

The Lonely Tenant

FADE IN:

INT. APARTMENT GREAT ROOM - DAY

A twelve foot ceiling with parlor walls. An engraved marble fireplace watches over a beautiful parquet floor.

EDWARD, 36, escorts MARIA, 28, into the room. He jingles keys in his hands as he watches her gawk at the interior.

EDWARD

She's a beauty, isn't she?

MARIA

Amazing. Why is the price so low?

Maria walks over to the windows. She takes in the eighth floor view.

EDWARD

Figure not too many people would want to live in an abandoned building. Once I get the rest finished, the price will go up. Just a fair warning.

MARIA

But, if I sign a year lease?

Edward nods.

EDWARD

I won't raise the price until its up.

Maria smiles.

INT. APARTMENT GREAT ROOM - NIGHT

A large throw rug lies in front of the fireplace. Moving boxes are scattered all over.

Maria enters wearing only a large T-shirt. She brushes her wet hair.

She sits on the ledge next to the window and lights a cigarette. She cracks the window. Lights an incense that protrudes from a bowl. She sets her RED LIGHTER on the ledge.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Maria walks in wearing a business-minded outfit. She studies her hair in the mirror.

She stops when she notices her red lighter on the sink next to her beauty products. She picks it up and studies it.

GREAT ROOM

Maria walks in and places the lighter on the ledge next to the incense. She walks into the...

KITCHEN

She walks over to a coffee pot on the counter. The tip of her shoe brazes something metallic underneath the lower cupboards.

She bends down to investigate. A large butcher's knife leans up against the kick-board, blade up. She grabs the knife and places it in the silverware drawer.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Keys jingle off screen. A door shuts. Maria walks in and turns on the light.

She begins to unbutton her pants, but stops when she notices her red lighter on the sink again.

GREAT ROOM

She walks over to the ledge and sets the lighter down.

KITCHEN

She reaches underneath the cabinets and pulls out the butcher's knife again.

MARIA

What the hell is going on?

INT. GREAT ROOM - LATER

Maria sits on the ledge smoking a cigarette while she talks on the phone.

MARIA

Its just weird. I think someone's
been coming into my apartment.
Little things keep moving around.

SIERRA (V.O.)

It's probably just a ghost.

MARIA

A ghost? Is that supposed to make
me feel better?

Sierra laughs.

SIERRA (V.O.)

Trust me. All those old buildings
have some kind of spirits
lingering. They're harmless. I'll
bring my ouija over tomorrow. We'll
have some fun with it.

INT. GREAT ROOM - NIGHT

SIERRA, 26, sits on a chair opposite of Maria. Two glasses of red wine occupy the table. A single candle illuminates the ouija board on the table between them.

Sierra places her hands on the planchette. Maria follows.

SIERRA

Clear your mind. Try not to think
of anything. Let the pointer flow
between us.

Maria lets out a long exhale. They begin to work the planchette in a large circle that skirts the boundaries of the board.

SIERRA

Are we alone?

The planchette drops it's view piece over "NO".

SIERRA

Who are you?

The planchette works its way through the letters D-E-A-D.

SIERRA

Welcome to the party, captain obvious.

MARIA

You're moving this, aren't you?

SIERRA

Am not. Have some faith. Focus.

They resume circling the planchette over the board.

SIERRA

Why are you here?

The board responds with T-O-W-A-R-N.

SIERRA

Warn? Warn us from what?

L-E-A-V-E-O-R-D-I-E. Maria takes her hands from the planchette.

MARIA

Okay. This isn't funny.

SIERRA

I'm not doing anything. Looks like you've got a feisty one here.

Sierra takes a sip of her wine.

MARIA

What am I supposed to do?

Sierra shrugs her shoulders.

SIERRA

Well, for starters, you could just ask it to leave.

MARIA

Does that work?

SIERRA

Most ghosts are just lost souls hanging on to what they remember about life. Stuff like this apartment. Just tell it to leave, maybe it will.

Maria looks upwards.

MARIA
Please, leave my house.

SIERRA
Come on, say it like you mean it.

MARIA
I want you out of my house.

SIERRA
Yawn.

Maria stands.

MARIA
Get out of my house, it no longer
belongs to you!

There is a knock at the front door. Maria and Sierra approach it.

SIERRA
Who is it?

Maria opens the door. Edward stands in the hallway.

EDWARD
Everything okay?

Maria blushes.

MARIA
Sorry, we're just having a little
fun.
(to Sierra)
This is my landlord, Edward.

Sierra offers her hand.

SIERRA
Well, she didn't tell me you were
such a dish. Care to join us for a
drink?

Edward looks past them to the table with the ouija board.

EDWARD
No, thank you though. Just wanted
to make sure everything was okay.

MARIA

Sorry, we'll try to keep it down.

Edward smiles.

EDWARD

No need. Not like you'll wake the neighbors. You two have a good night.

Edward walks off. Sierra grabs Maria's arm.

SIERRA

I think he likes me. I should spend some more time over here.

INT. GREAT ROOM - NIGHT

Maria walks in and sets a bag of groceries down. She immediately looks to the ledge. The lighter is gone.

BATHROOM

She walks in and flips on the light. The lighter is on the sink again.

KITCHEN

Maria bends down and sees the butcher's knife next to the kick board. She doesn't touch it.

MARIA

I'm through fighting with you.

Maria walks out of the kitchen.

GREAT ROOM

Maria grabs her bag of groceries. She notices Sierra's ouija board on a small table by the front door. She puts her groceries down and picks it up.

She places the board on the coffee table by the couch. She puts her hands on the planchette.

MARIA

Are you still here?

The pointer makes its way to "YES".

MARIA

Why do you move my things?

The board responds T-O-P-R-O-T-E-C-T.

MARIA

Protect? From what?

H-I-M.

MARIA

Him? Who is him?

A-T-D-O-O-R. Maria stares at her front door. Knock, knock. Maria approaches the door. Before she opens it she attaches the chain lock.

Maria opens the door. Edward stands in the hallway with a bottle of red wine.

EDWARD

Thought I'd bring over a little house warming gift. Noticed you liked red.

MARIA

Thank you. I think I drank too much last night. Gonna take it easy tonight.

EDWARD

That's okay. I understand.

Edward passes the bottle to her. She sets it on the table by the door. He flicks the chain lock with his finger.

EDWARD

Is that necessary, neighbor?

MARIA

I'm sorry. The place is a mess right now or I'd invite you in.

Edward nods.

EDWARD

Okay. You have a nice night. Maybe we can open that bottle tomorrow?

MARIA

That sounds good.

Edward walks down the hall. Maria shuts the door and bolts it.

HALLWAY

Edward stops and turns. He stares at Maria's door.

GREAT ROOM

Maria returns to the coffee table. She puts her hands on the planchette.

MARIA
What is your name?

The board spells out J-E-N-N-Y.

MARIA
Jenny, what happened to you?

M-U-R-D-E-R. Maria puts her hand over her mouth. She resumes.

MARIA
Did he do it?

The planchette darts to "YES".

MARIA
Where are you?

The pointer works its way through W-A-L-L. Maria stops. She looks around her apartment. She gets up and begins banging on the carved wooden panels that line the interior wall.

The first one she tries is solid, so is the next. The fourth one has a different sound. Hallow.

Maria runs her hand down the wood.

MARIA
Are you here?

EXT. FIRE ESCAPE - CONTINUOUS

Edward crouches. He watches Maria study the wall. She leaves the room and returns with a claw hammer. She puts the back of it underneath the panelling.

EDWARD
Fuck.

INT. GREAT ROOM - NIGHT

Maria pops off a piece of molding. She places it on the ground.

HALLWAY

Edward puts a key into Maria's apartment door. He turns it.

GREAT ROOM

Maria wedges the claw of the hammer into the panelling. She doesn't notice Edward's arm reaching in her front door. He unlatches the chain lock.

She continues to struggle with the panelling. Edward sneaks in and grabs the full bottle of wine from the table. He approaches.

Maria turns at the last second. Too late. THWACK! Lights out.

INT. BATHROOM - LATER

Maria comes to. She has her hands and ankles bound with zip ties. Running water fills the tub. Edward enters. Smiles.

EDWARD

How did you find out?

MARIA

Find out what?

EDWARD

That she's buried in there.

MARIA

Who?

EDWARD

My ex wife.

Edward walks to the tub faucet and shuts off the water. The tub is full.

EDWARD

Three days from finalizing our divorce, my mother dies. Leaves me this building in her will. Jenny decided she wanted half its value. She wouldn't sign. Cunt.

(MORE)

EDWARD (cont'd)
Figured if she likes the place so
much, I'll make her a permanent
resident.

Edward smiles. Maria struggles to sit up.

EDWARD
Shame you fell in the tub, hit your
head and drown.

MARIA
What?

EDWARD
That's my story. You like it? Oh,
by the way, does your friend know
about this too?

Maria shakes her head.

MARIA
No. I just found out today.

EDWARD
How?

MARIA
The ouija board. Jenny spoke to me.

Maria's cell phone rings off screen.

EDWARD
Is that your friend calling?

Edward walks out. Maria puts her hands on the counter and
pulls herself up. She notices the lighter. She takes a long
look at a can of hair spray.

GREAT ROOM

Edward grabs Maria's cell off the coffee table. The caller
I.D. reads "JENNY"

EDWARD
What?

Edward accepts the call. He puts the phone to his ear.

JENNY (V.O.)
See you soon, darling.

Edward spikes the phone to the ground. He storms towards the
bathroom.

HALLWAY

He reaches the bathroom doorway. A huge fireball engulfs his face. He falls to the ground. Screams.

Maria hops past him. She drops the lighter and hair spray.

Edward kicks with his legs. Blind. He trips Maria. She falls to the floor and begins to crawl.

EDWARD

You fucking bitch!

Edward paws at her feet. He gets a hold, but she kicks him off.

GREAT ROOM

Maria works feverishly. She squirms her way towards the kitchen. Edward, now on his feet. Waves his hands around as he struggles to find her.

KITCHEN

Maria works her way in. She eyes the butcher's knife next to the kick-board.

Edward races in. He trips and lands on top of her. He grabs her hair. Maria screams.

Edward feels around until he finds the refrigerator. He slams her head into it several times leaving a dent.

Maria falls limp. Edward searches out the sink. He turns the water on and splashes several handfuls onto his face. He laughs.

EDWARD

Sorry. Was never very good with women.

He stares at his hand. His red eyes try to make it out. Maria's eyes flutter. Blood drips down her forehead.

She quietly crawls towards the knife. She reaches it. She pulls it under her chest and lies on top of it.

EDWARD

Shame, really. I thought you were kind of pretty.

Edward drops to his knees. He rolls Maria over. She stares at him with a vengeful gaze. Her eyes turn from brown to green.

MARIA

Good to see you again, darling.

EDWARD

Jenny?

Maria plunges the knife into his neck. He falls backwards spitting up blood. He gasps for air. Maria smiles.

Edward falls over limp. Dead. Maria's expression changes to that of horror. She tilts her head back and screams.

A mist seems to rise from her breath. Her eyes change to her native brown.

She backs up against the cabinets. She catches her breath and begins to cry. Maria looks upwards.

MARIA

Thank you. Please, just leave me
alone now. Will you just leave me
alone?!

GREAT ROOM

Maria's wails are heard off screen. The planchette of the ouija board encompasses "YES".

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END.