

LIMB BY LIMB

by

Chris Wilson

FADE IN:

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

The street is a long stretch of beautiful but characterless houses. It is early in the morning and the only sign of human life is in the form of the PAPERBOY [13].

The Paperboy posts a newspaper through a letter box. He moves onto the next house by taking a shortcut, climbing over a small brick wall instead of walking the long way round.

When he goes to shove the newspaper through the letter box, the door creaks open. The Paperboy looks up and SCREAMS!

Towering over him is JACK THOMAS [28]. Jack is a zombie. His skin is white and coarse, his face is devoid of expression and his arms are stuck out. He is wearing a creased, scruffy looking suit and tie. Jack staggers towards the Paperboy.

Dropping the newspaper to the ground, the Paperboy runs for his life.

Jack picks the newspaper up.

JACK
Thank you!

EXT. BUS STOP - DAY

Jack is queuing at the bus stop. The other people in the queue are varied - ranging from PENSIONERS and STUDENTS to BUSINESSMEN.

As it is early in the morning, everyone looks as lifeless as Jack.

INT. BUS - DAY

Jack is sat down reading his newspaper. The headline of the paper reads: 'GORDON BROWN ZOMBIE RUMOURS FALSE'.

Jack senses someone staring at him. He lowers his paper and turns to the person next to him. It is a PENSIONER [70], whose coarse skin is not dissimilar to Jack's.

EXT. OFFICE BLOCK - DAY

Jack is in a swarm of BUSINESSMEN who walk through the main entrance of the impressive looking structure.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Jack enters the office. The office is a large room, populated by two dozen desks. The room's colour design matches the general atmosphere: dull.

Jack sits down at his desk and turns to his neighbour: AARON JENKINS [31]. Jenkins, who is never referred to by his first name, would look handsome if it was not for his outdated curtain hairstyle.

JACK

Hello Jenkins, how's it going?

JENKINS

A lot better now. Check out who's in Michaels' office.

Jack peers over his computer screen at the office next door. In there is MR. MICHAELS [48] - the fat and sweaty boss of the office. He is talking to JENNY [23], an overly attractive blonde haired woman.

JACK

Woah. Is she Laura's replacement?

JENKINS

Yeah and then some!

JACK

Calm down, you're already taken.

JENKINS

I know, I know. Wish I wasn't.

Jack continues to check out Jenny.

Mr. Michaels meanwhile opens the door, letting Jenny through first only so he can get a good look at her buttocks. Then he puts on an obviously strained smile as they walk through the office.

MR. MICHAELS

Let me show you around.

JENNY

I'm sure you're a very busy man. I should be able to find everything around here by myself.

MR. MICHAELS

No no, I insist.

Mr. Michaels leads Jenny over to the water cooler, which is positioned near the entrance of the office.

MR. MICHAELS (CONT'D)
Whenever you feel thirsty, here is
the water cooler.

Michaels puts his mouth close to Jenny's ear.

MR. MICHAELS (CONT'D)
But between me and you, this is
just tap water. If you want to have
refreshing spring water, feel free
to use my own personal water cooler
anytime.

JENNY
Uh. Thank you?

MR. MICHAELS
No problem. Now, let me show you-

WORKER (O.S.)
Mr. Michaels?!

Mr. Michaels turns around to the WORKER [36], who has a telephone receiver in his hand. Michaels grinds his teeth, trying not to lose his cool.

WORKER (CONT'D)
It's Mr. Yeomans from head office.

MR. MICHAELS
I'll take the call in my office.
(to Jenny)
I'll be right back. Stay right
here.

Michaels storms back into his office.

Jenny stands there looking lost. That is until Jack approaches her.

JACK
Hello.

JENNY
Oh hi.

JACK
I'm Jack Thomas. You're new here
aren't you?

JENNY

Yeah, just started today... Oh where are my manners? I'm Jennifer Mason, Jenny for short. Only my parents call me Jennifer.

Jenny laughs. Jack responds with an uncertain laugh of his own. Uncomfortable silence kicks in as they look at each other, neither knowing what to say next. Finally, Jack breaks the ice.

JACK

Hey, Michaels is gonna be a long time. How about I show you 'round instead?

JENNY

Or just show me to my desk? Anything to get me away from that disgusting creep.

JACK

Good idea.

Jack leads Jenny to a desk, which has a computer monitor and nothing much else on it.

JACK (CONT'D)

This is Laura's old desk, so I presume this is yours.

JENNY

It doesn't look much.

JACK

Well there's the fun part, you can decorate it however you want. I've stuck 'Blood Mile' stickers on the side of my monitor!

JENNY

You like The Blood Mile? I love that film!

Jack and Jenny laugh. As they do this they gaze into each other's eyes. It is love at first sight.

JACK

Say I know we've just met but - do you wanna go out sometime?

JENNY

Wow, you are quick. How about I return the favour? Pick me up at 8 tonight?

JACK

Okay then.

Jenny gives Jack a peck on the cheek.

In the distance, Mr. Michaels sees the kiss from his office. He stares in disbelief, so shocked that he loses grip of his telephone receiver despite being in mid-conversation.

INT. JENNY'S HOUSE (HALLWAY) - NIGHT

Jenny is dolled up. She is stood at the mirror, applying the final touches to her lipstick. As she puckers her lips, the door bell rings.

She walks to the front door and opens it. Jack is stood there, wearing smart-casual clothes, with a bunch of flowers and a box of chocolates in his hands. Jenny looks delighted.

JENNY

They're beautiful!

Jenny hugs Jack.

INT. AMERICAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Jack and Jenny begin their date sat either side of a table in a tacky looking restaurant, where the walls are haphazardly decorated in celebration of America. They're both reading their menus until the WAITER [25], who is dressed in a ridiculous cowboy costume approaches them.

WAITER

Howdy y'all, how 'bout dem orders?

JENNY

Hi, can I have the four ounce rump steak please?

JACK

Me too.

WAITER

And how would you like them?

JENNY
As bloody as you can.

Jack is distracted for a moment by Jenny's gruesome choice.

WAITER
And you partner?

JACK
Well done. Very, very well done.

WAITER
Yeehaw!

The Waiter notes the orders down and walks away.

Jenny and Jack look at each other before bursting into laughter.

INT. CINEMA - NIGHT

Jack and Jenny are sat in a crowded cinema watching a horror film, as indicated by the soundtrack of tense strings and deep breathing.

Jack's eyes wander to the left. He sees a BOYFRIEND [18] and GIRLFRIEND [18] beside him. The boyfriend pretends to yawn in order to get his arm around his girlfriend's shoulder. She snuggles up to him.

Jack turns to Jenny. He points his arms to the air and starts yawning.

However a flash of red and a crash of CHAINSAWS from the film causes Jenny to SHRIEK. She hugs Jack and buries her head in his torso.

Jack snuggles up to her.

EXT. JENNY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Jack and Jenny are holding hands as they walk up to Jenny's front door.

JENNY
I can't believe I screamed like that. I bet I looked like a huge idiot.

JACK
No you didn't. You looked
beautiful.

At this point, they're stood on the welcome mat.

JENNY
Awww, you're so-

JACK
Cute?

JENNY
Cheesy.

They grow silent. Gradually their heads move forward, connecting into a passionate kiss. After a moment, they break away.

When they look like they're about to go for a second round, Jack violently nips Jenny in the neck. He stumbles backwards in realisation of what he's done.

JACK
Oh my god, I'm so sorry.

Jenny lightly presses her neck and checks her hand; there's blood on her fingertips.

JENNY
You drew blood! What the hell is up
with you?

JACK
I'm sorry. It's my zombie
instincts, I can't help them
sometimes.

JENNY
ZOMBIE?!

JACK
Didn't you know?

JENNY
Oh I'm sorry, am I supposed to?

JACK
Isn't it obvious?

JENNY
No! Who else knows you're a zombie?

JACK
The entire office.

JENNY
And they're okay with it?!

JACK
Most of them are thirty-something
year old horror fans who still live
with their parents - you tell me.

JENNY
I swear to God I'm... Wait a
minute, you bit me! I swear if
you've just turned me into a zombie-

JACK
Relax, that's a myth. In order to
transform you, I'd need to eat your
brains and perform a voodoo ritual
on your carcass.

Jenny slaps Jack in the face before she stomps into her house. When Jack tries to follow her, the door is slammed in his face.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

The next day. Jack is sat at his desk, halfheartedly typing something into the computer.

He eventually abandons that altogether, opting to look around the office instead. On the other side of the room is Jenny, who is sporting a huge bandage where she was bitten.

Jenny sees Jack staring at her and quickly turns away.

Jenkins rolls his chair up to Jack.

JENKINS
As a man who's lost and gained back
his bird before, can I give you
some advice?

JACK
Yeah?

JENKINS
If you want Jenny back, first of
all you've got to be real.
(MORE)

JENKINS (CONT'D)

You're not Hugh Grant, you can't just charm her back. It's all about baby steps. Start with an apology.

JACK

"Hello there, sorry I tried to devour you".

JENKINS

Exactly. Then after that-

JACK

Don't bother, I wouldn't get past the first step.

JENKINS

Okay then. How about you show her you'd do anything to win her back? Something overelaborate.

JACK

Like what?

INT. JENNY'S HOUSE (BEDROOM) - NIGHT

Jenny is fast asleep in her bed until she is disturbed by the sound of tapping.

Dozy, she turns towards the bedroom window. Every couple of seconds, a small stone flies and bounces against the window.

She gets out of bed and walks to the window. There she sees the cause of the annoyance.

JENNY

Oh Jesus Christ.

Jack, who is sporting a full tuxedo, is stood in the middle of Jenny's back garden. Equipped with an acoustic guitar, he is surrounded by roses that have been laid out in a heart shape on the ground.

Jenny opens her window.

EXT. JENNY'S HOUSE (BACK GARDEN) - NIGHT

JACK

Jenny, I want to show you how sorry I am for last night and how we're meant for each other. That's why I'm going to play you a song that I think describes us perfectly.

After quickly tuning one of his guitar strings, he unleashes a recognisable but tuneless version of 'Every Breath You Take' by The Police.

JACK (CONT'D)
(singing)
*Every breath you take;
Every move you make;
Every bond you break-*

Suddenly a couple of his fingers break away from his hand thanks to the force of his strumming.

JENNY
Go away Jack.

Jenny closes her window and her curtains, leaving Jack stood by himself looking like an idiot.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

One week later. Jack and Jenkins are stood at the water cooler. Jenkins fills a plastic cup full of water.

JENKINS
Maybe it's time to give up. I mean,
she's totally ignored you for a
week now.

JACK
I would but I know in my cold,
black heart - a heart nonetheless -
she's the one.

JENKINS
I wouldn't worry, there's plenty
more fish in the sea as the old
saying goes...

Jenkins' voice trails off as Jenny, carrying a piece of paper, quickly enters the office. She brushes past Jack.

JACK
Jenny!

She ignores him. Jenny heads straight into Mr. Michaels' office, so determined in her mission that she doesn't even knock on the door first.

JENNY
Mr. Michaels, I'm handing in my
resignation.

MR. MICHAELS
Resignation?! But you've only just
started working here!

Mr. Michaels closes the office door so the rest of the conversation is inaudible. Michaels constantly has his hands in the air, looking angry throughout.

The conversation is swift as Jenny storms out of his room.

MR. MICHAELS (CONT'D)
Hey, get back here right now! You
need to give me two weeks notice.

JENNY
So you can stare at my arse some
more? Piss off!

Jenny exits the office.

Jenkins then nudges Jack.

JENKINS
If you want her so bad, go after
her!

JACK
What's the point? She just quit her
job because of me.

As Jack says his next piece of dialogue, he wanders over to the window.

JACK (CONT'D)
I've got to face facts: I've
screwed up. I've screwed up my last
chance to live my life as a normal
human.

JENKINS
Don't say that, man, I-

JACK
Oh no.

JENKINS
What?

Jenkins walks over to the window too.

They watch as Jenny walks into the street. She crosses the road and hugs TIMOTHY HENTON [40], a tall, Armani suit wearing man with pale skin and slicked back hair. Together they climb into a black taxi.

JACK

That's Timothy Henton, my Master!

Jenkins bursts out laughing.

JENKINS

Are you a part-time servant too or something?

JACK

No, he's the one who transformed me into a zombie. Timothy befriended me when I was low, I had just broke up with my girlfriend of that time. I was vulnerable and he manipulated me. He convinced me that being who I am now would relieve me of my... Pain.

Suddenly, Jack charges towards the door.

JENKINS

Where are you going?

By the time Jenkins finishes asking the question, Jack is long gone.

EXT. JENNY'S HOUSE - DAY

With a black taxi waiting in the road behind him, Jack urgently rings the doorbell. EMILY [22], Jenny's housemate, answers it.

JACK

Is Jenny in? She needs to come with me.

EMILY

No. What's this all about?

JACK

Where is she?

EMILY

She's gone on holiday with Tim to Los Angeles. If you'd tell-

JACK

Thanks.

Jack rushes back into the taxi.

JACK (CONT'D)

Take me to the airport.

The TAXI DRIVER [late 40's] obeys, accelerating the car.

EXT. AIRPORT - DAY

The taxi arrives outside the entrance. The moment the taxi comes to a halt, Jack charges out of there and into the building.

INT. AIRPORT (ENTRANCE) - DAY

Jack dashes into the airport and looks up at the flight information board.

When he sees that the Los Angeles flight is departing from Gate F66, he continues running.

INT. AIRPORT (GATE F66) - DAY

Jenny and Timothy are heading towards the tunnel which will lead them to the plane when:

JACK (O.S.)

JENNY! WAIT!

Jenny and Timothy turn to Jack. In fact, Jack's pleas were so loud, DOZENS OF PEOPLE in the surrounding area stops what they're doing and turn to him too.

JENNY

Jack?! In case you didn't realise,
it's over between the two of us.
Now stop making a scene!

JACK

I'm not here because of that. I'm
here to save you from Tim.

Timothy chuckles.

TIMOTHY

Well, well, Jack. So we meet again.

JENNY

You two know each other?

JACK

That doesn't matter. Jenny, I need you to come with me. If you don't then Tim will eat you!

JENNY

What we do behind closed doors is none of your business, Jack.

JACK

No, I mean he's a zombie!

JENNY

(to Timothy)
You are?

TIMOTHY

My dear, I'm not a zombie. Unlike your friend over there I'm a respectable member of society, a lawyer in fact!

JENNY

I've heard enough. Let's go.

Timothy and Jenny continue towards their destination.

JACK

Jenny, wait. I love you!

Jack's statement blind-sides Jenny. She turns back to him.

JENNY

You do?

JACK

These past eight days, all I've thought of is you. I want to lead as normal of a life I can, and I want to do it with you.

JENNY

Aren't you forgetting? Last time we tried that, you bit me!

JACK

Yes, yes I did. I swear biting your neck was an accident. When I see you, I don't see a meal. I see the love of my life!
(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)

I will do everything possible to
make sure we live together happily
ever after.

Jack and Jenny gaze into each other's eyes, exactly in the
same way they did the first time they met.

Meanwhile, Timothy sarcastically coughs.

TIMOTHY

You know what? This love thing is
making me rather ill, so if you
rather don't mind, I'll take what I
want now.

Timothy launches himself at Jenny. She SCREAMS as he grips
his hands around her head. Jack quickly responds by punching
Timothy in the face.

Timothy, completely dazed, staggers backwards. He trips over
his own feet and falls head/neck first onto the hard floor.
The impact is so hard, Timothy's head snaps clean off his
frail zombie body.

Jenny then runs to Jack and hugs him.

JENNY

I love you too.

They kiss passionately, and this time it goes off without a
hitch. The moment is so highly emotional, tears roll down
Jenny's eyes.

When the kiss ends, Jack picks Jenny up and carries her off
into the distance.

FADE OUT.