessed can be overcome by the ritual which is called exorcism. Like what we see in *The Conjuring*, to run the exorcism, the paranormal investigators should consult and convince the church whether exorcism is needed or not. From this, it can be see that exorcism has a relation with religion. Believing in God is important in exorcism since everything happened dealing with demonic possessed is also a God’s will. The Holly Book like *The Bible* for Christian and Catholic, *Al Qur’an* for Moslem, and the others are needed to guide the exorcism. From this we also see that people cannot do the exorcism without the ability and the understanding about demonic possessed and haunted. *The Conjuring* tells much about the fact mentioned above. By watching this film we get a lot of experience about haunted, demonic possessed and especially exorcism, besides, this film also is able to
send the author’s message that might be useful for viewers or readers. With a good sound effect, good make up and good actors and actresses, this film brings its viewers into the real situation.

Based on the above reason, the writer decides to discuss “Exorcism Described in James Wan’s Film, The Conjuring” as the main topic of the discussion. It is hoped by reading this paper people will know why the exorcism is needed, when it is needed, and how to solve the problem dealing with demonic possessed in a good way, with the best result.

**Film-The Conjuring**

**Awards**

Klarer (1999) divides literary genre into poetry play, prose and film. As one of the literary genres, film also has an objective to send a message from a literary work to the readers. Film also contains a story, plot, character, conflict and setting, which is fictitious into one thematic level. Watching a film is the same as reading a novel for example. The difference is on the way how the readers/viewers grab the content of the story. It will be easier than reading novel, drama and poetry. The Conjuring is a film which is categorized into a horror film based on the genre, directed by James Wan.

**Synopsis**

According to [www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com) the film written by Chad Hayes, Carey Hayes tells about Carolyn and Roger Peron who move into a dilapidated, old farmhouse in Harrisville, Rhode Island with their five daughters. The setting of time in this film is in 1971. One night, the children play a game called hide-and-clap, and in the middle of the game one of them finds the boarded up entrance to a cellar. Carolyn feels strange since the dog is barking outside and suddenly one of her daughters shouts from the bedroom because she feels someone pilling at her feet. In the morning Carolyn wake up and she was shocked because she finds the dog, Sadie is found dead. Over the next couple of days, the strange occur in the house like the doors open and close seemingly by themselves, Carolyn hears clapping when nobody is there. Her daughters, Cindy esleeepwalks into the eldest daughters’ bedroom. This activity develops in the eldest daughter being attacked by a spirit that looks like an elderly woman. This situation makes Carolyn seeks the help, and she finally meets the paranormal investigators or demonologist, Lorraine and Ed Warren. Entering the house, Lorraine feels a particular malevolent spirit has latched on the family. Lorraine and Ed conduct the investigation by collecting evidences dealing with demonic possessed. However, this cannot be done without an authorization from the Catholic Church.

In the same source it is told that during the process of researching the house history, Ed and Lorraine find out that the house belonged to an accused witch, Bathsheba. When Bathsheba’s husband caught her sacrificing their week-old infant, she climbed to the top of a tree on the property, cursed all those who would take her
land, and proclaimed her love for Satan before committing suicide. Bathsheba possesses Carolyn and uses her to kill her children since her purpose is to possess mothers and kill their children and sacrifice to Satan. The Exorcism is done by Ed and Lorraine in the house when Carolyn is under Bathsheba and tries to kill one of her daughter, April. Before the exorcism, Ed suggests Lorraine to call a priest, but she thinks it is too far away. Lorraine forces Ed to perform the exorcism himself. When the paranormal investigators perform the exorcism Carolyn seemingly stops struggling, and for a brief moment it seems that the exorcism is successfully performed, but it doesn’t either. Suddenly, the chair flips over end and she is held upside down. Ed yells for the demon to put her down. Ed tells the demon to leave her body, but Carolyn slowly turns to Ed and says, “She’s already gone”. Meanwhile, Drew finds April hiding under the floorboards in the kitchen, and he yells down the cellar that he found her. This alert makes the demon inside the Carolyn’s body run to find April to complete the sacrifice. Ed and Lorraine soon follow this and continue the exorcism by reading the holy words from the Catholic Holly Book, The Bible. Lorraine reaches down the floor and grabs Carolyn head, reminding her how much her family means to her. After Ed shouted ‘Bathsheba’ and commands her to leave the body and how Lorraine reminds Carolyn about her family, finally it works. This seems to get through to Carolyn, as her face relaxes, and her breathing returns to normal. The demonic presence in her eyes seems to fade, and she puts April down.

The scene changes to Carolyn being helped out of the front door to a now sunny morning, and her skin fade away and she returns to her normal self. Roger and Carolyn are happy with their children in front of the yard, knowing that it is finally over.

Based on the synopsis above, it is described the process of exorcism as a paranormal ritual is done well, with the demonologist or paranormal investigators with the specific reason.

**Dramatic Structure**

Boogs states that the art of storytelling whether in the short story, novel, drama or film, always depends on the strong of dramatic structure (1985:40) That is the arrangement of parts aesthetically, and logically in order to achieve the maximum emotional and dramatic impact. Both patterns contain the same elements like *exposition, complication, climax, and resolution or denouement*. In a literary text, dramatic structure is usually called plot, which presents the chronological of a story into one thematic level. Dramatic structure is used to describe the main idea which is grabbed in a story of a film. In the dramatic structure of a film we will see the step of the story starts from the beginning till the end. Mario Klarer states that:

*Plot is the logical interaction of the various thematic elements of a text which lead to a change of the original situation as presented at the outset of the narrative. An ideal traditional plot line encompasses the following four sequential levels: Exposition-complication-climax or turning point-resolution. The *exposition* or presentation of the initial situation is*
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...disturbed by a **complication** or conflict which produces suspense and eventually lead to a climax, crisis or turning point. The **climax** is followed by a **resolution** of the complication (French denouement), with which the text usually ends (1999:15)

The dramatic structure in James Wan’s *The Conjuring* is divided into **exposition, complication, climax, and resolution.** It describes the chronological of the story from the beginning till the end in one thematic level. The following dramatic structure and figures describes the exorcism in *The Conjuring*:

**Exposition: The beginning of the Story-The Peron’s Family Move to Harrisville, Rhode Island, 1971**

Based on the above figures, the story begins when Carolyn and Roger Peron with their five daughters move in an old farmhouse in Harrisville, Rhode Island. The setting of time is in 1971. In the beginning they seem happy about that. On the other hand, the dog, Sally suddenly rejects to come into the house, and it is something unusual. When the daughters are playing hide-and-clap, they found the boarded up entrance to a cellar. From here the story begins. The following figure shows when Roger finds the boarded up entrance to a cellar.
Complication: The Situation When Conflicts and Problems Begin Appear.

In this sequence, the conflict and the main problem of the story begin. In the morning Carolyn wakes up and she finds a bruise on her legs. She also notices all clocks in the house stop at 03:07 am. Suddenly Carolyn and Roger were shock with April’s cry about the dog, Sadie’s death. The unusual thing keeps going in the house, and it bothers the family. Cindy is sleepwalking, and hitting her head on the cupboard in Andrea’s room, Roger finds another bruise on Carolyn’s back, April talk to her mysterious friend, Christine wakes up in the night because someone grabs and pulls on her leg, she cries out because there is someone wants the family to die, and This activity develops in the eldest daughter being attacked by a dark spirit that looks like an elderly woman. This situation can be shown in the following figures.

Figure 2a
Carolyn finds a bruise on her leg in the morning
03:07am

Figure 2b
Carolyn notices the clock stopped at

Figure 2a
Cindy in her sleepwalking
back

Figure 2d
Roger finds another a bruise on Carolyn’s

Figure 2e
Christine tells that someone wants her family dead
In the part of Complication, the demon keeps on going bothering the Peron’s family in the haunted house with the incidents like mentioned above. This makes the family depressed and anxious since the dark spirit’s terror keeps on going. The children is scared, Carolyn gets depressed since the bruise on her body is getting bigger and worse. People who experienced this anxiety usually also impacts on his/her mental illness. The psychological disorder which is caused by demonic spirit terrors makes someone experience the mental illness like anxious, frightened, depressed, and shocked. This situation motivates Carolyn to seek the paranormal investigators to overcome the problem in her house. Finally she meets Lorraine and Ed Warren, the demonologist or paranormal investigators in Massachusetts Western University.

**Climax: The Paranormal Investigation and Exorcism Described in The Conjuring.**

Carolyn meets Ed Warren and Lorraine when they are giving a lecture about exorcism in Massachusetts Western University. She tells everything dealing with the incidents happened in her haunted house. Ed Warren rejects this for the first time, but after considering Carolyn’s description about her daughters finally Lorraine agrees to help her.

The investigation starts with Ed and Lorraine visit to Peron’s family. Lorraine felt something like demonic activity in the house but she didn’t tell this to Carolyn. The smell of rotting meat around the house is also told by Carolyn, and it is stated by Ed that it indicates the demonic activity. The following dialog and figure shows the description:

The following dialogue is a conversation between Carolyn and Ed Warren dealing with the above figures:

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517
00:47:03,696 --> 00:47:09,035
There's this awful smell, like rotting meat.
It moves around the house.
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The investigation continues to the cellar, and Lorraine felt something strange and awful happen around the cellar. This condition shows that the demonic activity is stronger compared to the other room in the house. It seems that the demonic wants to tell that the activity happens around the cellar. The evidence makes Lorraine and Ed sure that the demonic activity is in the house and it bothers the family. April’s music box also tells the evidence that there is a demonic activity. The facts that Ed and Lorraine feels and sees in that house make them think that Peron’s house needs a cleansing. That is called exorcism. Lorraine also saw the dark entity that haunts the house and the land. The latched on Carolyn’s back and the children also appear and it was caught by Lorraine. Besides that evidence, Lorraine also gets the information about the house. The following excerpt describes that the house is the original farmhouse. It was built in 1863 by Jedson Sherman who was married to a woman called Bathsheba. After their marriage they had a baby and scarifying the baby to Satan when the baby was 7 days old. It was related to Mary Towne Estye. She was one of the women accused of witchcraft in Salem and hung during the trial.
She was one of the women accused of witchcraft in Salem.

She was hung during the trials.

After Bathsheba married Jedson, they had a baby...

...and when the baby was 7 days old...

...Jedson caught her sacrificing it in front of the fireplace.

She ran out to that tree by the dock...

...climbed up, proclaimed her love to Satan...(2013:629-639)

The demonic activity develops since the paranormal investigators keep on preparing the investigation for the exorcism. Something big happens and it is the beginning of demonic possessed. It feeds and possesses Carolyn to kill the children and sacrifice to Satan. Bathsheba came to Carolyn when she was sleeping and feeds her up by throwing up the blood into her mouth. Carolyn is unconscious since she is under Bathsheba’s influence. Eventhough Lorraine tries to run immediately to help Carolyn but it’s late and it doesn’t work. The following figures show the fact of the story:

The sky is getting dark shows the demon’s come

The winds blow so strong
Carolyn wakes up unconsciously

Bathsheba feeds up Carolyn by spraying

The investigation keeps on searching by gathering the evidence dealing with the demon activity. The fact that Cindy still keeps walking stronger than. This time Cindy is sleepwalking again to Andrea’s room. They notice that someone is with her. Cindy is missing in Andrea’s room, but then she is discovered behind the wall through the cupboard. April says that it was a place for Rory to hide. Rory is April’s invisible friend who always talks to her about his past with Bathsheba. The following figures and dialogues show when Lorraine tries to play the music box and finds there was a boy, behind Lorraine after it stopped, and it was April’s friend, Rory.

April shows to Lorraine the music box

Rory is standing behind the music box mirror

Cindy starts on sleep walking again

She goes upstairs with a mysterious whisper
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The cellar in the house is a place which shows the demon activity. Something awful has ever happened in this place. Lorraine tries to get the evidences by getting to the place where April usually hides closer, until accidentally she fells down into the cellar. The result shows that something awful really happened inside the cellar. Lorraine sees a fat woman laughing and a daughter was hung up after she played April’s music box. It makes Lorraine sure that this place is the main place for the demon to do the activity. That is scarifying the child to Satan, and the woman was seen by Lorraine is Bathsheba’s spirit. The following figures show the description:

Finally, Cindy is found

The door asks Cindy to follow the way

April explains to Lorraine about the hidden place for Rory

Bathsheba’s spirit is behind Carolyn

Bathsheba’s spirit shows up her face to Carolyn
The decision for the exorcism finally made by moving the Peron’s family moving out from the house to an Inn. Ed and Lorraine take the evidences to the Church for the Priest’s permission on the exorcism. Here, we can see that even though Ed and Lorraine are capable on the exorcism, they still have to consult this to the Church, since everything dealing with dark spirit demonic activity, spirit calling are God’s will. That’s why exorcism must be conducted with The Bible as the main device. Ed Warren and Lorraine meets the Priest for getting the approval on the exorcism. The evidences and the investigation were showed to the Priest to convince him that the fact of demonic activity really happens in the haunted house. After explaining those facts to the Priest, he makes sure that the approval will come soon from Vatican.

In this part it is told that, factors that caused a person or a family who is bothered with spirit activity, demonic possessed, or others are everything related to religious aspects. The Conjuring gives the example dealing with that fact like the family do not go to the church or the kids aren’t baptized. It is complicated and makes the Peron’s family possessed. Considering this facts, the exorcism as the paranormal activity is needed to clean the possession. The following dialogue and figures shows the description:

Figure 6a
The Peron stay a night in an Inn

Figure 6b
The church

Figure 6c
The evidences were showed to the Priest

Figure 6d
Ed and Lorraine are talking to the Priest about the kids, Peron’s family and the exorcism

Dialogue:

905
01:23:43,894 --> 01:23:46,355
- So?
- Yeah, well, you weren't kidding.

01:23:46,522 --> 01:23:47,606
No.

01:23:48,399 --> 01:23:52,570
Look, Ed, this is complicated because the kids aren't baptized.

01:23:52,737 --> 01:23:55,948
- No, I understand.
- And the family are not members of the church.

01:23:56,115 --> 01:23:57,450
- Oh, come on.
- And...

01:23:58,284 --> 01:24:01,746
The approval would have to come directly from the Vatican.

01:24:03,122 --> 01:24:06,042
Father, we've never seen nothing like this.

01:24:09,920 --> 01:24:12,631
Yeah, well, neither have I.

01:24:21,348 --> 01:24:23,225
Father, they don't have a lot of time.

01:24:23,851 --> 01:24:25,061
All right.

01:24:26,562 --> 01:24:28,147
I'll push it through myself.

01:24:28,314 --> 01:24:30,274
- Thank you, Father. Thank you.
- Thank you.

01:24:30,858 --> 01:24:33,778
All right, we'll wait for your call. (2013:905-917)
The above events lead the story into climax or turning point. Climax in *The Conjuring* happens when the exorcism begins. The potential conflict shows that exorcism is such a paranormal activity which is done seriously under paranormal investigators. Ed Warren and Lorraine as the main character in *The Conjuring* represents a paranormal activity which is difficult to be believed by every people. Exorcism which has the same meaning as cleansing can be told as an activity dealing with mystics. As mentioned on the previous, the exorcism brings the bad impact whether for victim and the people around the exorcism. This activity should be done on purpose to clean a person who is under dark spirit or demon influence. *The Conjuring* presents how the exorcism is rejected by the Church for the first time. The facts told that demonic activity really happened in a real life must be proved by some evidences like the main character, Ed Warren and Lorraine does as the demonologist or paranormal investigators. They must show the evidence about that to the church for getting the approval from Vatican. What Ed and Warren have done in this film makes people believe that the demonic activity, dark spirit really happened in a real life. This true story gives us the truth that the exorcism is needed and it only can be done with some expert like paranormal investigators.

The climax of *The Conjuring* shows the process of the exorcism which is began by reading the words from the Holly Book, the *Bible*. The reaction which is given by Carolyn who is under Bathsheba’s influence shows us the effects of words in the *Bible* as the words for exorcism. She cries, gets angry, even she doesn’t know who she is. Her body is very strong when she rejects everything she doesn’t want to hear, listen and see. Ed Warren, who is helped by his wife Lorraine, Drew, Peron and the policeman, try to handle Carolyn, even it is very difficult to do. The following figures when Bathsheba wants to kill April with a scissors. She uses Carolyn’s body to run her scarifying to Satan. However, Carolyn doesn’t realize that since she is under Bathsheba’s influence. She also rejects strongly when everyone around her tries to overcome her.

Figure 7a

![Bathsheba in Carolyn’s body tries to kill April](image)

Figure 7

![She cries unconsciously](image)
Everyone tries to overcome Carolyn

She is getting worse with the bruises on her body

She shouts when Bathsheba pulls her into the cellar

The following figures and dialogues show the paranormal activity in exorcism done by Ed Warren and Lorraine:

Ed states that he must do the exorcism

Ed starts the exorcism

Ed commands Bathsheba to reveal herself

Bathsebha shows herself on the exorcism
Ed thought that exorcism must be done by a help of the Priest. After he knows Carolyn’s condition is getting worse and it was impossible to bring her out, finally Ed decided to do this himself. The following part of dialogue between Ed Warren and Carolyn shows the chronological of the exorcism:

1005
01:33:32,858 --> 01:33:34,818
I have to do it. The exorcism.

1006
01:33:35,277 --> 01:33:38,196
What? I thought you said we need a priest. You’re not a priest.

1007
01:33:38,405 --> 01:33:40,824
- Well, you got a better idea?
- He can do it. (2013:1005-1007)

As mentioned above exorcism usually brings the impact not only for the person who is being cleaned but also to the people around his/her. The words which are used in exorcism also give the reaction such as blooding. Bathsheba shows herself in a blood which is spread out from Carolyn’s mouth. As mentioned before the dark spirit of Bathsheba possessed Carolyn by spreading out a blood from her moth to Carolyn’s mouth when she was sleeping (see figure 3c and 3d). When Ed Warren was reading aloud the words from the Holly Book on the exorcism, suddenly Bathsheba showed her up with a lump of blood from Carolyn’s mouth. This condition also gives the bad impact on Carolyn’s eyes. Her eyes become white and it is extremely horrible. Her face becomes Bathsheba’s faces, and her hair is very awful. The fact makes Carolyn change totally becomes Bathsheba. The words in the Bible function as a spelled on the exorcism. The following dialogue shows the spelled used on the exorcism:

1014
01:34:45,389 --> 01:34:49,101
"In the name of the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit." (2013:1014)

1028
01:37:23,004 --> 01:37:26,258
"In the name of Jesus Christ, the saints and all the angels..."

1029
01:37:26,424 --> 01:37:28,510
...I command you to reveal yourself!" (2013:1028:1029)
The last spell makes Bathsheba moved out from Carolyn’s body and it makes Carolyn realized and cried. Lorraine held Carolyn’s head and tried to remind her about her family Peron and her daughters. She told her that they are her future, and she also reminded Carolyn not to leave them behind. Finally it makes Carolyn realized and disappointed herself. At the same time, the light brings situation back to normal again. The cleansing or exorcism is finally done well, and Bathsheba has gone. The following figures show the previous description:

Figure 9a
![Ed called Bathsheba](image)

Figure 9b
![Bathsheba shows herself](image)

Figure 9c
![Ed condemned Bathsheba go back to the hell](image)

Figure 9
![Carolyn starts back to normal after Lorraine held her head and reminded her about her daughters](image)
**Resolution: The End of Exorcism in *The Conjuring***

At the end of the exorcism finally Carolyn threw up a lump of blood from her mouth. This situation is the end of the main problem in the story, and it is indicated by a lump of blood which is spread up from Carolyn’s mouth as the sign that exorcism is successfully done by Bathsheba’s disappearance.

Carolyn was brought outside the house by Roger and she meets her daughters outside. She realizes that she has done something wrong and dangerous towards her family, and she was disappointed about that. The following figures show the description:

Figure 10a  Figure 10b
She threw up a lump of blood as the Bathsheba’s gone  Carolyn was brought outside the house

Figure 10c  Figure 10d
Carolyn meets the daughters  She meets the whole of her family

*The Conjuring* finally resolves the tension of the story with the exorcism. In this film we can learn that everything dealing with dark spirit, demon activity only can be solved with the help of paranormal investigator or demonologist. From these people we will bring into a ritual or paranormal activity which is called the exorcism. Exorcism reveals us that the case of demon activity and dark spirit is really existed around us. It could be attack ourselves even our relatives, no matter what kind of the activity is. *The Conjuring* leads us how to be courage even we have to face everything dealing with supernatural like demon or dark spirit. We have to be sure and believe that God always gives the best solution as long as we always ask Him for a help.
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