

NOWHERE TO HYDE

by

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the sidewalk.

WOMAN

Oh my God. I'm so sorry.

She's ashamed with herself and touches the corpse on the shoulder. She gets up with hand to her mouth and moves to the other side of the arch.

As she huddles down and leans against the guard office door, it opens. She hesitates, then decides to enter.

INT. GUARD OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

She enters into darkness. The smell of decay overwhelms and it's all she can do not to gag.

WOMAN

(softly)

Hello?

Silence.

She pulls out and strikes a match. More bodies are crammed in the office. A stairway on the left leads up to the tower.

The match burns down and out.

WOMAN

Ouch!

She shuffles over and begins up the stairs slowly.

STAIRWAY

The step creaks loudly and she catches her breath.

Slowly she ascends. She steps as near to the tread joint as possible to keep the noise down.

As she nears the top, a flicker of light from above casts a sudden shadow.

She stops climbing and slowly raises her head to look through the balusters.

GUARD TOWER

An old HAG (80) squats at a pile of bodies, her back to the woman, with a candle by her side.

She methodically sorts through each body. She starts at the head and looks at ears, the nose, tongue, nipples, and the skin around knees and hips.

Occasionally, she yanks out a stud, ring, or other implant and puts it in a nearby basket.

The next body she rolls over is a woman. She gets excited as she extends a boney finger to poke the breasts.

Even in rigor mortis, the breasts are oddly supple.

HAG

Oooh, that's a good one.

She lets out a little CACKLE of delight as she reaches in her jacket and pulls out a long filet knife.

With deft precision, she cuts under one breast and pulls out an implant. She places it in a basket with many others.

The woman is aghast. She runs up the last steps and holds her umbrella out like a sword.

WOMAN

Stop! Stop it right there! What in Gods name do you think you're doing?

The hag jumps up and drops the knife. She's scared half to death and falls backwards onto the stack of naked bodies.

HAG

Oh, my!

The woman approaches slowly and puts the umbrella tip to the hags face.

WOMAN

What would possess you to do such a thing?! What have we become?

The hag gets her wits about her and sits up. She looks at the woman in disbelief.

HAG

It's the solution!

WOMAN

Solution to what?!

HAG

Saline solution, you damned fool!

WOMAN

It's desecration!

HAG

It's what they want! I can trade these!

The woman gets a closer look in the basket. Besides breast implants and studs, there are titanium hip and knee joints.

WOMAN

You would profit from the dead?

HAG

I can live off the dead! And others, too!

WOMAN

Give her some respect!

The hag takes a defensive posture and points a bony finger at the woman and then to the corpse.

HAG

Ha! Did you know her?

WOMAN

No. But that doesn't matter. She was a human.

HAG

That saline is the only thing pure about her. She was a whore and a carrier!

With that, the woman backs away. She holds both the hag and corpse at bay with her makeshift sword.

The hag sees her fear of the corpse and smiles. She creeps forward on her knees to within reach of her knife.

HAG

You fear them, don't you. The dead. They can't hurt you anymore.

With the speed of someone half her age, she grabs her knife and goes tip-to-tip with the umbrella.

WOMAN

Ah-ah, get back.

HAG

It seems that we're at a bit of an impasse, eh?

WOMAN

You disgust me.

The anger and revulsion is too much for the woman to bear. She swings her umbrella and knocks the knife from the hag's grip. It clatters down the stairwell.

The hag puts on an act of helplessness and withdraws back into a corner.

HAG

If she were still alive, she'd be doing worse things by now. She would understand what I'm doing. And approve.

The woman's face contorts into an enraged sneer. She charges and goes at the old hag with both hands on her umbrella like a spear. The tip stops at her neck causing a slight dimple.

WOMAN

So that's the way it is now? Every woman for themselves?

(beat)

Fine. Your clothes. Give them to me.

The hag is shocked and in disbelief.

HAG

Wha--?

WOMAN

Now!

HAG

I'll catch a death!

WOMAN

I highly doubt it. I have a feeling that you'll survive just fine. I, on the other hand, may not. If this is the way it's going to be, I think I can lower myself to do such a thing.

(beat)

So...give them to me. Now.

The hag knows that she has met her match. She strips off her clothes and hands them to the woman.

She stands in her bra and underpants. Her saggy flesh shows faded tattoos of Pearl Jam, Soundgarden, and other grunge bands from an age gone by. She starts to shiver.

WOMAN

All of it.

HAG

You...you can't be serious?

WOMAN

Try me.

She takes off the articles and throws them at the woman.

In a final act of defiance, the old hag makes no effort for modesty. She stands with feet shoulder width apart, one hand on a hip and the other with a boney middle finger extended.

HAG

Fuck you, bitch!

WOMAN

Thank you.

The woman balls up the clothes and puts them in the basket with with the implants. She can hardly bear to look at the old hag.

WOMAN

It's what we have to do anymore,
right?

She picks up the basket, turns heel and hurries down the stairs. The door slams below.

The old hag turns towards the window to watch her run out into the dark rain and disappear.

She squats down and sits on the bare back of another corpse with her head in her hands.

At first, it sounds like a sob until it turns to chuckle, and then a full blown cackle. She laughs until she starts to cough up some foul looking phlegm.

HAG

Heh, she just might survive.

She starts to sort through the stack of bodies.

HAG

God dammit.

FADE TO BLACK