

METHODICAL

By

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INT. DINER - DAY

CARL (28) is seated at a table, sipping his coffee. GREG (28) walks in and sits across from Carl.

GREG  
Hi Carl.

CARL  
Hey Greg!

Greg finishes typing on his phone and then finally makes eye contact.

GREG  
What's up?

CARL  
Well you know, not much ever changes with me. How long has it been anyway?

GREG  
Listen Carl, I know I don't see you much anymore but I really don't have a lot of time. I have to be back on set in half an hour.

Greg turns out to look for a waitress.

GREG (CONT'D)  
Can someone get me some coffee?

Greg continues typing on his phone, Carl tries to stay positive. Greg looks up.

GREG (CONT'D)  
What is it?

CARL  
I have someone I want you to meet.

Greg stares back at Carl. He impatiently motions for him to continue.

CARL (CONT'D)  
He's a really great actor...

GREG  
Ah geez.

CARL

...and I think he's the perfect fit  
for your film.

GREG

Carl. Why? Why? Is this a stranger  
you met in your acting class?

CARL

Greg-

GREG

No listen. I know it's hard for  
you. You know I like you both as a  
friend and as an actor.

CARL

Greg please-

GREG

Uh uh, you're listening right now.  
I've tried to cast you in many  
shorts over the years, but the  
director never wants you.

CARL

The director who's also your  
girlfriend.

Greg pauses for a moment.

GREG

Fiancé.

CARL

What?

GREG

You heard me Carl, we're getting  
married. Producer and director,  
husband and wife, just like Nolan  
and Thomas. Now Carl, I can  
understand you asking for work,  
and I'm sure one day I could  
convince Melissa to cast you. But  
why are you sticking your neck out  
for some other guy?

CARL

Ok, this is part of what I wanted to tell you today. I've decided that instead of being the talent, I'm going to represent the talent.

Greg stares at Carl.

CARL (CONT'D)

I'm gonna be an agent.

Greg turns back out looking for a waitress.

GREG

Coffee? Anyone? Fresh covfefe?

CARL

I'm going to start bringing in all sorts of talent for you.

GREG

Carl, I've gotta get back to the set. I wish you all the best but I've gotta get outta here.

CARL

Wait! He's here. I see him walking up to the diner now.

Carl stands up.

CARL (CONT'D)

Ok, I know you've gotta go but please just give me a couple more minutes.

Greg pauses and then sighs and reluctantly nods his head.

CARL (CONT'D)

Awesome! I'm gonna go walk him in, I'll be right back!

Carl runs out, the bell rings as he opens the door to exit. Greg puts his head in his hands and rubs his face. The bell rings again.

CARL (O.S.)

Greg.

Greg looks up at the pair standing beside the table. Carl puts his arms up to present his friend as he says...

CARL (CONT'D)

Here's Johnny!

JOHNNY (30) is dressed in ragged clothes, has messy black hair, and is wearing heavy effects makeup that makes him look like a rotting zombie.

Greg stares up at Johnny, speechless. He turns to look at Carl.

GREG

Carl...what is happening?

Carl sits back down, followed by Johnny. Carl with a big smile says...

CARL

He's a method actor! I let him read the script for the horror film you wanna make. He's been like this all week.

Johnny stares threateningly at Greg.

GREG

So, he's in character right now?

CARL

Yes!

GREG

As a psychopathic zombie that can read minds.

CARL

And smell fear! You wrote that, great stuff.

GREG

Carl, this is a crazy person.

CARL

Now now, give him a chance. Go ahead and ask him some questions.

GREG

Oh boy, ahhh...hi Johnny.

Johnny continues to stare back.

GREG (CONT'D)

Uh, are you a member of SAG?

Johnny remains silent.

CARL

See? He has no dialogue in the script, so he never speaks. Only grunts and groans occasionally. Now that's dedication!

Greg puts his head back into his hands to rub his face.

CARL (CONT'D)

FYI he's also a DJ, so maybe now that you're gettin' married..

GREG

I can't. I'm sorry Carl, I can't do this. This is too much. You're too much, I can't even comprehend this. Goodbye Carl.

Greg stands and begins to walk toward the door. Bell rings. A ROBBER (30's) wearing a ski mask storms into the diner, pointing his gun.

ROBBER

Ok everyone, you know the drill!  
Nobody moves, and nobody gets hurt.

Greg quickly sits back down at the table as the Robber speaks. The Robber throws a bag at the WAITRESS (20's) behind the counter.

ROBBER (CONT'D)

Put the money in the bag, lady.

Greg and Carl whisper to each other.

GREG

(Nervously)

Is this really happening Carl?

Carl nods his head yes.

GREG (CONT'D)

I can't believe this!

CARL  
Neither can I. The same thing  
happened last week.

GREG  
At this diner?

Carl nods.

CARL  
Pretty sure it's the same guy too.  
He has a rash in the same spot.

They both look over, the Robber scratches his butt.

GREG  
What are we supposed to do?

CARL  
Let us pray.

Carl grabs Greg's hands and closes his eyes.

GREG  
What about Johnny?

CARL  
Johnny's a zombie, Greg. Why would  
he pray? He's got nothing to lose.

Johnny stares at Greg. Greg closes his eyes and joins Carl  
in a prayer.

CARL (CONT'D)  
Dear God, we need help. Please  
deliver us a guardian angel to  
protect us in this moment of  
uncertainty. If you do, then I  
promise I will change. I promise  
to visit you more often. I promise  
to give you more than just the  
loose change in my pocket.

Greg opens one eye to peak at Carl.

CARL (CONT'D)  
And lastly, I promise to pay more  
attention and to stop wondering  
whether or not the priest has been  
inside of the altar boy.

Greg realizes that Johnny has left the table. He looks over in the Robber's direction. Greg frantically taps Carl's arm.

GREG  
Carl look!

Carl also looks over. His eyes grow wide.

The Robber looks through the bag.

ROBBER  
Is that everything?

The waitress nods nervously.

ROBBER (CONT'D)  
Where's your tip jar?

WAITRESS  
We put it in back.

The Robber throws the bag back at the Waitress, still holding his gun.

ROBBER  
Well go get it!

A loud groan is heard off screen. The Robber turns to see Johnny staring hard at him. The Robber's eyes grow wide in panic.

Johnny grabs the Robber's wrist and squeezes hard while also grabbing his shoulder. He bites down hard on the Robber's bicep. The Robber screams and drops the gun. Johnny groans loudly while biting down. He then takes off the Robber's mask and spits blood into his face, all while the Robber screams frantically. The Robber then gets loose and runs out of the diner without the money.

With blood dripping down his chin, Johnny walks back to his table. The Waitress, frozen in shock, watches him walk away. Johnny sits back down, and everything is silent for a moment.

GREG  
I think he's perfect!

CARL  
I told you Greg, this is commitment!



GREG

He just bit the guy's arms off!

CARL

He really reads between the lines.

GREG

Why do you think he went after him like that?

CARL

Umm...oh my god. The prayer. We prayed for a guardian angel and your script says-

CARL & GREG

(Together)

-that he's the son of Lucifer!

They both start laughing.

GREG

Oh my god, that's right! Thanks for saving us Johnny!

Greg puts his hand on Johnny's shoulder, then removes it as Johnny keeps staring.

CARL

This is your brain child, Greg.

GREG

This is my brain on drugs. Ok, email me everything you have for him.

Greg shakes Carl's hand.

GREG (CONT'D)

I can't wait to tell Melissa. Speaking of which, I'm late! Waitress, can I please get that coffee to go?

Johnny picks up Carl's coffee and throws it at Greg's face, soaking him. A moment passes.

CARL

You know, I wanted to say, I...

(MORE)

CARL (CONT'D)  
...didn't quite understand why you  
had the zombie throw drinks at  
people.

THE END