

Mark of the Fiend

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Loaded with numerous pieces of horror movie memorabilia, this bedroom belongs to a real film buff, and that film buff is JEREMY, 15, who sits on his bed and watches Nosferatu.

He watches the movie in total focus. The suspense is high, until a rattling against the window gets his attention. He looks over. Just a branch from the bush outside silhouettes against the closed curtain.

JEREMY

Stupid wind.

Jeremy's door creaks open, seemingly on its own. Jeremy is agitated as he gets up and looks out into the hallway. Still nothing. He shuts the door and turns around to find a werewolf in his face!

He screams, falls to the ground, and backs up toward the door. The werewolf, who is actually Jeremy's dad Ron, 44, laughs hysterically as he takes the werewolf mask off.

RON

I got you! I told you I would. You should have seen your face.

JEREMY

How did you get in here?

RON

I came in earlier and hid in the closet.

JEREMY

How'd you get the door to do that?

RON

That was just luck. I got you good though, right?

JEREMY

Yeah, Dad. Sure. You got me.

RON

Oh, quit being such a party pooper. You may think you're too old and too cool for Halloween, but you're never too old to have fun.

JEREMY

I didn't say I was too old to have fun, I said I was too old for trick or treating. I'll have my fun.

Ron looks at him suspiciously.

RON

Now, you don't go getting into any trouble, alright? Cause if you do, your mom's gonna get mad, and when your mom gets mad, I get mad.

JEREMY

Alright, alright. I'll be good. I haven't heard the doorbell in awhile, any kids out yet?

RON

Now that you mention it, I haven't heard it either. Take a look outside, see if there's any on the block.

Jeremy goes to the window and opens the curtain to find a large, red X painted on the outside in a thin liquid. It startles him at first, but he soon laughs it off and turns to Ron.

JEREMY

Funny, Dad. Two for two tonight.

Ron isn't laughing at this one.

RON

I didn't do that.

JEREMY

Sure you didn't. Must be someone else going around painting people's windows.

RON

I don't think that's paint. Looks like fake blood.

Jeremy looks at the X as tiny droplets slide down the window pane and cause it to look even creepier.

JEREMY

Even better. You're really on your game this year.

RON

Jeremy, I'm serious, and I don't think it's funny that someone's out vandalizing people's homes.

JEREMY
 That's good, Dad. Really
 good. I've gotta go meet
 Mitch. I'll be home later.

Jeremy grabs a backpack off his bed and exits, leaving Ron to stare at the painted window, perplexed.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - NIGHT

Numerous TRICK OR TREATERS run along from house to house collecting candy.

Jeremy walks along, taking in the sporadic houses with red X's painted on a single window.

EXT. MITCH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Jeremy arrives to find MITCH, 15, and DAVE, 40. Dave cleans Mitch's bedroom window, also painted with a red X.

JEREMY
 They got you too?

DAVE
 This happened at your house too,
 Jeremy?

JEREMY
 Yeah, same exact thing. My dad
 thinks it's vandals.

DAVE
 Oh, it's vandals alright, and when
 I get my hands on 'em--

MITCH
 But, Dad, this is pretty
 creepy. People around here
 normally T-P somebody's house or
 put shaving cream on their car
 windows.

DAVE
 So maybe they're not from around
 here. Maybe they're from Visalia.

JEREMY
 They're not doing this to everybody
 though. I only saw it on some of
 the houses as I walked over.

DAVE
 You guys just keep an eye out. If
 you see anybody doing this anywhere
 else, you call me. Got it?

MITCH
 Okay. Let's go, Jeremy.

They leave. Dave goes back to cleaning the window, but
 thinks better of it. He tosses the rag.

DAVE
 Eh, I'll do it later.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - NIGHT

Mitch and Jeremy walk along in total quiet. No trick or
 treaters, but plenty of X'd out windows across the street.

They stop suddenly as a bush rustles next to them. Through
 a small gap, the face of EDDIE, 14, peeks out. He has a
 small red X on his forehead.

EDDIE
 Guys. Get in here.

JEREMY
 Eddie? What are you doing?

EDDIE
 Just come here!

Mitch and Jeremy shrug, but enter the bush to find that
 Eddie has a bucket full of red liquid next to him.

MITCH
 It's you. You're the one painting
 the X's.

EDDIE
 It's not me, I swear.

JEREMY
 Yeah, right. You got the bucket
 right here.

EDDIE
 I know, but it's not mine.

MITCH
 Then whose is it?

Eddie points into the distance.

EDDIE

His.

They turn to see OLD MAN PHILBERT, a decrepit octogenarian with long, stringy hair and a wool overcoat. He deliberately moves along the sidewalk with a bucket of red liquid and eyes houses as he passes them.

JEREMY

What? Old Man Philbert?

EDDIE

Yeah, he's the one doing it, and he gave me this bucket. He told me to help him.

JEREMY

Help him what?

EDDIE

Keep it away.

MITCH

It? What it?

EDDIE

Man, I don't know, but he scared the crap out of me.

JEREMY

Did he put that X on your forehead?

EDDIE

Yeah. I totally forgot about that.

Eddie wipes the X from his forehead with his shirt sleeve as an arm shoots through the bush and grabs Mitch. It's Old Man Philbert!

OLD MAN PHILBERT

You must be marked! All you kids must be marked!

MITCH

Let me go!

Mitch struggles, but Old Man Philbert is much stronger than he looks. Jeremy tries to help, but it's no use. Soon, they're both displaying red X's on their heads.

Old Man Philbert lets go and the two boys stumble out of the bush, scared out of their wits.

JEREMY
Are you crazy?!?!?

OLD MAN PHILBERT
It will not harm you now.

Old Man Philbert calmly walks away. Jeremy and Mitch watch him as he walks to a window and marks a red X.

MITCH
Get Eddie, and let's go.

Jeremy goes to the bush. Eddie and the bucket are gone.

JEREMY
He's gone.

MITCH
Gone? What a chicken.

Mitch goes to wipe it off, but the hand of Old Man Philbert appears out of nowhere and grabs him.

OLD MAN PHILBERT
Don't!

MITCH
Get away from me! I'm not walking around with this stuff on my head all night.

OLD MAN PHILBERT
Leave it or the fiend will get you!

Mitch pulls his arm away.

MITCH
Look, that stuff might work on the twelve year olds, but we're fifteen, we're mature. And too smart for your dumb tricks.

Old Man Philbert ominously points at the vacated bush.

OLD MAN PHILBERT
I bet your friend thought he was too smart too, but not anymore.

JEREMY
What? What did you do to him?

OLD MAN PHILBERT
I tried to protect him, but he
refused. Now the fiend has him.

MITCH
What fiend?!?! What are you
talking about?!?!

OLD MAN PHILBERT
There's no time, but you mustn't
remove the mark from your head or
your window. Not until the evil
has returned to its proper place.

A police cruiser pulls up with its lights flashing, sounds
the horn. An OFFICER gets out and approaches.

OFFICER
Let's go, Philbert.

OLD MAN PHILBERT
No. I'm not done yet. There's
still more to do!

Old Man Philbert attempts to get away, but the officer grabs
him, and leads him to the back seat of the cruiser.

He yells at the kids through the window, but it's unclear
what he's saying. The Officer takes the bucket and dumps it
into the sewer.

JEREMY
No!

The officer sets the empty bucket on the curb.

OFFICER
Oh no. Don't think I'm letting you
kids get your hands on this
stuff. What the old man has done
is bad enough already. Now I
suggest you two move along to a
more crowded street, and stay out
of trouble.

The officer gets into the car and drives off. He eyes
Jeremy in pleading until he's out of sight.

JEREMY
I really don't like this.

MITCH

Me neither.

JEREMY

What should we do?

MITCH

What the cop said. Get out of here. You still stayin' over?

JEREMY

I guess so.

MITCH

Good, cause I'm not walking home by myself. Mark or no mark.

Mitch and Jeremy head out, after a few steps, Mitch notices droplets of sweat on his brow. He wipes them away, not realizing he takes the X on his head right along with it.

Jeremy bends down to tie his shoe, and when he gets up, Mitch is gone.

JEREMY

Mitch, this isn't funny. Mitch!

Jeremy looks around, shielding his eyes, and ultimately his forehead from the streetlights overhead.

He scans the street slowly, until he is face to face with THE FIEND, a tall, thin being with no discernible facial features and two black holes for eyes.

Jeremy throws up his hands in shock and uncovers the X. The Fiend emits a high pitched shriek, shields its eyes, and disappears as quickly as it arrived.

With nothing else to do, Jeremy books it for home.

INT. JEREMY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Jeremy rushes in, startling Ron and his mother, GAIL, 40.

RON

Jeez, you scared the heck out of us. We were watching Freddy.

JEREMY

Oh yeah, well that's not as scary as what's going on out there.

GAIL

What's going on? Did something happen? What's that on your forehead?

JEREMY

Something happened alright, and this thing on my forehead is the only thing keeping it away.

RON

Jeremy, what happened?

JEREMY

There's something out there, and it got Mitch and Eddie.

RON

Alright, Jeremy, enough. This isn't funny.

JEREMY

I know it's not. I'm not joking!

RON

Okay, so am I supposed to go open the door so they can jump out and scare me? Fine, I'll play ball.

Ron goes to the door and opens it...two TRICK OR TREATERS stand with their bags out.

TRICK OR TREATERS

Trick or Treat!

Ron grabs candy from a bowl, gives it to the kids, and shuts the door. He looks to Jeremy.

RON

You sure they didn't go to the park for the costume contest?

JEREMY

Dad, they're not wearing costumes. They were with me, and then they weren't.

RON

Okay, okay. I'll call their folks and see if they're home.

JEREMY
I'll be in my room where it's safe.

INT. JEREMY'S HOUSE, BATHROOM - NIGHT

Jeremy looks at himself in the mirror, still shaken. He turns the water on and splashes some on his face.

He pats dry with a nearby towel and looks back to the mirror. He washed the mark off! He calms himself down.

JEREMY
It's fine. Fine. I still have the
mark on the window.

Jeremy exits the bathroom and heads to his bedroom.

INT. JEREMY'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ron talks on the phone. Gail stands nearby.

RON
I know what you mean, Dave. These
kids are getting out of hand...

INT. JEREMY'S HOUSE, BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jeremy walks toward the window.

RON (V.O.)
...First, I had to wash that gunk
off Jeremy's window...

Jeremy opens his window to find it perfectly clean.

He spins around and the Fiend is in his bedroom, its black hole eyes swirling at rapid pace until they suck Jeremy in.

In a moment, all is silent, and they're both gone.

INT. JEREMY'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

RON
...And now this. Well listen, I
gotta go, but if Mitch shows up
after that costume contest I'll let
you know. And thanks for letting
me know he called. See ya.

Ron hangs up and the phone rings immediately. He answers.

RON
Hello?

JEREMY (V.O.)
Yeah, Dad. It's Jeremy.

RON
Jeremy? I thought you were in your room.

JEREMY (V.O.)
I was, but I left. I'm on my way to the costume contest. I'll be home in a bit okay?

RON
Uh, yeah, sure buddy. Just don't be too late, alright?

JEREMY (V.O.)
I won't. I'm in good hands.

RON
What? Who are you with?

THE FIEND (V.O.)
He's with me, and all the others who didn't wear the mark!

The phone clicks dead.

RON
Hello? Hello?

Ron hangs up the phone in anger and looks to Gail.

RON
Rotten kids. Always joking.

They go back to watching their movie on the couch.

THE END