

HUMANITIES INSTITUTE  
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## ***I Confess* (1953)**

Alfred Hitchcock

### **Contents** (Overview-Synopsis-Characters-Character Analysis-Themes-Scenes)

#### OVERVIEW

*Director* Sir Alfred Hitchcock (1899-1980) is a household name and perhaps the best-known British filmmaker. With over 50 films to his credit, Hitchcock helped to shape the modern understanding of the thriller genre. His best-known films include *The Birds*, *Psycho*, *Vertigo*, and *Rear Window*, all of which have earned accolades, including preservation by the US Film Registry. In 1960, Hitchcock was inducted into the Hollywood Walk of Fame with two stars for his work in both film and television. He was also the first recipient of the BAFTA Academy Fellowship Award.

*Film* Based on a 1902 French play, *Nos deux consciences* (*Our Two Consciences*), the screenplay for *I Confess* was written by George Tabori. Several elements of the play had to be changed to align with the film code, such as the priest being Ruth's lover, their illegitimate child, and the priest being executed at the film's end. Tabori refused to make these changes, so William Archibald was called in to rewrite the script. Much of the film was shot in Quebec during the autumn of 1952. Anita Björk was originally cast as the female lead, but Warner Brothers demanded she be replaced when she began living with her child's father, unmarried.

*Background* Reviews of *I Confess* were mixed. No two critics seemed to think alike. Most of those with complaints seemed to dislike the 'overblown' finale, while those who enjoyed it seemed to enjoy the Catholic themes. Sarah Ortiz called the film "the most Catholic film of Hitchcock's films." At the end of 1953, *I Confess* was adapted for radio with Carry Grant playing the lead role. *I Confess* ranks among the lower echelons of Hitchcock's films in modern ratings, holding only 81% approval on Rotten Tomatoes. Non-Catholic viewers typically have difficulty understanding Father Logan's inability to expose Keller, perhaps driving this lack of popularity.

#### CINEMATIC NARRATION

*I Confess* is certainly weak when compared to the stories in *Stage Fright*, *Strangers on a Train*, or *Rope*, but it makes up for this narrative lack with cinematography. Quebec City is on full display and those interested in the city's history will particularly enjoy this film, walking along the streets along with the characters. Heavy noir themes appear in the use of streetlights and shadows. Many performances are compelling, but the lack of popular appeal in court drama and general misunderstanding of the duties of Catholic clergy make the film drag for some. Hitchcock's cameo can be seen just after the opening credits—keep an eye out for his distinct profile in the background.

#### SYNOPSIS

In Quebec City, Catholic priest Father Logan, finds himself entangled in a murder mystery when a parishioner, Otto Keller, admits to a grizzly crime during a late-night confession. Bound by the sacred seal of confession, Logan remains tight-lipped, making him a prime suspect in the eyes of the law. As the investigation deepens, Logan's past connection with a woman named Ruth adds complexity to the case. Flashbacks unveil a history of love, wartime separation, and a compromising situation with the victim. Despite a lack of a concrete alibi, Logan refuses to betray the sanctity of the confessional.

After a prolonged court case, a jury finds Father Logan innocent, but the judge states his disagreement with the ruling. Outside the courtroom, a hostile crowd forms, accusing Logan of the crime. Despite the social pressure, Father Logan remains silent, but Alma Keller begins to speak with the police. Otto Keller attempts to keep his part in the murder secret, and even kills his wife to silence her. On the run and pursued by the police, Keller finds himself cornered in a nearby hotel. Father Logan attempts to talk Keller down, only for the deranged killer to be shot by the police.

## CHARACTERS

*Father Michael William Logan* – a Catholic priest who was once in love with Ruth Grandfort

*Ruth Grandfort* – wife of a Quebec legislator and Father Logan's former lover

*Inspector Larrue* – police detective in charge of the Villette case

*Pierre Grandfort* – Ruth's husband, a legislator

*Crown Prosecutor William Robertson* – chief prosecutor in charge of Father Logan's trial

*Otto Keller* – German refugee and gardener, who kills Villette for money; also Anna's husband

*Alma Keller* – German refugee and domestic worker for the church, also Otto's wife

*Mr. Villette* – murdered man, a lawyer

## CHARACTER ANALYSIS

### **Father Logan**

Michael Logan is a devout man who became a priest after World War II. Before the war, he was in love with Ruth, but the violence in Europe changed him. He must keep Otto Keller's dark secret, as Keller's part in the murder of Villette was revealed to him during the sacred rite of confession.

*Brave* Father Logan can't help but be brave. Despite his fear, he seems compelled to make the bravest choices throughout the film, from volunteering for the army to keeping the sacred vow of confession. He doesn't seem to take much joy in it, yet he always chooses the path of bravery when given a choice. We learn that he received medals for bravery in World War II. He also bravely defends Ruth's honor when Villette insults her on his property. Some of his greatest acts of bravery also show his deep sense of morality. For example, he walks into Larrue's office brazenly even though he knows the police are searching for him. He also refuses at any point to speak about the substance of Keller's confession although he now faces the noose for another man's murder. His final act of bravery almost spells his end, as Keller plans to kill Father Logan in a twisted act of revenge because Keller believes the priest spoke to the police. Despite the risk, Father Logan rushes into the ballroom, hoping to end the standoff without more bloodshed.

*Pious Father* Logan is incredibly pious. We see many other characters take shortcuts through religious etiquette, but Father Logan never does. He takes his duties as a priest so seriously that his inability to break the promise of secrecy surrounding confession almost costs him his freedom; and he states very clearly several times that his service to the church is incredibly important to him. Father Logan tells Ruth that he believes in what he is and what he does, and that service to the church is his godly mission. Even after all he's been through because of Keller, Father Logan's piety shines at the film's end while he holds the dying murderer and performs the last rites.

*Dutiful* Father Logan's sense of duty is profound. We learn that he volunteered for the army at the beginning of World War II. His sense of duty carries him to the priesthood where he believes he can help not only the bodies but the souls of many more people than he ever could as a soldier. Father Logan's dutiful nature shows in his strict adherence to priestly promises, never once speaking about Keller's late-night confession even at risk to his own life and freedom.

## **Ruth Grandfort**

Ruth is the wife of a legislator in Quebec. She was in love with Father Logan before he became a priest and she planned to marry him before the war. When she is blackmailed by Villette about her former relationship with Logan, she drags the priest closer to the murder plot by mistake.

*Emotional* Ruth is incredibly emotional. She has a lot to be upset about: a man is blackmailing her; she's married to a man she doesn't love; and the man she loves doesn't love her back in the same way. While she does find a lot of joy in her social life and is thankful to Pierre for his kindness, she resents having to pretend to be in love and makes this known to her husband. Ruth is driven to some hasty actions in her emotional attempt to keep Father Logan from being tried for Villette's murder, and Inspector Larrue uses this against her. Ruth's testimony, while emotional, truthful, and revealing, also fails to act as an alibi for Father Logan on the night of the murder. Her emotions run high on the stand, so high that the judge almost dismisses her.

*Dissatisfied* Ruth is dissatisfied with the way her life has gone. Before the war, she wished to marry Michael Logan. After the war, she cannot. She's married to Pierre, a man she admires but does not love. Even if she could divorce Pierre, Father Logan has taken priestly vows and will not give them up for her. He has found a new purpose. Unrequited love can make us act in unpredictable ways: It makes Ruth spend the night with her former lover without informing her husband that she's out. This becomes her downfall when Villette appears and recognizes her, leveraging the information as blackmail at a later date. While she is dissatisfied with her marriage, she doesn't want Pierre to suffer because of her actions and calls Father Logan for help.

*Lovestruck* Ruth has utter devotion to Father Logan. She fell deeply in love with him when they were younger, intending to marry him when he got back from the war. This never happened, and she married a kind and promising young politician, Pierre, instead. While she is faithful to her husband, she still loves Father Logan. She treats this unrequited love with distance until Villette's blackmail forces her to contact the priest. We see Ruth struggle with her attraction to a priest throughout the film, but by the end, she realizes that Father Logan is serious in his vows. She leaves the hotel with Pierre instead of staying to see if Logan survives his encounter with Keller, showing us that she's given up hope on rekindling their romance.

## **Inspector Larrue**

Inspector Larrue is a notable detective in the Quebec City police force. He is handed the Villette case specifically because of the lack of suspects and evidence. Given the evidence he uncovers, he begins to suspect that Father Logan committed Villette's murder.

*Determined* Larrue's determination is legendary. He will solve the Villette murder and he won't let anyone stand in his way. He pushes through all of Ruth's defenses, demanding to get at the root of her connection to Father Logan and Villette. The only time he's not able to overcome an obstacle is when Father Logan refuses to testify. Only a priest's piety can keep him from what he desires.

*Intelligent* Inspector Larrue is very intelligent, and it shows in his investigative abilities. He is given a case with no motive, no suspects, and very little evidence, and he is able to build a very convincing case against Father Logan. The only issue with his case is that it depends on Keller's lies. Once he realizes that Keller has been lying after he kills Alma, Larrue does an about-face, doing everything he can to help find Father Logan innocent. It dawns on him almost immediately after Keller shoots his wife that Keller worked for Villette as a gardener, giving him opportunity and a possible motive.

*Strategic* Inspector Larrue is a brilliant strategist. Most of the time he's featured in the film outside of interviews, he's running some sort of operation from his office. His quick thinking and decisive leadership help him to solve a supposedly unsolvable case in just a matter of days. While his manhunt for Father Logan doesn't go to plan, we can see Larrue's strategic mind at work, trying to cut off any route Father

Logan might have for escape. We see him in his element during the crisis outside the courthouse and in the hotel after Keller shoots and kills Alma. He works quickly to corner Keller inside the hotel, keeping the guests calm and out of the way while he does so. He decides to end the standoff with some decisive gunplay. His decision saves Father Logan's life when the sharpshooter detective he ordered to shoot Keller does just that, keeping Keller from adding another corpse to his body count.

### **Otto Keller**

Otto is a German refugee who traveled to Canada with Father Logan after the war. He and his wife, Alma, work at the church where Father Logan lives. In a desperate attempt to get \$2,000, Otto kills Villette before pinning the murder on Father Logan.

*Impulsive* Otto is incredibly impulsive. He commits burglary against Villette in an attempt to make a quick \$2,000 so he and Alma can disappear and start new lives, but when he is caught he kills Villette. Impulsively, seeking some reprieve from his troubled emotions, Keller then confesses his crimes to Father Logan. While this offers some temporary relief, it makes Keller paranoid that someone knows his part in the murder. Occasionally, Keller's impulsive behavior comes from his quick wit. For example, he convinces the police that Father Logan is involved in Villette's murder by hiding the bloody cassock in the priest's chest and lying about Father Logan's movements on the day of the murder. His final act of impulsivity is his undoing. Unable to face Alma speaking to the police in Father Logan's defense, he shoots her from the courthouse steps, killing her and creating a standoff in a nearby hotel that ends in his death.

*Cruel* Otto's cruelty is sudden and strange. Seemingly all at once, Otto turns against Father Logan, fearful that the priest will talk to the police. He uses his knowledge of Father Logan as the prime suspect to make the police suspect him further, switching their positions in his retelling of the night of the murder. Knowing that Father Logan will have to give up his priest vows to tell anyone about his confession, Keller often taunts Father Logan, calling him a coward and a hypocrite despite the priest's piety. Otto is shown to be cruel to Alma, especially at the moment that he chooses to take her life rather than let her speak to the police. Likewise, he shoots a chef at the hotel, and while we don't see this happen, it is clear it didn't need to happen. Keller's fear of being caught and tried for murder leads him to commit many cruel acts.

*Coward* Otto's cowardice is clear to the viewer, but he likes to believe he is brave. He does this mainly by clinging to his Luger pistol and mocking Father Logan for being unable to reveal Keller's confession. Throughout the second half of the movie, Otto takes any chance he can to call Father Logan a coward, justifying his paranoia towards the priest. Otto fears being caught for Villette's murder more than anything, and the fact that Father Logan knows who did it drives Keller toward madness. When Alma attempts to tell the police about Otto's part in the murder, he kills her before running off into a nearby hotel. Cornered and afraid, all Otto can do is project his cowardice onto Father Logan. Even in his last moments, he is afraid, reaching out to Father Logan and begging for his last rites.

### **THEMES**

*Faith/Religion* As a story about a priest, *I Confess* possesses some strong motifs and themes around religion. Many appear as blatant as placing Jesus on the cross clearly in shot, while others are more covert: Father Logan's love for Ruth is his 'cross to bear'; and when he wanders the streets of Quebec City deciding whether or not to keep his priestly confessional vows, this mirrors Jesus' prayers in the garden before the day of his crucifixion. While Father Logan's strong faith keeps Keller's murder a secret, even as the police attempt to have him tried for the crime, Keller's lack of faith—both in Logan and in the church—creates a paranoia in him so strong that he shoots his wife to keep the truth of Villette's death a secret.

*Love* Love plays a substantial role in this film. Ruth's love for Father Logan is obvious despite his vows. The war changed him, making the young man seek value in a higher power. Because he believes in his religion and his duties as a priest, he foregoes love to serve his flock. Ruth hates this, but she loves Michael too much to hurt him by acting as a temptation, keeping away from him for the most part. Her

love also shows as she reaches out to Father Logan instead of her husband when Villette blackmails her. Ruth trusts him to help her handle the sticky situation more than she does Pierre.

**Crime** Crime plays a chilling part in *I Confess*. The film opens with a murder, the culprit fleeing just out of view of the camera. We soon learn that the killer is Otto Keller when he confesses his crime to Father Logan. Keller does everything he can to stop the police from connecting him to the murder, showing up at Villette's house at his scheduled time and "discovering" the body. Hampering the investigation is one of the more mild crimes that he commits as soon he begins framing Father Logan for the murder, hiding the bloody cassock among the priest's possessions and giving false testimony to the police. Keller's criminality reaches new heights at the film's end when he murders Alma, his wife, for trying to talk to the police. Father Logan's unwillingness to help Larrue with his investigation is seen as criminal by the inspector, making Larrue build a fairly convincing case against the priest. Father Logan, in an attempt to avoid what he sees as a religious crime, refuses to talk about Keller's confession even at the risk of losing his freedom or his life when taken to court for Keller's crime.

**Investigation** Investigation is a key theme in most of Hitchcock's films. It plays a smaller role than usual in *I Confess*, serving more as a backdrop to the drama between Ruth and Father Logan than a quest for truth and justice. The audience knows that Keller is the killer from the film's beginning, adding a thrilling element to Larrue's investigation when he singles out Father Logan as the likely suspect. While Larrue is a competent investigator, he is blinded by Father Logan's priestly inability to talk about the night of the murder, assuming his silence is guilt rather than duty. We see that Keller had been on the investigator's radar at some point and it doesn't take him long to do a complete 180 when Keller shoots Alma from the courthouse steps. He puts two and two together, stating to Father Logan that having been Villette's gardener gives Keller opportunity while his violent actions toward his wife show ability and potential motive.

**Appearance vs. Reality** The villainous and the innocent are both seen to be something they're not throughout *I Confess*. Keller's manipulation of the police and planting evidence in Father Logan's trunk drives the court case to its deadly climax. Because he turns up and claims to have found the body on the morning after the murder, Larrue and the other policemen write him off, believing him to be helpful. Keller realizes this, beginning to seed lies into the investigation by swapping his and Father Logan's places in his retelling of the events that happened on the night of the murder. Similarly, Ruth and Father Logan's past relationship is given the appearance of continuing because Ruth still loves him. The jurors can't believe that Father Logan isn't seeing such a beautiful woman. Despite his piety and honesty, Father Logan is cast as the villain by the prosecution because he must uphold the sacrament of confession or risk being defrocked.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What role does faith play in the film's narrative?

How do noir elements engage with the religious themes and motifs throughout the film?

While not omnipresent, like some of Hitchcock's other narratives, *I Confess* uses many plot elements typical of Hitchcock's films. Name as many as you can.

Many unfamiliar with Catholic traditions find Father Logan's ability to keep Keller's confession secret unconvincing. Do you find this portrayal of Catholic clergy realistic or unrealistic? Why?

## SCENES

**On the Run** Eerie music plays while the camera jumps around some of Quebec City's landmarks. Time and again we see "direction" signs in the center of each shot until the camera follows one of the arrows through an open window. On the floor of the study lies a body, a pipe by its side. The camera glances up to see a beaded curtain on the nearby doorway rustling with movement. Spinning, the camera finds a man dressed in a priest's garb walking quickly down the street. It pulls back to watch two young schoolgirls follow him down the street at a distance. In an alley, the priest unbuttons his cloak and removes it, revealing a man in an ordinary suit.



**Church** The man approaches a church and enters through the rear. From a window above, Father Logan watches the man walk into the church. He decides to go investigate. Low light emanates through the church's sanctuary where the altar sits. Father Logan emerges from behind the altar, kneels before it and faces the room. He stares into the dark rows of pews, noticing a figure hunched among them. Grabbing a nearby candle, the priest makes his way towards the man seated in prayer. "Keller!" Father Logan says in recognition. "What are you doing here this time of night?" "I- I wanted to pray," Mr. Keller replies with a thick German accent. Father Logan asks if he can be of any help and Keller replies, "No one can help me." After some conversation about Father Logan's work in Europe during the war, Keller realizes that he wants to confess.



**Confession** Inside the confessional, Father Logan goes through the normal confession routine before Keller begins to talk: "I have killed Mr. Villette." Father Logan is shocked and tries to keep his composure. "Why?" he asks calmly. Keller explains that he wanted Villette's money, saying he wore a priest's cassock to avoid suspicion. The scene jumps to the Kellers' quarters upstairs in the church where Keller tells his wife the same story. Mrs. Keller looks frightened while Mr. Keller explains, "All we need is \$2,000... With \$2,000, we can start a new life!" He says that Father Logan told him to return the money he stole from Villette, but he is afraid that the police will catch him. "Father Logan will tell them," Mrs. Keller says quietly. "He cannot tell them what he heard in the confessional," Mr. Keller says, standing menacingly over Mrs. Keller.



**Wednesday** Mr. Keller walks down the church's front steps when Mrs. Keller hisses his name from a nearby window: "Otto!" "What is it, Alma?" Mr. Keller asks impatiently when he draws near. She asks if he's going to the police. "I always work in Mr. Villette's garden on Wednesdays," Mr. Keller replies curtly. The church bell rings and the Wednesday morning mass ends. Those gathered in the sanctuary file outside while Father Logan moves into the rear of the church, an altar boy helping him to fold and stow his priestly garment. Dressed in his usual robe, Father Logan enters another part of the church. He sees Mrs. Keller with the breakfast dishes climbing up the stairs and their eyes meet for a moment. Her face is pulled tight in an expression of fear before she ducks into a nearby room.



**Breakfast** Father Michael approaches from behind Father Logan, asking if it will take him and Keller much longer to finish painting a nearby room. Father Logan says he doesn't know before Father Michael complains about the smell. They move to the dining room where Mrs. Keller keeps herself busy setting the table. After sitting down with their tea, the priests cross themselves and say a prayer before continuing their conversation. Father Michael says they're "fortunate" to have Keller and his handyman skills. A crash in the hall announces the appearance of Father Benoit. The priest joins the other two, asking Mrs. Keller to ask her husband to take a look at his bicycle, the cause of the earlier disturbance. Mrs. Keller awkwardly explains that Mr. Keller isn't there because it's Wednesday. Her eyes never leave the back of Father Logan's head as she serves the priests.



**Scene of the crime** "Excuse me," Father Logan says abruptly before standing and leaving. He walks through town to Mr. Villette's house accompanied by dramatic music. Outside the house, a crowd stands behind a line of officers. An officer recognizes Father Logan and tells him Mr. Villette has been murdered. Another officer invites Father Logan inside the house when he says he had an appointment and wants to help the police with their investigation. The lead detective tells the priest to leave, asking to conduct an interview later.



**Investigation** After Father Logan leaves, the policemen get to work. A smorgasbord of evidence is paraded in front of Inspector Larrue, including a pipe with no fingerprints and a cash box filled with bills. Mr. Keller enters the hallway afterward, telling his false version of how he found the body earlier that morning. Inspector Larrue watches Father Logan pacing outside, dismissing Keller in order to focus on it. Soon, a blonde woman approaches the priest and he pulls her aside. The camera jumps outside to overhear Father Logan telling the woman the news. “He’s dead? I can’t believe it,” she says with relief. “We’re free.” Larrue watches the two disappear into the crowd as the scene fades out.



**Parliament** The blonde who met with Father Logan appears in a car, speeding towards the Parliament Building. She screeches to a halt before quickly entering the building. Inside, the staff seem to know her. “Is my husband in the chamber?” she asks a nearby bailiff. “Yes, madame,” the man replies, “Mr. Grandfort is speaking now.” He moves to open the door, and the camera brushes past him into the courtroom where Mr. Grandfort speaks passionately about equal pay for female teachers before a recess is called. Mr. Grandfort is shocked to see his wife: “Ruth, my dear! What a charming surprise.” “Pierre,” she responds, kissing him on the cheek, “take me to lunch.” Mr. Grandfort comments that earlier she was feeling depressed. “Was I?” Ruth asks, and her husband says she was. “I don’t seem depressed now, do I?” she asks while the scene fades out.



**“Mr. Keller, good morning”** Father Benoit passes Mr. Keller on the church steps, smiling pleasantly when he informs the handyman that his bicycle tire isn’t flat. Inside, Father Michael talks about the paint job, saying he’d prefer “an old-fashioned white.” Otto can barely contain his nervous expression when Father Michael greets him: “Mr. Keller, good morning. Is Mr. Villette’s garden flourishing?” Mr. Keller puts on the same act he did for the police, telling the priests that Mr. Villette has been murdered and that he was the one to find the body. Father Michael moves out of the room, muttering sadly about the murder when Mr. Keller turns to Father Logan, demanding to speak with him about why he was at Villette’s house that morning. “I don’t know what you’re talking about,” Father Logan says calmly. Mr. Keller asks for advice when Alma enters the room to tell her husband about Father Benoit’s bicycle, as the priest had asked her to do.





**An impossible case** The scene opens on a man playing with a coin and a pair of forks, making a little bridge set across his wine glass. "I don't see why you're so damn solemn about this case, Larrue," a man says. "Anyway, why do you come and worry me after lunch?" The camera pulls back, revealing the speaker to be the man playing with the forks. The crown prosecutor continues speaking, saying that Larrue is an incredibly talented investigator, but that he must now solve a murder without suspects or clues, joking that it "ought to be simple for you." An officer asks Larrue if he should "bring the girls in." The crown prosecutor is shocked to hear of this development. "Just a possibility," says Larrue. "It may be something to go on."



**Schoolgirls** After the young girls enter the office, Larrue apologizes for "dragging them away from school" before offering them cookies. When the girls are comfortable, he begins his line of questioning. "Your mother called to say that you had passed the Villette house last night," he begins, and the girls speak plainly about what they saw there. After 11, they were traveling home from babysitting when they saw a priest exit the Villette house. This shocks the men, and they ask for more specificity. The scene from the beginning of the film plays again as they repeat what they saw. Larrue thanks the girls and escorts them out, asking them to keep quiet about the police questioning. As his partner leaves to follow the girls, Larrue stops him, asking him to check with every rectory in town to see which priests were out late the night before.



**Making sure-** Dramatic music plays as a montage of churches and several priests answer the police's questions. Finally, the steeple of Father Logan's church comes into view. Inside, Father Michael speaks to a policeman about Father Logan's movements the night before. Father Logan soon enters the room and answers the policeman's questions. Mr. Keller makes a shocked face when he overhears that Inspector Larrue would like to interview Father Logan, watching from the doorway. As Father Logan is led away by the police, Father Benoit enters the church with his bicycle. The camera finds Alma polishing candlesticks somewhere in the church when Mr. Keller opens the door, asking her if she's washed Father Logan's cassock yet. She says she hasn't, asking why he wants to know before Mr. Keller leans close and whispers a plan to her.



**“Unpleasant bit of business”** At the police station, Father Logan speaks with Larrue’s partner in a long hallway. Inspector Larrue exits a nearby room, apologizing for keeping the priest waiting and inviting him inside to speak. “Unpleasant bit of business, isn’t it Father?” Larrue asks before showing Logan to a seat. “Just a few questions,” Larrue continues, “and we’ll get it over as soon as possible.” They go over Father Logan’s past, noting his military awards and confirming that he knew Villette. “I didn’t know him well,” Father Logan says. “I’d met him once many years ago.” Larrue is visibly frustrated: “No one seems to know Villette.”



**The Lady** Larrue takes a hard turn, demanding information about the woman Father Logan met outside Villette’s house. “Inspector,” the priest replies politely, “the appointment that I had with Villette couldn’t be of any importance to you.” Larrue apologizes for “jumping too quickly” before asking about the lady once more. “I wish I could discuss it, but I can’t,” Father Logan insists. “She isn’t involved.” Larrue cannot accept this answer. “You’ll have to take my word for it,” Father Logan says apologetically.



**Mystification** “I respect your word,” Larrue says with fire in his voice, “but I need your help.” “I’m not able to help,” Father Logan replies meekly. Larrue’s expression changes, becoming a bit more aggressive, and says, “I just don’t want all this mystification to make things too awkward for you.” Father Logan is confused, and Inspector Larrue explains, “A priest was seen leaving Villette’s house at the time of the murder. I saw a priest outside Villette’s house the next morning... Too much mystification might lead one to believe that both priests were one and the same, mightn’t it?” Father Logan looks frightened before calming down, questioning Larrue’s evidence. When he is unable to substantiate his alibi, Inspector Larrue leads Father Logan from the office, bidding him good night.



**A call for the prosecutor** Inspector Larrue crosses the room back to his desk and picks up the phone. He calls the crown prosecutor, Roberts, demanding that the person on the other end find him when he's unavailable. The scene fades to a room of tuxedo-clad gentlemen and well-dressed ladies watching the crown prosecutor attempt to lay down on his back without spilling a glass of water balanced on his head. A maid enters, saying there's a call for him. He asks Ruth to answer the phone while he gets up off the floor. "Oh, it's you Larrue," he says somewhat dismissively. "You ought to be in bed with a thriller instead of worrying people." Something Larrue says piques his interest, and his expression changes rapidly. Prosecutor Robertson says he'll be at the station immediately before hanging up. As he apologizes for leaving early, Ruth and Pierre ask Roberts if it's about the Villette murder. He says it is, and Ruth is shocked to learn that a priest is involved.



**In love with a priest** Alone with Pierre, Ruth's behavior changes. Pierre gently tries to get Ruth's attention. "We have guests, Pierre," she says dismissively. After the party, Ruth dismisses her maid in French, tidying up the guests' glasses and ashtrays before Pierre appears in the doorway. "It was a good party, wasn't it?" he asks, crossing the room to his wife. "Stop worrying," he says. When she asks about what, he replies, "About Logan. The whole idea is ridiculous!" She snaps, "Shut up," before apologizing. "You're still in love with him," Pierre says. "That should be apparent... I'm not going to talk about it now," Ruth replies. They begin to fight about Ruth's past with Father Logan, Pierre eventually storming off in a huff, saying he hopes that Logan is "in terrible trouble."



**Not asleep** Dramatic music crescendos as Ruth leaves the parlor and walks into a study. The camera rests behind a chair with the telephone in focus when she sits and dials a number. "Hello," she says plainly, "I'd like to speak to Father Logan, please." Alma is on the other end of the line, and she says that he is asleep. "I'm not asleep," Father Logan says loudly when he appears on the landing of the stairs. He takes the phone from Alma and speaks to Ruth. "I've got to see you," she says. "I'm going to Lévis tomorrow morning on the nine o'clock ferry." "Alright," Father Logan says on the other end. "Good night." Alma, who has stood watching until now, hurries up the stairs.



**Ferry** The next morning, Father Logan leaves the church and travels across town to the ferry station. An unmarked police car follows him. The ferry steams away from the quay with a mournful blow of its horn while Ruth finds a seat on the top deck. She spots Father Logan leaning against the railing when their eyes meet. After crossing to her and greeting her with a bright smile, they begin a covert conversation. "We shouldn't be seen together," Father Logan murmurs, "for your sake... There's probably police all over the boat." The camera follows Ruth's eyes while she looks at the men around the ferry, a dramatic chord striking each time the camera jumps. They speak of Pierre, and of Ruth's lingering love for Father Logan.



**Private conversation** Ruth talks at length about how she hasn't changed despite being married to Pierre, and that she is still in love with Father Logan. She concludes by asking Logan if he wants her "to pretend" that she's not in love with him. "I don't want you to pretend," he responds. "Ruth, don't you understand? I chose to be what I am. I believe in what I am. I... I want you to see things as they are and not... and to go on hurting yourself." "Don't pity me," Ruth says with sad eyes. "I shan't bother you again."



**"Why not get it over with?"** "And you followed her from the ferry to 22 Grand Allies?" a police officer asks one of the men who was seated on the ferry, an undercover cop. "This is absurd, Larrue," Prosecutor Robertson says with a frustrated edge. "This will be very embarrassing for me. I shall have to apologize to Madame Grandfort for this ridiculous report your men have turned in." Larrue says that he will deliver an apology, "if an apology is necessary." Robertson says that he'll call Ruth tomorrow, but Larrue has other ideas: "Why not get it over with, sir?" He firmly places a phone in front of the crown prosecutor who dials the Grandfort home with a sigh. He asks Pierre if he can speak to Ruth.



**Called for questioning** Pierre paces in the background while Ruth sits in a wing-back chair, speaking on the phone. "I see," she says. "That's very kind of you. Thank you." "What does Willy want?" Pierre asks after she hangs up the phone. "He wants me to come to his office now," she answers. "I was seen on the ferry this morning with Michael Logan. Apparently, I was followed by a detective." Pierre tries to pick a fight, but she won't let him. "I'm going to answer whatever questions the inspector wishes to ask me. I'm also going to explain that Michael could not have killed Villette." "Has Father Logan cleared himself to your satisfaction?" Pierre asks snidely. "He didn't have to," Ruth replies. "I was with him at the time." Despite his anger and jealousy, Pierre offers to go to the police station with her.



**Cooperation** Mr. and Mrs. Grandfort are led into an office where Prosecutor Robertson and Inspector Larrue await them. Robertson apologizes to the couple for disrupting their evening, promising to keep the visit from the press before Larrue invites everyone to sit. A detective enters with the news: Father Logan has arrived. "Send him in," Larrue says with a smile. Logan greets everyone before sitting. Larrue stands at the end of his desk, rocking on his feet like an impatient schoolboy as he questions Ruth about her meeting with Father Logan on the ferry. She dodges the question at first, but Larrue brings up their meeting outside Villette's house on the morning of the murder. She says she had a meeting scheduled with Villette on the morning of the murder. Ruth then delivers what she believes to be a perfect alibi: Father Logan was with her on a car ride between 9 and 11 on the evening of the murder.



**Blackmail** Larrue isn't satisfied with the information Ruth has given him, and he presses for more about the meeting she had scheduled with Villette. "Monsieur Villette was blackmailing me," Ruth says plainly. "I had met Father Logan to ask his advice." "You had not told your husband about this?" Larrue asks, confusion tinging his voice. "I didn't want to worry him," Ruth explains. Larrue questions why she reached out to a seemingly random priest for advice. "Father Logan is an old friend," Ruth says with frustration. She's beginning to break under the pressure of questioning. Pierre notices, interrupting the interview. "My wife does not have to answer those questions," he says. "She's not under oath." Larrue reacts with anger, raising his voice and demanding answers. "Madame Grandfort," he finally says, "are you trying to protect Father Logan?"



**“Are you a human being?”** Ruth looks up at the inspector, hurt. “Are you a human being, Inspector?” she asks. “You think it’s important for me to tell you why I was being blackmailed? You don’t care whom I hurt, just so long as I answer all your questions.” Larrue backpedals a little, saying he only wants to solve a murder. Despite both Pierre and Father Logan’s urging to remain quiet, Ruth agrees to cooperate to “clear Father Logan.” Ruth asks for a glass of water, and after a drink, she begins telling the story behind her blackmail. “Father Logan and I grew up together,” she begins while the scene cuts away to a flashback.



**Growing up together** Ruth narrates while images of her and Father Logan as young adults cross the screen. She describes vaguely how they fell in love while the memory of their romance plays out to romantic music. Ruth descends the stairs and kisses Logan. She laments the beginning of the war, saying she resented Logan for volunteering. He wouldn’t marry her because he was afraid to leave her a widow. Ruth then describes their last night together before she talks about her relationship and marriage to Pierre, mentioning that she never felt deep feelings for him, marrying him out of convenience rather than love. She found him kind, and she was happy for long enough. She mentions meeting Villette for the first time at her wedding reception.



**After the war** “Then the war was over,” Ruth says as the flashback cuts out for a moment. “The men were coming home.” The flashback returns as Ruth narrates going to the port to meet Logan. The flashback continues when she says they planned to meet the next day. In pastoral surroundings, the two walk and talk and laugh together while Ruth describes her feelings about the war and how it changed Logan. “Then a storm came up, so suddenly,” Ruth continues. “We saw a house across the field and ran for shelter.” With no one home and the door locked tight, she and Logan spent the night in a nearby gazebo to stay out of the rain. Early the next morning, a man appears and demands that the two leave his property. It’s Villette, and he recognizes Ruth. That was the day his plan for blackmail began. She then describes the blackmail, and how Villette’s pestering made her more and more desperate.



**Father Logan's alibi** Ruth's explanation ends, and she gets up to leave. "Father Logan has his alibi now, doesn't he, Willy?" she asks before leaving. Prosecutor Robertson says he does before asking if Father Logan would like to leave as well. The priest leaves. After a moment's contemplation, Robertson speaks: "Well, it's over." "Is it, sir?" Larrue asks. He brings forward new forensic evidence, showing Robertson an autopsy report that proves Villette couldn't have died before 11.



**Helpful, but not the way she meant** The next morning, Pierre knocks on Ruth's bedroom door, apologizing for waking her. She's already awake, and she's distraught to hear the news that the police have singled out Father Logan as the prime suspect in the Villette murder based on her testimony. Pierre continues, saying they'll be calling Ruth as a witness and confirming that the police plan to arrest Father Logan. "He says you have given the motive they've been waiting for," Pierre says, trying to hide his amusement. "I should have lied," Ruth says mournfully. She asks for Pierre to have her breakfast sent up and he leaves the room.



**"They're going to arrest you"** The camera looks toward the church steeple while dramatic music plays. Inside the sanctuary, Ruth pleads with Father Logan. "You must do something," She says. "They're going to arrest you." Father Logan says nothing to be done but submit to the court. Ruth doesn't like this, but she can't convince him to do anything else. A boy comes in and interrupts them, requesting a confession. Before she leaves, Ruth turns and bows toward the altar. She runs into Mr. Keller, who carries an armful of flowers for the altar. After apologizing, she leaves and Keller walks into the Sanctuary.



**Altar** Before the altar, Keller kneels quickly before placing the flowers upon it. He busies himself collecting the wilted flowers from the vases, looking over his shoulder nervously for Father Logan. Father Logan eventually emerges from the confessional and approaches the altar while intense music begins to play. "I've been waiting to speak with you, Father," Keller whispers while Father Logan walks away from him. Keller pesters him about what he's told the police before Logan turns around, saying plainly, "I'm going to be arrested, Keller." Keller walks more closely, whispering emphatically, "You're trying to frighten me... You think by telling me that, I will give myself up... Perhaps you'll point your finger at me." After they part, Keller runs up to his room and speaks to his wife. From a drawer he pulls a gun, saying, "He thinks he can tell the police, yes? I am ready."



**Father Logan missing** Father Logan exits the church and wanders aimlessly across the streets of Quebec City. Dramatic music and city sounds accompany him. Meanwhile, Inspector Larrue appears to take Logan into custody. Keller tells the policeman that Father Logan left twenty minutes before seeming scared. The camera finds Larrue in his office at the police station, coordinating efforts to find Logan. Father Logan continues his wandering in obvious distress. Across the city, detectives pull aside priest after priest, looking for Father Logan. Father Logan stops by a store window, eyeing a suit as if contemplating giving up his priestly vows. In the next shot, we watch Logan walk from afar, a statue of Jesus dragging the cross in the foreground. He enters a nearby cathedral, his face determined.



**"Any news yet?"** Back at the church Father Michael and Father Benoit wait nervously. "Will Father Logan be in for lunch?" asks Alma while she sets the table. Father Benoit's bicycle crashes to the floor in the hallway. Outside, Father Michael watches a policeman operate his radio before the scene fades to Larrue at his desk. "Any news yet?" he says into a phone receiver. He hangs up and begins his lunch when he comes to a sudden halt. Father Logan stands inside his doorway, staring at him. An odd smile crosses his face before he says, "Hello, Father." After asking if Father Logan has eaten lunch, the scene fades out while Larrue calls in an order for him.





**Trial** The trial begins with a detective on the stand. He confirms that he found a bloodstained cassock in Father Logan's trunk. Completing his questioning, Robertson asks that a doctor be called to the stand. After being sworn in, the doctor speaks about the bloodstains on the cassock, saying they are type O, Villette's blood type. Alma watches the proceedings from the crowd, a conflicted look on her face. The scene fades out.



**Mr. Keller on the stand** Sometime later, Mr. Keller is questioned on the stand. "On the night of the murder," Prosecutor Robertson says, "you spoke to the accused?" Keller replies that he did, saying it was after 11:45. "My wife was asleep, sir, and I was just about to go to bed. I happened to look out the window, and there I saw someone enter the church." He says he went to confront this person, finding Father Logan in the sanctuary, swapping their places in his retelling. "Was there anything about his manner that seemed out of the ordinary?" the prosecutor asks. "He seemed distressed, sir," Keller replies, saying that Logan refused his help and told him to leave him alone.



**Ruth's statement** A new scene fades in with Ruth at the stand. "Madame Grandfort," the prosecutor says impatiently, "I'm only trying to clarify your testimony." "I've told you everything you need to know," she says. Robertson says that isn't for her to decide and presses on. "It is true, is it not, that you had an association with the accused which you didn't wish to become public knowledge?" Robertson begins. "You said that you were in love with the accused before the war. Am I right?" "Yes," says Ruth. When she refuses to answer further questions about their past love, the prosecutor threatens to read her sworn testimony aloud instead. Ruth relents, saying that she's still in love with Father Logan. The proceedings bog down in the scandalous claims that their rendezvous at Villette's gazebo was adulterous. The judge then releases Ruth after she begins to have an emotional breakdown on the stand.



**Father Logan takes the stand** Father Logan fades into view, Jesus in agony on the cross juxtaposed with his profile. Robertson asks him to confirm that the cassock is his. He says it isn't. When Robertson infers that someone had then put it inside his trunk, Alma grabs Mr. Keller's arm in the audience. Despite everything, Father Logan holds to his priestly vow: his knowledge of Keller's crime will never escape his lips. Prosecutor Robertson begins interrogating Father Logan about his morality as a priest concerning his post-war rendezvous with Ruth. Father Logan says he wasn't a priest at the time, nor did he know Ruth was married. The prosecutor implies that this rendezvous was still adulterous, but Father Logan denies this. When he admits that he struck Villette that day out of anger, Robertson posits that he could potentially be driven to murder by anger. Father Logan replies angrily that he could not, and the court erupts in murmurs.



**Trapped in an accusation** Sometime later, Robertson continues his cross-examination of Father Logan, laying out the timeline of the night of the murder. Father Logan agrees with his outline. "Then, it was possible for you to go to Villette's house," Robertson points out. "Yes, it was possible," Father Logan replies, "but I didn't go there. I went right home to the rectory." As he doesn't have any witnesses to his return to the church and having heard Mr. Keller's story first, the prosecution doubts Father Logan's testimony. Robertson posits that Father Logan was having an affair with Ruth. The priest's emotional reaction to the accusation causes murmurs to erupt in the gallery once more.



**Deliberation** The scene fades in with the camera facing the jury from the judge's bench. The judge repeats his orders: "It is your duty to carefully examine all the evidence that has been given and to determine whether the charge against the accused has been proven." He also reminds the jury that his position as a priest and relationship with Madame Grandfort should not affect their ruling "except as it may affect this charge of murder." With that, the jury retreats into their chamber to deliberate. In the smoke-filled room, one man paces, saying, "Obviously, they didn't spend just that one night together. There must have been many more times." The scene fades out.



**The verdict** The judge enters the courtroom and all present rise. After seating the courtroom, the judge asks if the jury has reached a verdict. The pacing man from before stands and gives the jury's ruling: "While we attach grave suspicion to the accused, we cannot provide sufficient evidence that he actually wielded the weapon that killed Monsieur Villette. Therefore, our verdict is not guilty." Father Logan lets out a shaky breath of relief. The judge approves the ruling, but only after vocally expressing his disagreement with the jury. Father Logan is led from the box to the hallway outside the courtroom. "Take off that collar!" someone shouts from the crowd as he leaves custody.



**"Are you satisfied?"**- Father Logan is alone in a crowd of clamoring reporters and shocked, staring faces. Dramatic music plays while he makes his way outside. On the courthouse steps, a crowd of reporters and jeering onlookers awaits the priest. "Preach us a sermon, Logan," someone shouts, causing a ripple of cruel laughter to pass across the crowd. The taunts continue, worsening as he wades into the crowd, heading for le Château Frontenac hotel across the street. In an office in the courthouse, Prosecutor Robertson watches the commotion from the window. "Are you satisfied, Willy?" Pierre demands when he barges into the room. "Do you think I've enjoyed it?" the lawyer responds.



**A shot from the courthouse steps**- The police gathered on the courthouse steps can't keep the crowd back. Father Logan is jostled around while a bunch of angry young men try to get at him. Alma and Otto watch from the steps. Seeing Father Logan pinned against a car, Alma rushes to help him. Otto shouts angrily after her, but she ignores him. "Stop it!" she screams, shocking the crowd for a moment. "He's innocent," she then says to a police officer, barely audible over the din of the crowd. Mr. Keller pulls the Luger from his pocket. "My husband..." Alma says, pointing at Otto. The Luger points back. Screams erupt and the crowd scatters when a shot rings out. "There he goes!" a woman shouts when Mr. Keller runs off towards the nearby hotel. Alma doubles over, dying in Father Michael's arms as he quickly mutters her last rites. She manages to murmur "forgive me" before succumbing to her wound.



**Château Frontenac-** “Have you got Keller?” Larrue asks a detective. “He just ran in the Château Frontenac, sir,” the man replies. Larrue orders a squad to pursue the killer, but with the demand that he not be shot. Larrue wants Keller to be able to clear Father Logan’s name after all that’s happened, and he can’t do that dead. Larrue asks Father Logan to join him, trying to pry out any information he can about Keller. Father Logan just asks to try and talk to Keller. Shots ring out as Keller fires his pistol in a panic. A chef doubles over in the kitchen, and the pursuing detectives chase after him.



**Cornered in the ballroom** In an empty ballroom, Keller slams his shoulder against a locked door beside the stage. The police stop in the doorway, watching him. Realizing he’s trapped, Keller takes a shot but misses. Larrue and Father Logan approach with a group of policemen. Keller stands by the piano on the stage, his pistol leveled at the door on the other end of the room. “Keller!” Larrue shouts. “Give yourself up!” Keller responds with more shots, and Larrue calls for an officer to get backup with tear gas. “Let me go in,” Father Logan offers eventually, “and try to talk to him.” Inspector Larrue denies Father Logan the opportunity but can’t make any headway with Keller. “You’ve already shot two people,” Larrue shouts to Keller. “Now, isn’t that enough?” Keller tries to open one of the nearby windows. “And. And what about Villette?” Larrue shouts desperately.



**“Coming to speak to me?”** Keller reacts with shock to the question. “So the priest talked?” Keller demands. “Hey, Logan! Where are you, Father Logan?” The priest slowly gathers his courage while Keller mocks him from inside the ballroom: “You are a coward like all other people, aren’t you? A hypocrite like all the rest.” Larrue orders one of his men to take a shot, and Larrue shouts a warning. “Don’t make them do it, Keller!” Father Logan shouts before the shots go off. He pushes past the officers into the ballroom. “Coming to speak to me?” Keller asks gleefully. “Put the gun away,” Father Logan says, walking quickly toward Keller. “There’s been enough bloodshed already.” “You must not come closer, Father,” Keller warns ominously. “I’ll shoot you, you know.” “You won’t shoot me, Otto,” Father Logan says calmly. Clutching the bullet wound in his shoulder, Keller begins to slump against the stage and speak of Alma. “She’s dead,” Logan says. “You killed her.” Keller can’t bear to hear it, blaming Father Logan for Alma’s death.



**Last Rites** “Then I am alone as you are,” Keller eventually says. “I’m not alone,” says Father Logan, the police gathering in the background behind him. “Oh, yes, you are,” Keller quips back. “To kill you would be a favor to you. You have no friends.” While his ranting continues, he raises the pistol, aiming at Father Logan. A detective behind Logan takes a quick shot, striking Keller and sending him tumbling to the floor. Father Logan rushes forward and cradles the dying man. In the background, Father Michael mutters a prayer and Larrue wipes the sweat from his brow. After a long moment, Father Logan murmurs the last rites in Latin before crossing Mr. Keller. Gently, he closes Keller’s eyes before the screen fades to black.

