

Doormat Smiles

By

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FADE IN:

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

DAVID sits at the breakfast table and rubs the sleep out of his eyes.

CHERYL(OS)
Coffee or tea?

DAVID
Hmmm, coffee I think, strong
please.

David is in his late 30s, thinning hair, hawklike features and this morning - bloodshot eyes.

CHERYL (OS)
Strong? What - black as midnight on
a moonless night?

DAVID
(laughing)
No thanks Agent Cooper, white but
strong is fine.

CHERYL (OS)
Not like you love, you okay?

DAVID
Didn't sleep so well, tossed and
turned most of the night.

The sounds of SPOON AND CUP mixing emanate from behind David.

CHERYL (OS)
Poor baby, any idea why?

DAVID
Not a clue.

CHERYL approaches the table and puts a mug down in front of David. She is also in her mid thirties, not unattractive in a plain Jane kind of way.

She sits opposite her husband.

CHERYL
So did you?

(CONTINUED)

DAVID
Did I what?

CHERYL
Have one of your great dreams.

DAVID
Oh no, not last night...

CHERYL
(laughing)
Remember that one you had about the
cast of Glee coming to do our
gardening?

DAVID
Yeah - funny one that!

CHERYL
Oh and remember that time...

Cheryl's animated recollection starts to become DISTANT and
OBSCURED by another sound, spectral music starts.

WAIT A MINUTE MR POSTMAN - too loud and at the wrong speed
permeates the air.

David's eyes glaze over.

Cheryl continues to mouth words that can't be heard.

David begins to hum along.

CHERYL
(tugging David's arm)
Oi sleepy head... you drifted off
there for a mo...

The song stops abruptly and David is back at the kitchen
table.

DAVID
Sorry love.

CHERYL
Anywhere nice?

DAVID
Where?

CHERYL
Where you drifted off to, nice was
it?

DAVID

Oh, I see, and no, not really.

CHERYL

Well never mind, get an early night
and you'll be fine tomorrow.

DAVID

Good plan love.

CHERYL

Of course, now I'm off to finish
getting ready - you still be here
when I'm done?

DAVID

(holding up coffee cup)
No, gonna finish this and get
going.

CHERYL

Okey dokey, that case I'll see you
tonight.

Cheryl gets up from the table, leans over and plants a kiss
on David's cheek before scurrying off upstairs.

David stares into the contents of his cup and watches the
steam rise.

After a few moments he takes a large gulp, grimaces, and
repeats until he's drained the cup.

David leaves the cup on the table and heads out of the
kitchen.

INT. HALLWAY, IN FRONT OF DOOR

David approaches the front door ready to face the day.

He stops tentatively and looks down at the doormat where a
brown paper envelope sits waiting for him.

David stoops and picks up the envelope.

The envelope is sealed.

David turns it over in his hands but there is no addressee,
stamp or any other marks on the envelope.

David glances behind him, upstairs, where a hair dryer has
just started up.

(CONTINUED)

DAVID

Hmmm...

David slides an exploratory nail under the flap of the envelope, then the rest of his finger.

He pries the flap open and then pushes the sides together to make it gape a little.

He peers inside.

DAVID

God, not again?

David tips the envelope at an angle until something slides out into this outstretched palm.

It's a photo, reverse side up.

David turns the photograph over.

DAVID

Fuck!

The photograph shows a woman tied to chair, leather hood type restraint over her head.

David drops the photo in shock and revulsion.

DAVID

Fuck!

Upstairs the hairdryer clicks off.

CHERYL (OS)

That you love?

DAVID

Yeah, just going, see you later.

CHERYL (OS)

You too love.

David drops to one knee and sweeps the photo up and back into the envelope before putting the key into the lock and leaving the house.

The hairdryer starts up again as the door closes.

INT. CAR - MORNING

David drives hunched over the wheel.

On the seat beside him is the envelope.

David pulls into a large supermarket, drives to the back of the mostly empty car park and turns off the engine.

He drops his head to the steering wheel and sighs.

DAVID
(under breath)
Another!

David pops open his glove box and another brown paper envelope uncurls menacingly from its confinement.

David nervously glances into the mirror and scans round the exterior of the car.

Satisfied no one is around he shakes out the contents of both envelopes.

Two photo's look almost identical, but the one from the glove box has no woman in frame - just an empty chair in an empty room.

DAVID
Huh, same then...

David examines the photo's up close, switching back and forth between the two, seeking something.

DAVID
Definitely same place...

David carefully puts the photos back in their respective envelopes and then both into the glove box.

He stares at the envelopes, shudders and slams the glove box shut.

A twist of the key and the engine returns to life.

David drives off slowly.

INT. OFFICE

David is sat in the coffee area of the office with GEOFF, a slightly older, rotund man with glasses and red cheeks.

They are both eating sandwiches and drinking diet coke.

DAVID

So I don't know what they are...

GEOFF

Un huh, well it's a prank, gotta be.

DAVID

Yeah but who'd do such a thing?

GEOFF

Kids! You annoyed any of the neighborhood chavs lately?

DAVID

No course not.

GEOFF

Just random mischief then.

David frowns, takes a bit of his sandwich and munches thoughtfully.

DAVID

Seems more planned than that.

GEOFF

Nah, just kids... they'll find something else to do soon.

DAVID

I'm not sure...

GEOFF

Too many gadgets and internet porn, they'll move on!

Geoff looks smug, happy with his verdict. He takes a bite from his sandwich.

DAVID

Yeah, you're right, kids, little feckers!

David and Geoff set to finishing their food.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - DUSK

David drives slowly up the driveway and comes to a gentle stop outside his house.

The house is in darkness, Cheryl not home yet.

A frown crosses David's face as he narrows his eyes and stares at the house door.

From the letter box protrudes a brown envelope.

DAVID

No!

David continues to stare at the door, his hands gripping the steering wheel like a life raft.

Moments pass as he grips harder, and harder.

DAVID

Ow!

David pulls his hands from the steering wheel and shakes them to get the blood flowing again.

He sits in the car, hand wavering on the handle, hand down, back up, down in his lap.

DAVID

Fuck this!

David flings the door open and almost leaps out of the car.

In two quick strides he is beside the front door.

Again he pauses, hand hovering.

Then the envelope is in one hand, with the other he unlocks the door and steps into the house.

INT. HALLWAY

David kicks the door shut with his heel. The SLAM rings out like a gunshot in the quiet house.

David cocks his head, waiting for a reply.

The house remains silent.

He holds the envelope at arms length before bringing it near and running a finger under the flap.

He slides the content out onto his palm.

(CONTINUED)

The photo is almost the same, but this time the edge of the frame has a figure stood in it, in one hand a large whip.

The hooded woman is now straining against her bonds, sinews standing out on her neck and arms.

DAVID

Jesus!

David puts the chain on the door.

He glances at the wall clock, 5.45.

David turns and retreats into the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN

David paces into the kitchen, stops by the table and pushes the photo into the middle of it.

He sits down, shrugs off his jacket and slumps into the seat.

He eyes the photo nervously.

With an extended fingertip he pulls the photo across the table towards him.

He picks the photo up and starts to examine it.

The photo is the same scene as the others, shot from the same place.

The woman is active, fighting her bonds.

The figure caught in the corner of the frame appears male but there isn't enough detail to be conclusive.

The whip looks aggressive.

David runs a finger over the surface of the photo, traces the shape of the whip.

David drifts into reverie.

(BEAT)

RATTLING sound interrupts him.

CHERYL (OS)

David - you there?

David starts with a jerk.

(CONTINUED)

The kitchen is darker.

DAVID
Yep, coming.

CHERYL (OS)
Hurry up, it's freezing out here!

David picks up the photo, slips it into the envelope and pick up his jacket - which he uses to cover the envelope.

INT. HALLWAY

David takes the chain from the door and opens it.

CHERYL
What's with the chain?

DAVID
Dunno, musta been on autopilot.

Cheryl starts to take her coat off, kick her shoes from her feet.

CHERYL
You just got home too?

Cheryl nods at David's jacket hanging from his hand.

DAVID
Er, yeah - just through the door myself.

CHERYL
Late at work?

David looks quizzically at his wife.

CHERYL
You're normally home an hour before me...

David glances at the wall clock, 6.45.

DAVID
Er, no, traffic outside the office, something musta happened.

CHERYL
That's rubbish!

(CONTINUED)

DAVID
Yeah, tell me about it.

CHERYL
So?

DAVID
So?

CHERYL
My kiss?

DAVID
God, yep, sorry.

David leans in and kisses his wife.

CHERYL
You okay?

DAVID
Yeah, all good and glad it's
Friday!

CHERYL
Yeah, work was bedlam today,
relieved when it was over.

Cheryl starts to move towards the kitchen.

DAVID
Bad?

David follows her.

INT. KITCHEN

Cheryl flicks the kitchen light on.

CHERYL
Yeah, Sonia is still off sick so I
was picking up her stuff too and
Friday is always really busy
anyways.

DAVID
God, she's a liability.

CHERYL
Yep... shall we call out for food?

DAVID
Great idea, pizza?

CHERYL
Yeah if you like.

DAVID
Do you mind calling, I just wanna
run upstairs and change.

CHERYL
No probs - usual?

DAVID
Please, extra mushroom though.

David starts to move out of the kitchen as Cheryl takes her
phone from her pocket.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

David sits at the table typing away on his iPad.

From upstairs come the sounds of movement, busy, bustling.

WEBSITE - Snopes (visible on iPad screen)

David types 'porn through the post' and presses enter.

A list of results come back, David scans the summaries
carefully.

DAVID
(muttering)
Nothing?

David re-types his Search 'anonymous s&m through the post'
and hits enter again.

Results come back on the screen, many of them the same as
before. David checks them again, concentrating.

CHERYL (OS)
What ya doing?

Cheryl appears at his side.

DAVID
Sheesh you scared me!

CHERYL
Sorry, you were miles away...
and...

(CONTINUED)

DAVID

And?

CHERYL

What's so engrossing?

DAVID

Oh just this website Geoff mentioned.

CHERYL

God is it as weird as him?

DAVID

He's not weird.

CHERYL

Yep, he definitely is, he's nearly 40, lives at with his Mum, plays video games and collects Blakes 7 memorabilia.

DAVID

So - that's not weird.

CHERYL

Did you hear me say Blakes 7?

DAVID

Anyways!

CHERYL

Website, yeah, so what sort of fetish porn has he been recommending?

DAVID

(smiling)

As if... and in the kitchen... and on a Saturday!

CHERYL

Careful what you say next!

DAVID

Snopes, that's the website, debunks urban myths and stuff. Really fascinating.

CHERYL

What sort of stuff?

(CONTINUED)

DAVID

Your mate Sonia, you know that crap she posts on Facebook, what was it last week, pink crystal meths to get kids hooked.

CHERYL

(protesting)

That's true it was on...

DAVID

(finishing her sentence)

... the internet?

CHERYL

Yeah, yeah - not everything online is rubbish, you old cynic!

DAVID

Like those cute cat video's she constantly posts, those are real... Just really, really, really - shite!

CHERYL

Ouch - harsh!

DAVID

But still true though.

CHERYL

Snopes though?

DAVID

Yeah you should check it - specially for anything Sonia tells you.

CHERYL

Stop with the Sonia bashing tormenting! I'm gonna leave you to your Japanese porn and go to the gym.

DAVID

(grinning)

It's not Japanese.

CHERYL

Whatever your perv!

Cheryl stoops for a quick kiss and turns on her heels.

(CONTINUED)

Moments later the sound of the front door opening, and then closing, signal her departure.

David relaxes and clears his browser history.

He picks up his coffee and goes to the kitchen window and looks out into the garden.

A metallic rattle comes through from the hallway.

DAVID
Forgot something love?

There is no answer.

David puts his cup down and goes to the hallway.

INT. HALLWAY

David stares incredulously at the doormat.

Another brown envelope stares back.

David walks to the front door and peers out through the side window.

Cheryl's car has gone.

DAVID
Who the fuck?

David picks up the envelope and slides out the photograph.

The scene is the same, mostly.

The man in the scene is nearer the woman now, the whip poised ready to strike.

The man's face is slightly at an angle, in the shadow and indistinct, the only visible element a manic grin.

The background is a little clearer in this shot, rear wall, damp and rough is visible behind the woman.

DAVID
Can't be, just can't.

David turns, takes a key from his pocket and opens the door to the basement.

Once down the stairs David turns on a light and scans the floor, walls and ceiling nearest the door.

SIDE ON: ON DAVID

DAVID
Anyone down here?

No answer.

DAVID
Just me?

WIDE: BASEMENT

David is staring at himself in a mirror on the wall.

The David in the mirror is wide eyed and manic.

DAVID - IN THE MIRROR
Yep - just me - like the photo's?

David turns from the mirror, now wide eyed and manic,
leaving normal David in the mirror.

David moves to face the center of the room.

DAVID
We've got about an hour, what shall
we do today.

David advances and the interior becomes visible.

A camera on a tripod is in the middle of the room, to the
side a small table with a printer on it.

Stepping forward he picks up a whip hanging from the tripod
and flicks a switch on the camera.

DAVID
So Sonia, ready?

David advances, whip held high.

Sonia struggles against her confinement at the back of the
room.

David smiles as the camera flash goes off.

FADE OUT:

THE END