

THE ACTOR

By

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EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

GLEN, (38) & ELLEN (34) stroll together.

ELLEN

It's just down here?

GLEN

Mmm. Yeah, it's not far.

ELLEN

And you have to come this way every night?

GLEN

It's day most of the time. Only come here when it's night after an evening out.

The alley turns round the side of the building - a tall tower block. Glen takes Ellen by the neck, wraps himself around her. They struggle. Ellen emits a muffled scream. A bin crashes to the ground.

EXT. GLEN'S HOME - DAY.

Two men, DETECTIVE ALAN STERN (40), DETECTIVE SERGEANT BRIAN FOX (48) arrive at a modern detached property. They knock at the door, adjust their jackets. Both wear suits.

INT. GLEN'S HOUSE.

Glen wears a shirt and trousers, he moves toward the door, opens it to the two detectives.

GLEN

Hi. Can I help?

FOX

(showing identity card)  
Detective Fox. This is my colleague, Detective Stern.

Glen straightens, his brows furrow.

GLEN

Ok. Is there something I can do you for you, gentlemen?

Fox puts away his identity card, takes a step closer to Glen.

FOX

Mr Glen Howe?

GLEN

Yes.

FOX

We'd like to speak to you at the station, Glen. If you wouldn't mind?

Glen looks concerned, confused.

GLEN

Is there a problem? is something wrong?

FOX

We'll be able to expand further at the station - if you wouldn't mind?

Fox moves to the side, his arm rises, gesturing the way for Glen.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM.

Fox and Stern are sat opposite Glen.

Glen is ashen, stony-faced, a blank gaze toward the table.

FOX

We are formally charging you with the assault of Ellen Ridge, and the attempted rape of Ellen Ridge. (beat) Mr Howe, do you have anything to say?

Glen looks from left to right, does not blink.

GLEN

I, I, I just...

Glen looks up to the two detectives, pleading.

GLEN (CONT'D)

I never touched the woman. I have no idea what you are talking about. I completely did not do this.

INT. COURTROOM

Ellen Ridge is in the witness box. COUNSEL REEVES (55) strides diagonally toward her.

REEVES

You are a fantasist, Ms Ridge. That is the case, is it not? You met Mr Howe during acting classes, he rebuffed your advances, you dreamt up a scenario that never existed, and now you have dragged an innocent man to the dock, haven't you Ms Ridge?

Ellen shakes her head, blank stare ahead.

ELLEN

(whispers)

You don't know what he did to me. You have no idea. You have no concept of what I went through, of what he put me through.

EXT. MALLIERS EVENING COLLEGE - EVENING.

Steps leading to double doors, move slowly smoothly up the stairs veering cleanly to the left - sign outside the college reads: 'Evening classes: 18:45-20:30'.

INT. MALLIERS EVENING COLLEGE.

MELODY INDERS (45) slim, dull clothes, attractive, is pacing in front of a group of student.

Students are a mixed bunch of workers, office types - evening course types.

INDERS (O.S)

(continuing)

...it is deception. That is the fundamental skill of the actor. He or she must strive to deceive. One cannot be accepted for what one is, but for whom one is attempting to make the audience believe one is. You must convince.

The students listen; we see them listening; moving across them, left to right.

INDERS (CONT'D) (O.S)

...and to convince fully, that is not so that the audience accepts, as acceptance is placid, it is passive - it is so that the audience is convinced absolutely, it is convinced and convicted.

The students are intent, thoughts captivated. We move left to right. Stop on Glen Howe. Head raised in thought, he holds a pen in a raised hand and a notebook on his open-crossed legs - poised to write.

We move on slowly. From behind Glen comes the figure of Ellen. Ellen in thought, leaning forward slightly.

INT. COURTROOM

Glen Howe is in the witness box. He is leant forward. COUNSEL for the PLAINTIFF, MARTIN ELLIOTT (39) stands a few feet away from him.

GLEN

I have been destroyed by these accusations. Everything I have has been taken away from me.

(passionate)

I cannot eat, I cannot sleep, and I cannot work, because of this.

ELLIOTT  
(to the judge)  
No more questions y'honour.

INT. MALLIERS EVENING COLLEGE.

Tea break. Students mill about. There are trestle table towards the rear of the room - sandwiches and coffee, drinks.

Ellen has a drink; she is choosing something to eat. MARK NAYLOR (32) casual, sidles up beside her.

MARK  
Hi

ELLEN  
Oh, hi Mark, how are you doing?

MARK  
I'm good. You?  
(she nods)  
Got me thinking a lot, the class tonight.

ELLEN  
Yeah, kinda, confrontational wasn't it?

MARK  
Well, not for me. I wouldn't call it so. Kinda like a challenge. I wasn't going for everything she said at first, I felt she was trying to create something...

ELLEN  
Trying to make a point?

MARK  
Yeah, totally. But you end up feeling you could use this stuff, in lots of ways.

ELLEN  
How do you mean?

MARK

I felt inspired, but I'm not too sure what I was inspired to do... does that make sense..?

INT. COURTROOM

JUDGE ROYCE presides.

ROYCE

There is a fundamental lack of evidence; in particular the paucity of forensic evidence is pitiful. I am directing the jury to return a not guilty verdict.

Glen throws back his head in relief.

Elliot shakes his head. He is sat next to Ellen. She closes her eyes.

INT. MALLIERS EVENING COLLEGE.

Glen comes out of the men's room. He heads toward the refreshments, pours a coffee and joins Ellen and Mark.

GLEN

Hi guys.

ELLEN

Hi Glen. You know Mark?

GLEN

Hi Mark, I've seen you a couple of times here.

MARK

Hi there, Glen? Yeah, seen you around.

ELLEN

Mark was... inspired, by today's lecture. He was wondering how he could use it. In his acting. How he could develop it.

GLEN

Oh?

MARK

Yeah, I found it compelling,  
and...

ELLEN

(interrupts)

We have a game.

MARK

Sorry?

ELLEN

A game. A game that we like  
to play. Would you like to  
play it?

MARK

(small laugh)

What kind of game is it?

ELLEN

Ahhh. It's a fun game, but we  
can't tell you too much about  
it. Want to be in?

MARK

Well, I can hardly be in if I  
don't know so much about it?

ELLEN

Mmm. Ok.

Ellen leaves the moment to hang.

MARK

C'mon. Tell me.

ELLEN

We can't tell you if you  
ain't in - it's just too...,  
you know there's, we'd have  
to tell you too much.

MARK

You wind me up. Is it legal?

Glen laughs; Ellen holds her hand to her face to  
disguise a smile.

ELLEN

Like totally, no. But therein lies the fun. But it's not so illegal.

MARK

Painful?

ELLEN

(are you dumb?)

No!

MARK

Ok, ok. You got me so intrigued, I'm going to go and, yeah, ok call me in, let me see what the game's all about.

INT. MARK'S HOUSE - DAY

Mark washes the dishes. There is a knock on the door. He takes a tea towel and dries his hands as he goes to answer. Dumps the towel. Opens the door.

DETECTIVE SERGEANT SARAH HYTE (30) and DETECTIVE WILL YOUNG (44) are stood outside.

WILL

Mark Naylor? Mr Mark Naylor? Do you mind if we have a word with you?

MARK

Yeah, that's me. How can I help?

SARAH

We'd like to have a word with you down at the station, Mr Naylor.

MARK

A word? What do you mean a word? I don't know what you're talking about. What is it? Is there a problem?

WILL

There's been an allegation of an assault Mr Naylor. We'd like you to come down to the station.

MARK

An assault! Assault? What? I just don't believe this. Oh my days, what is going on? This is just like totally - Oh. This is too much. Ok, ok. Yeah, I guess I'll come. I can't believe this. Let me get my jacket - I'll be right there.

INT. COURTROOM

Mark stands in the dock.

One of the JURORS stands. The JUDGE beckons him, and he moves forward.

JUDGE

Have you come to a decision?

JUROR

We have your honour.

JUDGE

And was this decision unanimous?

JUROR

The decision was ten in favour of the decision and two against, your honour.

JUDGE

And what was your decision?

JUROR

Guilty, your honour.

Mark remains in the dock, blood draining his colour; he is flanked by two guards who place their hands on his arms. He struggles.

MARK

Wait! Hold on, this isn't  
right, it was a game, it  
wasn't supposed to end like  
this.

The guards begin to remove Mark. His struggle  
intensifies; as he resists he turns to the figure  
of Ellen, who is sat with her LAWYER.

MARK

Ellen, tell them. Tell them  
it was a game. Ellen!

Ellen remains still. Some rows behind her sits  
Glen, his lolled head back disguising a grin, he  
shakes his head briefly.

FADE OUT:

THE END