

Agoraphobia

by
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SCENE 1.

Heavy trance music. A GIRL, dressed all in black, with heavy dark eye shadow, dances.

PERRY watches her. She flirts back.

TOM, Perry's friend, slaps him on the back.

TOM

Go get her, cowboy!

PERRY

I think-

TOM

DON'T THINK! GO!

Tom practically pushes Perry into her. Perry and the girl begin to dance. She is all over him. She kisses him.

PERRY

Let's go to my place.

The club transforms. They are in Perry's apartment. She throws him into a chair.

She straddles his and kisses his chest, his lips, his neck.

She sinks her teeth deep into his neck.

Black.

SCENE 2.

The room contains a small refrigerator, a table, a lamp, a chair, and a front door.

Perry sits in the chair, wrapped in a blanket. A bloody gauze pad on his neck.

A knock on the door.

PERRY

Who is it?

TOM (O.S.)

Who is...you called me!

Perry moves to the door and unlocks it.
He moves back.

PERRY

It's open, come in.

TOM (O.S.)

Come in? Jeez.

Tom enters, singing, carrying the morning paper. The outside light floods in through the door, and Perry slips under the blanket.

PERRY

Shut the door. Please.

Tom does so, grudgingly, shutting out the light.

Perry slips out from under his blanket. Tom indicates the gauze pad.

TOM

What the hell's the matter with you? Couldn't bother to walk down the driveway to get your paper? Why you got the shades all drawn? What happened to your neck?

PERRY

Got bit.

TOM

That chick did that? Nice!

Perry takes off the blanket. He holds up a mirror.

PERRY

Come here.

TOM

Why?

PERRY
Look in this mirror.

Tom does.

TOM
I look good.

PERRY
Bring it here.

Tom does. Perry shows Tom the two of them in the mirror. Tom double-takes.

TOM
I see. That's, uh.

PERRY
Abnormal.

TOM
Yes. And. Uh. How long have you been, without a reflection?

PERRY
Since I got up this morning.

TOM
Again I'll ask: that chick did this to you?

PERRY
I presume so.

TOM
She bit you.

PERRY
Yes.

TOM
Then what?

PERRY
I don't remember.

TOM
Well, what's the first thing you do remember?

PERRY
I woke up on the floor. In a puddle of. Wet red.

TOM

She still here?

PERRY

She was gone when I woke up.

Pause.

TOM

Hm. You hungry?

PERRY

What?

TOM

Because I'm not sticking around if...

PERRY

If what?

TOM

Why did you invite me over here, Perry?

PERRY

Because I need goddamn help, Tom! That's why!

TOM

I understand that.

PERRY

I can't go to the hospital like this. I can't even go outside. I tried to get the paper this morning and I almost passed out.

TOM

No sunlight. Check.

PERRY

I tried to take my pulse. You know what my heart rate is? Nine.

TOM

Nine? What's your blood pressure? Two over negative six?

PERRY

Can we not use that word?

TOM

What word?

PERRY
The B word.

TOM
Blood?

PERRY
It makes me nervous.

TOM
Fine. I'll cross it out of my dictionary.

Pause.

PERRY
You want a drink?

TOM
A beer would be good.

Perry walks to the refrigerator. He opens it.

PERRY
OH!

He slams it shut and puts a hand over his nose.

TOM
What?

PERRY
Was she in my refrigerator? It smells like something died in there!

TOM
Let me see.

Tom open the refrigerator door as Perry stands back. Tom sniffs.

TOM
I don't smell anything.

PERRY
How can you not smell that? I can't even go near that!

Tom looks around the fridge quickly.
Then, he grimaces. He reaches for a
bottle on the shelf.

He sticks the jar in Perry's face.
Perry shrinks back, disgusted.

TOM

(reading the label)

"Jalapeno garlic sauce. Now with more real garlic." You cook
now?

PERRY

I was gonna make dinner for Jamie.

PERRY

So, this has gone unused in the fridge since before she left?
And you starting trolling for undead women?

PERRY

I guess so.

TOM

You want me to get rid of it?

PERRY

Please.

Black.

SCENE 3.

Perry takes two matchsticks and lies
them side by side on the table.

He slowly turns one, crossing it with
the other. He yanks his hand away just
as they are perpendicular.

He looks at his makeshift cross.
Nothing.

PERRY

Well, at least that one isn't true.

The front door opens. A shaft of light
strikes Perry. He quickly steps over to
the wall, protecting himself.

Tom stands in the doorway with a grocery bag.

TOM

I got wings.

PERRY

Shut the door, please.

Tom does so. Perry relaxes.

TOM

Wings? Also picked up some raw hamburger from the store, just in case.

Tom slaps down the raw hamburger, and opens the box of wings.

Perry stares at the wings, glumly.

PERRY

It just doesn't smell appetizing.

TOM

Try them. Don't they look. Gooney?

Perry gives one a shot. He shrugs.

PERRY

I'm not that hungry, anyway.

TOM

So. I see you duct taped the shades to the windows like I suggested. Very good.

PERRY

The light's still coming in.

TOM

Given any more thought to calling the doctor?

PERRY

What's he going to do? Lock me up, or get a wooden stake.

TOM

What do we do, then?

PERRY

I don't know. This sucks.

Tom looks at the door.

TOM

How about chemotherapy?

PERRY

What?

TOM

Where's your closet?

Tom heads offstage.

PERRY

What are you doing? Don't pull my closet apart!

Tom returns with an armload of winter clothing.

TOM

Listen. Chemotherapy works because you basically pump yourself full of poison, poison the disease doesn't like either. If you survive longer than the cancer does, you win.

PERRY

I think that's a pretty weak understanding of chemotherapy. Hey!

Tom starts to pull winter clothes onto Perry, including a ski mask.

TOM

I'm not a doctor, but think about it. Let's say something is taking over your body. What's the thing it hates the most?

Tom grabs the doorknob, ready to open the door.

PERRY

I can't go out there.

TOM

Just stand in the doorway.

PERRY

It won't work.

TOM

I'm trying to be proactive. If you don't like my ideas, come up with your own solution.

Perry puts his head in his hands.

PERRY

Do it.

Tom opens the door. He peeks his head outside and looks around.

TOM

OK, the coast is clear.

PERRY

Who even says that?

TOM

What, the coast is clear?

PERRY

Yeah, who are you, Buck Rodgers?

TOM

Will you quit yakking and get over here?

Very slowly, Perry walks backwards to the doorway, and bathes his completely covered body in the light.

Silence.

TOM

How do you feel?

PERRY

Terrified. And. Something else.

TOM

What? Describe your feelings.

PERRY

Yes, doctor. I feel. Um.

TOM

Nauseous? Headachy?

PERRY

I'm not pregnant, here.

TOM

Sleepy? Dizzy? Gassy?

PERRY

I feel. Burning.

TOM

A burning sensation?

PERRY

NO, I'M ACTUALLY BURNING, YOU JACKASS!

This is suddenly and violently true. Through all of the layers of clothing, smoke begins to pour. Perry collapses.

TOM

Ah crap. Crap.

Tom grabs Perry and drags him out of the light. He shuts the door. He pulls off the ski mask.

He runs from the room and brings back a fire extinguisher. He can't figure it out.

TOM

How does this thing work?

PERRY

Water. Water. Please.

TOM

I'm on top of it.

He leaps over Perry to the refrigerator. He pulls out the Brita pitcher and pours it over Perry.

PERRY

WATER TO DRINK, YOU IDIOT!

TOM

Oh! Right!

He gets a tall glass and pours out the rest of the pitcher.

PERRY

JUST. GIVE IT. PLEASE.

Tom bolts for Perry and holds out the glass. Perry grabs the Brita and begins to pour it into his mouth. Tom, at a loss, drinks the glass of water.

PERRY

Shit...it's not...working...I'm still thirsty...I'm dying here.

Tom jumps back to the refrigerator. He yanks out the container of raw hamburger, opens a drawer on the table, pulls out a knife, and slits the plastic cover.

TOM

Quick! Drink this.

He presses the styrofoam container to Perry's lips, who drinks. He gulps down the liquid at the bottom of the tray.

Perry falls back, satisfied, exhausted.

TOM

Still thirsty? Feel better?

PERRY

Less thirsty. More disturbed.

Black.

SCENE 4.

Less light.

Tom drops grocery bags on the table. They are overflowing with packages of meat and plastic cups of red liquid. All are marked DELI.

Perry sits in a bathrobe, drinking a glass of the red stuff.

TOM

OK, now you've got sixteen pounds of ground beef, twelve quarts of various animal fluids, and a bag of chips. That one's mostly for me.

PERRY

None of it is fresh.

TOM

Well, yeah.

PERRY

I can tell. It's like soda. It makes you think you're not thirsty, until you try to drink it for three days in the desert.

Tom hesitates.

TOM

Well. I did pick up one other item. Not from the grocery store.

Perry stares up at him. Tom goes into the back room.

He returns with a cat carrier, complete with occupant.

PERRY

Get the fuck out.

TOM

Look at it as an insurance policy.

PERRY

You bought a cat?

TOM

Well. No. This is my girlfriend's cat.

PERRY

You stole your girlfriend's cat to be potential food?

TOM

This thing is evil. It is the vilest, angriest cat you ever saw, and if anything deserves to be eaten more than I do, it does.

PERRY

She's gonna murder you.

TOM

She's not gonna know. The thing runs away twice a week. She lets it wander the neighborhood. It's a miracle the thing's still alive.

PERRY

I'm not going to eat your girlfriend's cat.

TOM

Its name is Mr. Destiny.

PERRY

I'm not going to eat Mr. Destiny.

TOM

You'd be putting it out of its misery, for being given a name like that.

PERRY

Bring it back.

TOM

I'm going to put him in the back, just in case.

PERRY

DON'T PUT IT IN THE BACK.

Tom heads out with Mr. Destiny. Perry rubs his forehead and looks at the door.

PERRY

You know, I can hear everything going on outside. It's like tinnitus. I can't shut it out. There's kids across the street. If I try, I can hear their heartbeats. And when I try to imagine them. All I see are necks, arms and legs.

He drinks his cup of blood.

PERRY

It's too damn bright in here.

Tom comes back in.

TOM

You taped down the windows. What do you want? I guess I could do a better job. Get some cardboard. Board them up. Neighbors'll probably start to wonder.

PERRY

I won't ever see them again anyway.

Perry is entranced by Tom, who examines the windows and door. He watches the veins on Tom's neck.

TOM

Will you try to keep a positive attitude for once?

PERRY

I can't go outside. I'm afraid of the outside. And the light keeps getting brighter.

TOM

The light is getting darker.

PERRY

It feels like it's getting brighter. Even parts of the house are too bright now. The world I can inhabit is getting smaller.

At the end of his statement, he begins to move towards Tom silently.

TOM

The sun will go down soon. And we'll work this out. You're still pretty lucid, you're not turning evil, and best of all-

Just as Perry stands behind Tom, Tom flings open the front door, bathing Perry in sunlight. Perry screams and leaps backwards into the safety of the room.

TOM

I'm not an idiot. So maybe we can still think our way out of this.

He closes the door. Perry peeks sheepishly out from the shadows.

TOM

You're starving. I understand. However, I have given you a perfectly legitimate option.

Perry thinks about it, and nods. He starts towards the back room.

TOM

I'll board up the windows. Enjoy your dinner.

Perry sighs.

PERRY

Bon appetit, Mr. Destiny.

Black.

SCENE 5.

Very dim pools of light, slowly fading out.

Perry sits on the floor.

Tom watches him from the chair, holding his jacket on his lap.

TOM

Can we turn on the lamp?

PERRY

No.

TOM

It's artificial.

PERRY

It gives me a headache.

TOM

Yes, dear.

Silence.

PERRY

Gotta take a piss.

TOM

Enjoy yourself.

Perry stands. He carefully avoids the pools of dim light scattered across the floor.

TOM

Seriously?

PERRY

It's too bright.

TOM

Why don't you ride it out in the bathroom? It'll be dark in a couple of minutes.

PERRY

I will.

TOM

I'm gonna turn this light on, then.

PERRY

Fine.

Perry leaves. Tom turns on the lamp. He searches through his jacket pockets. He pulls out a plastic Ziploc bag containing the bottle of garlic sauce. Considers it.

He sits. Pops a beer.

Noise from the other room - a door opening and shutting.

TOM

Whatcha doing?

PERRY (O.S.)

Nothing.

TOM

You're still with me, right? Because I don't bail out on people, dude. We're gonna solve this. But you gotta get your head in the right place.

Silence.

TOM

Perry?

PERRY (O.S.)

Head in the right place, right.

TOM

You're still with this program?

PERRY (O.S.)

Still with the program.

TOM

Good.

Tom considers the garlic sauce. He puts it back in his jacket pocket.

He rummages through Perry's table drawer. He grabs a wooden spoon and snaps it in half.

More movement from down the hall.

TOM

Sun's gotta almost be down. There's no light coming in through the windows.

Silence.

TOM

Perry? Perry? Where are you, dude? Perry? Perry? You alive, man? Don't pull this horror movie shit on me, now.

Silence. Then, a metallic SNAP.

TOM

What was that? Whatcha doing?

Tom goes for his jacket. Another SNAP. Tom thinks. Then looks at the lamp.

TOM

That's not the breaker is it? Are you flipping the - crap!

SNAP, and the lamp goes off.

Total darkness.

TOM

Crap. Crap. Crap.

Something moves in the hallway.

Snap. Tom lights a cigarette lighter. He tears at the jacket and digs out the garlic sauce.

He holds it out just a Perry leaps out from the darkness.

Then a hissing wail, and Perry retreats into the darkness.

Tom scoops the half a spoon from the floor.

TOM

You really can't stand this stuff, can you? OK. I can't see you, but you can probably see me. Given the way this seems to be going.

Faint breathing and growling in the darkness. Perry audibly stalks Tom from the periphery of the light.

TOM

You've got to get past me to get out of here, Perry. Your world's just getting smaller and smaller, now. Look, we still have options. Maybe you can last until morning. Maybe you're different in the day. I'm just trying to be optimistic here, Perry. It would be nice if you'd get on board with that for once. That's your problem, you know. You always say you feel trapped. You're never trapped. Everybody has a million options every day they never take advantage of. You're the biggest perpetrator I ever met. Oh, Dave isn't giving me the raise. Jaime left me. Sunlight causes me to burn. Get over yourself. You're just afraid. You just like living in your comfortable life, hiding in your bathroom. I mean, you're not even going to be a very good creature of the night.

You'll be all, oh, there's so much garlic around this season. There aren't any virgins anymore. This old man tastes funny. You'll be the same loser, and now you'll be an evil loser. That girl wouldn't have even looked at you last night if she hadn't wanted a snack. You know what? I'd be doing you a big favor if I just stuck this spoon right in your-

The cat carrier flies out of the darkness. Tom dives out of the way.

Something crashes across the room and out the door.

Blue moonlight spills into the room, illuminating Tom on the floor.

He stands and peers out the door into the night.

Silence. Then, somewhere in the distance, a woman screams.

Tom smiles.

TOM

Atta boy.

Black.