

BRUJA

"Pilot"

Written by

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BRUJA GLOSSARY

Aklat (book): The book functions like a bestiary, a medieval treatise on mythical creatures and spirits with a moralizing tone.

Anino (shadow): The powerful Dark Lord who traps weak souls in the panopticon.

Aswang (aswang): A shape-shifting, vampire-like creature who eats babies and young children. They are former bats who made a deal with *Anino* to become half-human, half-bat.

Bruja/Bruha (witch): A mortal being who possesses magic powers and casts spells. They have three moles behind their left ear.

Panopticon (panopticon): A circular prison with a central tower from which prisoners can be observed at all times.

Tagalog (Tagalog): The official language of the Philippines, evolving during 333 years of Spanish colonization to integrate many Spanish words. There are 120+ other indigenous languages spoken in the Philippines.

Tiyanak (tiyanak): A shape-shifting, dwarf-like spirit who torments victims but doesn't eat them.

TEASER

EXT. CONDO BUILDING - NIGHT

TWO SECURITY GUARDS emerge out of a guard post to beat the hot, stale air. They fan themselves with folded cardboard. The air is just as stagnant outside. They groan.

Their eyes roam to motionless wheels of a parked car.

A swarm of BATS rush in, flying over the guards.

One guard BOLTS right back to the post. Locks himself in.

The other guard aims his gun at the bats. He STALLS, shivering with fear. He looks up at a window.

INT. CHILD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Powerpuff Girls painted on a dresser. Naked Barbie doll, head detached from its torso on the wood floor.

Affixed to the wall:

--Sets of clocks labeled: Manila: 9:30. New York: 9:30. Lima: 8:30. St. Louis: 8:30. Intercontinental.

We could be in America, except we're in: **CAPTION: Manila, Philippines**

--A calendar with X's. It's **APRIL 13, 2001. GOOD FRIDAY.**

--A crucifix towering over two cribs.

A MOTHER tucks her TWIN BABY GIRLS under blankets. On one baby: a STEADFAST TWINKLE in her eye. A shining face.

On the other baby: WATERY eyes like she's about to cry. The mother kisses her.

A YOUNG BOY (5) peeps from under covers to chime in.

YOUNG BOY

Mama, what about the aswang?

MOTHER

Naku. It's 2001. We don't believe in those things anymore.

YOUNG BOY

I heard the bats.

MOTHER

No, you didn't. Their sounds are too high-pitched for you.

YOUNG BOY

But what if I see them?

MOTHER

Just close your eyes. I'll keep the AC on. You'll fall right asleep.

The mother caresses the young boy's face.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Sweet dreams.

She heads to the door to flip off the lights. GLOW-IN-THE-DARK STARS on the ceiling illuminate the room.

The young boy closes his eyes. Door shuts.

INT. CHILD'S BEDROOM - LATER

The GLOW from the stars on the ceiling FADES.

Unwelcome breeze. Door hinges open. BATS penetrate through the crack. The flapping of wings blows the Barbie's hair.

The bats move swiftly in a cluster. Erratic in the dark, until the cluster becomes more visible--

--a Filipina WOMAN IN WHITE!

She glides, slipping a glance at the mirror.

Fleeting reflection. Hard to make out her face. She flips her raven hair back.

She inhales. Her eyes widen. She follows the smell of fresh blood. We don't see her feet. Only that her light, airborne movement seems to defy gravity.

She hovers above the twin babies, floating midair.

She lingers over the weepy-eyed baby. She sees over the baby's head, her delicate little ears. The baby SCREECHES.

The woman's TONGUE extends out of her mouth at an INTERMINABLE length. She's the creature your Filipina grandma warned you about: the **aswang!**

Her tongue envelopes the crying baby's neck. CRACK.

A bloody piece of FLESH, eyeballs exposed, floats and enters her mouth.

The baby is left HEADLESS. The aswang's tongue continues to swerve around the decapitated body left in the blanket.

The beheaded torso swims down her open jaw. Her tongue recoils back. She swallows.

The blanket falls to the ground. The baby is gone.

DROPS OF BLOOD on the aswang's chin. She coolly wipes it off. She's done this many times before. Her stomach expands.

She just **ATE THE BABY!**

The young boy grips the covers. He can't control his HEAVY BREATHING. The aswang notices but turns her head to--

--the other twin baby, unfazed, at arm's length from her.

The aswang's TONGUE reaches out once again. The baby maintains a HEADSTRONG face, making eye contact.

The aswang tilts her head and recoils her tongue, intrigued by the TWINKLE in the baby's eye despite the dark hour.

The aswang picks up the baby. Rests the baby on her shoulders.

With the baby's back toward us, we see THREE SUBTLE FRECKLES on the baby's ear.

END TEASER