

Eisoptrophobia

FADE IN:

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Fast food joint. Mostly empty. Eight people sit, crowded at a table.

Everybody's laughing. Having a good time. Save for--

JACK ROGERS (21), sitting silently. He EXHALES, presses his legs together. SAM SHAW (21), next to him, takes notice--

SAM
(Hushed)
Dude, just fucking go.

Jack shakes his head. Eats a fry.

JACK
(Hushed)
I'll hold it. Unless you're coming.

Sam looks around.

SAM
(Hushed, Derisive)
Yeah, that's not happening.

He turns back to the table. A pretty blonde (20), smiles at him. He smirks back.

Jack doesn't move. A beat. Sam rolls his eyes, turns back to him--

SAM (CONT'D)
Christ, fine.

They both get up.

HALLWAY - RESTAURANT

Narrow space. Incandescent light FLICKERS above, illuminating a bathroom sign on a door. Jack and Sam approach it.

SAM
Why can't you just wait for
somebody else to go in first?

JACK
Cause that's the weirdest fucking
thing anybody could do.

SAM
What, and this isn't?

JACK
Alright, is doing this gonna kill
you?

SAM
Yeah, I'm dying right now. How do
you deal with this at home,
anyways?

JACK
Look, I doubt you want to know.

SAM
Jeez...

JACK
Can we just get it over with?

The door SWINGS open. Somebody comes out, glaring at both of
them.

SAM
(Under his breath)
Great.

Jack looks at him--

JACK
Well, after you.

SAM
You're kidding me.

Sam pushes the door open but stops--

SAM (CONT'D)
No, hang on.

He looks Jack square in the eyes.

SAM (CONT'D)
Tell me what you're afraid of.

JACK
Oh, come on-

SAM
That's my condition for doing this.

JACK
Look, you're not going to
understand-

SAM
Oh, I know I won't.
(beat)
They're just fucking mirrors, Jack.
Reflective surfaces, that's it.
What's the problem?

A beat. Jack looks around, shakes his head--

JACK
I'm not scared of *mirrors*.

Sam raises an eyebrow.

SAM
Then what?

Jack SIGHS--

JACK
It's my reflection.

SAM
Yeah, what about it?

Jack struggles to come up with the words--

JACK
It's... it's not right. Something's
off about it. Always been like
this.

Sam seems visibly more intrigued.

SAM
Like what? What's wrong with it?

Jack's tone is dead serious.

JACK
Whatever's staring back... I'm
pretty sure it's not me.

Sam SCOFFS.

SAM
C'mon, that's ridiculous. The hell
does that even mean?

A beat.

JACK
I see myself blinking sometimes.

Sam's face drops for a second.

SAM
Well... it's probably just in your head. Some traumatic shit happen to as a kid? To do with mirrors?

Jack slowly shakes his head.

JACK
No.

SAM
Well, just don't look at your reflection then. The hell do you need me for?

JACK
Nothing happens whenever somebody else is there. But when I'm alone... I can't avoid it.

A beat. They just stand there. Sam doesn't seem fully convinced.

SAM
Alright, whatever. It's been long enough, everybody's probably making theories about us.

Sam enters the--

BATHROOM - RESTAURANT

Typical layout. A big mirror to the side. Jack hurries in, looking straight as he enters a stall.

Sam positions himself at a urinal. Once he finishes up, he starts towards the sink. Stares at his reflection as he washes his hands. He SCOFFS.

He looks at the stall. Jack's still in there.

SAM
Look, you're gonna hate me but... you gotta deal with this shit sooner or later.

Sam starts towards the door.

SAM (CONT'D)
This is me helping you.

And he exits.

JACK (O.S)
Dude? Are you kidding me?

URINAL

Jack buries his hands into his face. He looks terrified.

JACK
Fuck.

He shakes his head. EXHALES. Gets up, flushing the toilet. Just stands there for a second. He's not ready.

He swallows. Opens the stall door, coming back out into the--

WASHROOM

He catches a glimpse of himself before quickly turning away.

JACK
(Under his breath)
C'mon. Just do it.

He turns back around slowly. Lifts his head... and stares at himself. He walks towards the mirror. Everything seems normal. *Until--*

He stops. So does his reflection. But not at the same time. About a second delay.

He's breathing heavy now. Panic in his eyes. He turns away for a second before forcing himself to stare back.

JACK (CONT'D)
Fuck it.

He SLAMS his hands on the counter, gets close to the mirror.

JACK
Who are you?

Jack waits. Nothing happens for a while. He shifts a bit in the reflection. Only in the reflection.

The mirrored version of Jack eventually starts raising his arm slowly. Points a finger directly ahead. Right at him. Jack goes white. Jack points at himself.

JACK

Me?

A beat. The reflection seems to contemplate for a second. It eventually shakes its head. Jack furrows his brow in confusion.

JACK

What do you want?

His voice quivers a bit. The reflection just points at him again. Jack SIGHS--

JACK

I don't understand.

The reflection holds his finger up. Starts walking backwards. It remains stone-faced. Jack remains paralyzed.

It's backed up near the urinals at this point. Right next to the light switch. Jack just stares at it in confusion. And then he realizes--

JACK

Shit.

He WHIPS his head around. For a split second, he's faced with his doppelganger, in physical form. It gives him a twisted smirk before turning off the lights.

RAGGED breaths are audible in the dark. Along with one pair of footsteps.

INT. RESTAURANT

Everybody's getting ready to leave. One of the Guys turns to Sam--

GUY

What the hell's Jack doing in there?

Sam shrugs.

SAM

Who the fuck knows, man.

He chuckles. But there's a hint of worry in his eyes.

SAM (CONT'D)

Maybe I'll go check.

He stands up as Jack comes out of the corridor. He walks towards him. Sam breathes a subtle sigh of relief. He smiles at Jack--

SAM (CONT'D)

So what, you see the boogeyman in there?

Jack laughs, shakes his head.

JACK

Guess I didn't know what I was expecting. Not gonna worry about it anymore.

SAM

Good. Rest in peace to that bullshit.

They start heading towards the exit. The group leaves one by one until it's just Jack still inside. He stops. Watches the glass door as it closes in front of him.

He stares at where his reflection's supposed to be. There's nothing. Just tables behind him. He grins, before heading out.

CUT TO:

BLACK.

END.