

HEED THE SLIGHTED

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FADE IN:

INT. OLD HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

A single candle flame. But wait, it's not alone. We spread wide to include at least five other candles in various stages of life set on an old dresser, all thick with cascades of spent wax along their sides.

A KNOCK at the door, then an older man's voice -

VOICE (O.S.)

Mom?

The flames illuminate walls of old, yet beautiful, woven tapestries. The light finds its way to a bed with an old, yet beautiful, woman - the man's MOTHER.

The level of liquid left in the bottle of Jack Daniel's on her nightstand shows it has provided much warmth already. A small glass and a well worn book of ancient pagan rituals sit beside it. A little louder this time -

VOICE (O.S.)

Mom?

When no answer comes, electric light streams in as the door CREAKS open. In steps SAM, a man in his mid to late 30s. A little soft around the middle, and maybe a bit soft in the head as well; It's too soon to tell.

He lifts the bottle for inspection. The same word, but laced with disappointment this time -

SAM

Mom.

As Sam leans over her, a silver pendant showing a tree overlaid by a pentagram hangs out of his open collared shirt. She's breathing. He takes the small glass up with the bottle of JD, blows out the candles and leaves the room, closing the door behind him to complete darkness.

INT. MODERN OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Sam opens the main lobby door at his work - the light is near blinding. A phone RINGS as he passes by the young RECEPTIONIST.

RECEPTIONIST O.S.
Good morning, SimCo Industries.

As Sam walks into an open office area, a group of four employees gather in the walkway yakking about who knows what TV show. Two young suits and two young ladies. It's going to be tight.

Blinders on, Sam forges ahead trying not to draw attention. A slender woman, JULIE, late 20s, laughs at something one of the young suits, RYAN, also late 20s, says.

As she tips her head to take a sip of her coffee, she catches Sam out the corner of her eye.

JULIE
Oh, hi Sam.

FAIL. Without looking up, Sam nods and slips past...oblivious to Julie's disappoint in his response. Not quite out of earshot, Sam hears -

RYAN
Freak.

He ignores the comment, and pushes the door leading to the stairs.

INT. SMALL OFFICE - DAY

Sam's lone laminate desk sits inside a small office surrounded by various pieces of computer hardware. A couple of printers, an opened CPU sits on the desk.

The room is dark compared to the rest of the building. Could be the addition of the cheap blinds on a smaller window. Sam slides a hard drive in when a BING is heard on his computer: a new email.

The note is from Joanne, the office manager. The subject in bold reads MEMO TO STAFF. Sam clicks on it.

Insert:

To: SimCo Staff

Subject: Alarm Testing

Please be aware that Fire
Inspection Safety Corp. will be
conducting tests on our fire alarm
system tomorrow. Please disregard
the alarm as it may go off several

times over the course of the morning.

Sam allows himself a smile, as though this is the very moment he'd been waiting for. He stretches his lungs with air and closes his eyes. You get the feeling he almost can't stop himself from bursting with joy.

JULIE (O.S.)

How much?

Startled, Sam nearly falls off his chair. He collects himself as Julie steps in.

SAM

Excuse me?

JULIE

How much did you win?

SAM

Sorry...I'm not following.

Julie folds her arms.

JULIE

Well, by the grin on your face I'd say you just won a huge jackpot or you're watching some great porn footage.

SAM

Neither.

JULIE

I always thought you were more observant, Sam.

SAM

What do you mean?

Julie waggles her ring finger. She's coincidentally also near bursting with joy.

JULIE

Matt finally proposed. Can you believe it?

She offers her hand for inspection.

SAM

Nice rock. Congratulations.

He turns his attention back to the CPU.

JULIE

That's it? 'Nice rock'?

Sam shrugs.

JULIE

You didn't you say 'hi' to me this morning.

SAM

(protests)

I did.

JULIE

Remember our little talk last week about taking the elevator so you'd get used to being near the human species?

SAM

I like exercise.

She points toward his soft torso and shoots him a doubtful look.

JULIE

A nod isn't a 'hello' by the way. It would be great if you would just stop to have a conversation sometimes.

SAM

With those guys? Why bother? I'm just a freak.

Julie pretends not to notice Sam's emphasis on the word 'freak'.

SAM

I said congratulations, you know. I didn't just say 'nice rock'.

JULIE

Listen, I know it's not really any of my business, but maybe if you didn't go around telling people you're a warlock, they wouldn't act so weird around you.

SAM
It's the truth.

JULIE
It's your religion. And people
don't like talking about religion.

Julie subconsciously twists her engagement ring.

SAM
You mean they don't like talking
about my religion.

JULIE
Maybe it scares them.

Sam places the CPU on the floor then locks eyes with Julie.

SAM
Maybe it should.

If his aim was to unnerve her, he's succeeded.

JULIE
Listen, I really just came up to
thank you for all your advice with
Matt. I won't bother you anymore.
(Waves at the room full of
hardware.)
You obviously prefer the company of
the inorganic.

Julie turns to leave. Sam's bravado leaves with her as he
watches her walk away.

INT. CORRIDOR BY BREAK ROOM - DAY

Sam walks toward the break room for lunch. Just as he
reaches the doorway, he overhears -

RYAN (O.S.)
Maybe he didn't say warlock after
all. Maybe he said boretalk -

INT. BREAK ROOM - DAY

Both Young Suits sit at one of the break tables with Julie
and AMANDA, another up and comer at the company.

RYAN (CONT)

- because every time that guy opens his mouth I'm bored out of my mind.

YOUNG SUIT #2 and Amanda laugh. Julie takes a bit of her sandwich.

YOUNG SUIT #2

Ryan, he must have said sorecock... from all the masturbating he does.

Ryan admits this is even better given the roar of laughter he lets loose.

AMANDA

I know I wouldn't touch him.

JULIE

He's not that bad guys. He's pretty nice once you get to know him.

RYAN

It's not our fault the guy makes himself an easy target, Julie.

Enjoying the first reaction, #2 tries another one on for size -

YOUNG SUIT #2

Sam, Sam...the Dungeons and Dragons man...lives with his mom and his right hand, Jan.

Oh yeah. The reaction is spectacular. Julie packs up.

JULIE

Later guys. I have that conference call.

They can barely acknowledge her exit. Julie turns the corner and -

INT. CORRIDOR BY BREAK ROOM - DAY

- nearly slams into Sam. His expression is somewhat thankful, but she says nothing and just moves past him. He watches her walk away for the second time that day.

INT. OLD HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Sam walks in the house. He's greeted by a hand-written note on the counter.

INSERT:

Gone out for a while. Leftovers in
the fridge.

No salutation, no signature needed. Who else ever comes there?

INT. OLD HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sam flips the light switch and walks over to his mom's dresser. He closes his eyes and lowers his head for a few moments. An intensity overtakes his face when he lifts his head back up.

He positions his hands around one of the candles as though holding a softball between them. He rotates each hand in opposite directions, as though twisting a Rubik's Cube, still keeping the shape of a ball. His voice is as intense as his features -

SAM

Air in abundance, all around me,
gather and grant me fire.

His hands continue in a fluid movement. Again -

SAM

Air in abundance, all around me,
gather and grant me fire.

The imaginary ball in his hands grows larger.

SAM

Air in abundance, all around me -

He turns his palms upwards and throws his hands up in a sweeping motion -

SAM

- grant me fire!

And the air does. A nearly 10" flame bursts upon the wick, before retreating to its normal, tamer, 1" height. Sam seems pleased and blows it out.

INT. SAM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sam lies in his worn twisted sheets. As he reaches to turn off the light on the nightstand with his right hand. He inspects the hand a bit closer, then smiles -

SAM

Night, Jan.

He turns the lamp's knob. CLICK. Darkness. The way he slips deep into his sheets shows a contentedness, a welcoming sleep, he probably hasn't felt in years.

INT. OLD HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

A repeat of the previous day: Flaming candles, Sam's sleeping mom, and another near empty bottle of liquor.

Sam quietly reaches for the extra pillow beside the woman's body. He stands beside the bed, letting a few moments pass. At last he leans over her, places the pillow back and kisses her softly on the cheek. She stirs momentarily.

He walks over to the dresser and blows out the candles.

INT. OLD HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Sam walks toward the door, then stops. He fishes his cell phone out of his pants and looks at it. A couple of seconds pass before he finds his contact's number and presses 'send'. It RINGS.

JULIE (O.S.)

Hello?

SAM

Hey, Julie.

JULIE (O.S.)

Sam? I didn't know you had my number.

She's still obviously irritated with yesterday's conversation

SAM

Joanne asked me to call. Guess the office lost electricity while the alarm guys were working on the system this morning.

JULIE

Oh.

SAM

She was told it's gonna be at least a couple of hours before the electrician shows up, so she's telling people to come in late today.

Julie lightens up a bit.

JULIE (O.S.)

Sounds good to me. Didn't sleep that great. Maybe I'll shut my eyes for a bit longer.

At this, Sam visibly relaxes.

SAM

Bye, Julie.

JULIE (O.S.)

Sorry about yesterday. Those guys can be real jerks. Forget what I said. You know, about talking to them.

SAM

It's nothing you did.

JULIE (O.S.)

See you later then?

SAM

(beat)

Bye, Julie.

He presses 'end', slips the phone back in his pocket, and walks out the door. Through the window we see him get into his car and back out of the driveway.

EXT. MODERN OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Through the windows, floor by floor, blistering flames shoot along the carpeting, walls, and cubicles as though from a slingshot.

On the fourth floor, Ryan tries to break the glass as the fire loams behind him. SIRENS are heard coming in the distance.

On the sixth floor, we move through the window into -

INT. SMALL OFFICE - DAY

- Sam's office...where he sits at his desk, eyes closed, waiting. He smiles, for now he would be a victim by choice: just one of the other poor, hapless victims to be profiled on this evening's news.

The SCREAMS are nearly drowned out by CRACKLING flames and BREAKING GLASS. The fire alarm ROARS for evacuation, but those, unwilling, victims on the upper floors find out too late; this is not a test.

FADE OUT