

ARE YOU AFRAID OF THE DARK?

Written by

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Based on, If Any

Address
Phone Number

EXT. STREET - DAY

LINDA(25) walks down the street, shivering from the cold. She carries a bag of potatoes and looks tired and sad. She approaches a run-down building and fumbles for her key.

LINDA
(to herself)
Come on, where is that damn key?

She finally finds it and unlocks the door. Inside, the room is small and sparsely furnished. Linda puts the potatoes on a table and tries to turn on the rice cooker.

LINDA (CONT'D)
(angrily)
Oh, come on! Not again!

She sighs and begins to prepare the potatoes to cook on the stove. As she works, she remembers the past.

LINDA (V.O.)
I miss him. I miss Pete. And I miss
the life we had before everything
fell apart.

She finishes cooking the potatoes and sits down to eat. They are tasteless, but she eats them anyway.

LINDA (V.O.)
I hate this life. I hate working in
that butcher's store. I hate the
men who come in there and leer at
me. I hate feeling like I have no
choices.

Linda lies down on her bed and falls asleep, but she is awoken by the wind howling outside. She curses and tries to block the draft with some torn newspapers.

LINDA
(to herself)
I can't take this anymore.

She falls back asleep and wakes up to find it's already 11 AM. She curses again, knowing that her boss will dock her pay for being late.

LINDA (CONT'D)
(to herself)
I can't afford to lose any more
money.

She falls back asleep and wakes up again at 2 PM. The wind has stopped, and she feels a little better. She decides to treat herself to a steak at Mr. Raymond's steakhouse.

CUT TO:

INT. MR. RAYMOND'S STEAKHOUSE - DAY

Linda sits at a table, looking out of place in her green velvet dress. She orders a steak and a glass of wine. As she eats, she can't help but feel jealous of Mrs. Raymond.

LINDA
(to herself)
She has everything I want. A lovely
home, good food, and a loving
husband. It's not fair.

As she finishes her meal, Mr. Raymond comes over to her table.

MR. RAYMOND
(smiling)
How was everything, Linda?

Linda smiles back, feeling a little flustered.

LINDA
It was beautiful, Mr. Raymond.
Thank you.

MR. RAYMOND
(leaning in)
If you ever need anything, don't
hesitate to ask.

Linda feels a flutter in her stomach.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY

Linda walks out of the steakhouse, feeling a mixture of satisfaction and guilt. She knows she shouldn't have spent money on a fancy meal, but escaping her dreary existence for a while was worth it. Walking down the street, she sees a group of kids playing hopscotch. She smiles, remembering her childhood.

LINDA (V.O.)
I used to play hopscotch with my
sister when we were kids. We had
dreams and hopes back then.

She shakes her head, pushing the memories aside.

LINDA (V.O.)
But that was a long time ago. So
now, I have to survive.

As she walks, she sees a HELP WANTED sign in the window of a clothing store. She hesitates for a moment, then decides to go in and inquire.

CUT TO:

INT. CLOTHING STORE - DAY

Linda walks up to the counter and speaks to the sales clerk.

LINDA
(excitedly)
I saw your help and wanted to sign
outside. Is the position still
available?

SALES CLERK
(smiling)
Yes, it is. Can you fill out this
application?

Linda nods eagerly and takes the form. As she fills it out, she feels a sense of hope. Maybe this job could be her way out.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY

Linda walks out of the store, feeling buoyant. She knows there's no guarantee she'll get the job, but just the act of trying has lifted her spirits. Walking down the street, she sees a group of men gathered outside a storefront. They're catcalling and whistling at her.

LINDA (V.O.)
Why do men have to be like that?
Can't they leave me alone?

She tries to ignore them and keeps walking, but one of the men steps in front of her, blocking her path.

MAN

(leering)
Hey there, pretty lady. Where are
you headed?

Linda feels a surge of fear, but she tries to stay calm.

LINDA

(sternly)
Excuse me, sir, but I need to get
past it.

The man laughs and moves closer to her.

MAN

(smirking)
Why don't you stay and have a
little fun with us, huh?

Linda feels her blood boil. Finally, she's had enough of men treating her like an object.

LINDA

(angrily)
No, thank you.

She pushes past the man and walks away.

CUT TO:

INT. LINDA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Linda sits at her kitchen table, staring at the phone. She's been waiting for a call back from the clothing store all day, but it hadn't come. She feels a sense of disappointment and frustration.

LINDA (V.O.)

Why do things always have to be so
hard for me? What did I do to
deserve this life?

She hears a knock at the door and gets up to answer it.

CUT TO:

INT. LINDA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Linda opens the door to find Mr. Raymond standing there, looking concerned.

MR. RAYMOND
(worriedly)
Linda, I came to check on you. You
seemed upset earlier today.

Linda feels a mix of gratitude and embarrassment. She didn't expect Mr. Raymond to care about her problems.

LINDA
(thankfully)
Thank you, Mr. Raymond. That's very
kind of you.

MR. RAYMOND
(sincerely)
Is there anything I can do to help?

Linda hesitates momentarily, unsure how to respond to Mr. Raymond's offer. She knows he's a wealthy and influential man and is uncertain if she wants to owe him any favors. But at the same time, she can't deny that the idea of having someone to rely on is tempting.

LINDA
(awkwardly)
Um, thank you, Mr. Raymond. I
appreciate it.

MR. RAYMOND
(smiling)
Good. I'm glad to hear that. And
please, call me Edward.

Linda nods and smiles, feeling a little more at ease.

LINDA
Thank you, Edward.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Linda walks down the street, her hands in her pockets. She looks around, taking in the sights and sounds of the city. She sees couples walking hand in hand and feels a pang of envy.

LINDA (V.O.)
Why can't I have that? Why can't I
be happy like them?

She shakes her head, knowing she feels sorry for herself.
Nevertheless, she keeps walking, hoping to stumble upon
something that will make her feel better.

CUT TO:

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Linda walks into a bar, hoping to find some company. She sits
at the bar and orders a drink, feeling slightly nervous.

LINDA
(to the bartender)
Can I get a martini, please?

BARTENDER
(nodding)
Sure thing.

Linda sips her drink, feeling a little more relaxed. She
looks around the bar and sees a man sitting a few seats down.
He's tall and handsome, with dark hair and piercing blue
eyes. He catches her staring and smiles.

MAN
(winking)
Hey there.

Linda feels her cheeks turn red.

LINDA
(awkwardly)
Hi.

MAN
(sitting next to her)
Mind if I buy you a drink?

Linda hesitates for a moment but then nods.

LINDA
(smiling)
Sure. Why not?

The man orders another round of drinks, and they start
talking. Linda learns his name is Rich, and he's a
businessman in town for a conference.

They talk about their lives and dreams, and Linda feels more comfortable around him.

CUT TO:

INT. LINDA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Linda sits at her small kitchen table, staring at a pile of bills. She looks defeated and stressed, trying to figure out how to pay for everything. Then, suddenly, there's a knock at the door, and Linda gets up to answer it. When she opens the door, she sees Mr. Raymond standing outside and is surprised.

LINDA
(surprised)
Mr. Raymond? What are you doing here?

MR. RAYMOND
(smiling)
I was in the neighborhood and thought I'd drop by. May I come in?

Linda hesitates for a moment but eventually nods and lets him in. They sit at the kitchen table, and Mr. Raymond pulls out a checkbook, making Linda uneasy.

MR. RAYMOND (CONT'D)
(handling her a check)
Consider this a gift, Linda. I know times are tough, and I want to help in any way I can.

Linda looks at the check-in in disbelief.

LINDA
(whispering)
This is too much. I can't accept this.

MR. RAYMOND
(kindly)
Please, Linda. I insist. Consider it a loan if it makes you feel better.

Linda reluctantly nods, feeling like she doesn't have any other choice. As she takes the check, she notices that Mr. Raymond's hand lingers on hers for a moment too long, and she feels uncomfortable.

LINDA

(thankful)

Thank you so much, Mr. Raymond. You don't know how much this means to me.

Mr. Raymond stands up and places a hand on her shoulder, which makes Linda flinch.

MR. RAYMOND

(sympathetically)

I do know, Linda. I've been there myself. And I want you to know that you can always come to me for help, no matter what.

Linda nods, grateful for the unexpected kindness but uneasy about Mr. Raymond's behavior.

CUT TO:

INT. BUTCHER'S STORE - DAY

Linda works behind the counter, smiling as customers come in and out. She's wearing a new dress, and her hair is styled differently, feeling more confident and presentable. However, as she works, she notices Mr. Raymond loitering around the store, watching her intently.

Linda tries to ignore him, but he keeps finding reasons to come up and talk to her, even when he doesn't need to buy anything. He compliments her on her appearance, tells her she smells nice, and even touches her arm at one point, which makes her feel incredibly uncomfortable and trapped.

CUSTOMER

(smiling)

You look nice today, Linda. New dress?

Linda nods, trying to play it off as if everything is okay.

LINDA

(smiling)

Thank you. It was a gift.

CUSTOMER

(raising an eyebrow)

From who?

Linda hesitates for a moment, knowing that she can't keep this a secret forever.

LINDA
(smiling, but nervously)
From Mr. Raymond.

The customer nods, understanding, but Linda can't shake off the feeling that she's trapped and alone.

CUSTOMER
(nodding)
He's a good man, that Mr. Raymond.

Linda forces a smile, feeling like things are finally starting to look up, but deep down, she knows that this isn't over yet, and she's scared about what might happen next.

INT. LINDA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

As the day goes on, Linda can't shake off a feeling of unease. She can't stop thinking about Mr. Raymond and his unexpected kindness. Later that night, as she lies in bed, she can't sleep.

Linda sits in front of her laptop, typing away. She pauses and leans back in her chair, rubbing her temples. She takes a deep breath and starts typing again, determined to learn more about Mr. Raymond.

Linda's laptop screen shows her scrolling through search results pages until she stops on one that catches her eye. The article is titled "The Dark Side of Mr. Raymond's Success."

Linda's eyes widen as she reads about Mr. Raymond's history of exploiting vulnerable women. Then, she gasps and whispers to herself.

LINDA
(whispering)
Oh my God. What have I gotten
myself into?

She continues to read, feeling sick to her stomach, as she realizes that Mr. Raymond's "gift" wasn't an act of kindness but a way to control her.

Linda closes her laptop and takes a deep breath. She knows she has to do something, so the next day she goes to the police and tells them everything.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Linda sits across from a police officer, her hands shaking.

POLICE OFFICER
Can you tell me exactly what
happened, Linda?

Linda takes a deep breath and recounts her experiences with Mr. Raymond. She tells the officer about the gift, the dinners, and the inappropriate comments. She tells him how she felt trapped and scared.

The police officer takes notes and promises to investigate Mr. Raymond. A few weeks later, Linda gets a call from the police.

POLICE OFFICER (V.O.)
Linda, we have found evidence of
Mr. Raymond's predatory behavior.
He has been arrested and charged
with multiple counts of sexual
assault and exploitation.

Linda feels relieved that justice has been served, but the trauma of what happened weighs heavily on her.

INT. LINDA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Linda sits alone in her apartment, staring into space. She feels lost and alone.

LINDA
(whispering to herself)
How could I have been so naive? How
could I have let this happen to me?

Days turn into weeks, and Linda struggles to understand what happened. Finally, she isolates herself from the world, afraid to trust anyone.

INT. LINDA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Linda sits at her kitchen table, staring at a bottle of pills and a bottle of alcohol.

LINDA
(whispering to herself)
I can't take it anymore. I can't
live like this.

She picks up the pills and the bottle of alcohol, ready to end it all.

FADE TO BLACK.

