

Beyond the Black Door

Written by

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INT. BASEMENT - MORNING

SAM is doing her washing. She loads a pile of clothes into the machine and messes with the settings. We're not focused on her though- we're looking at a small wooden door in the wall behind her. We're tracking towards it and letting her go slowly out of frame. As we move towards it, the washer comes alive and the hum of it gets louder and louder until we-

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Sam wanders through the house, absently eating a bowl of pasta as she walks. She's got one headphone in listening to music. She suddenly stops in her path, takes the headphone out to listen. There's voices coming from below her, the sound of conversation and laughter in the basement. She puts the bowl down and heads towards the sound.

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

The door swings open and Sam shouts down the stairs

SAM

Alex? I didn't know you were home...
Is that... Is someone with you?

The laughter cuts off abruptly as she speaks. We hear shuffling and after a moment ALEX appears at the bottom of the steps alone. He looks slightly flustered.

ALEX

Sam I...

SAM

I heard voices?

ALEX

Oh! The... no I was just listening to something sorry. Just me.

(beat)

SAM

Okay... Doing some laundry?

Alex looks at her confused for a moment, then seems to catch up

ALEX
Laundry... Yeah I'm just... Sorry
I'll turn it down

Sam seems thrown off, but doesn't care enough to carry on the conversation

SAM
All good... I'll... see you later
okay?

ALEX
Later, yeah...

He watches her go and the door closes on him.

INT. BASEMENT - LATER

We're looking out from within the washing machine. It shakes and judders. Sam walks into view, holding a basket of washing and does a double take as she looks into the machine, leans in to look closer. We go to the reverse to see that it's completely empty, just spinning around. Sam looks perplexed.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sam lies restless in bed. She tosses and turns but sleep doesn't come. Some time later we see she's given up; the bedside lamp is on, she's reading a book and absently smoking a joint.

The sound of a door opening suddenly breaks the silence. It came from out in the hall, Sam looks up from her book. We hear the door shut, then the slow creaking of footsteps across the floor. A shadow crosses the shaft of light coming under Sam's door and she watches it creep across her wall. The footsteps carry on down the stairs and we hear the clunk of the basement door.

Sam looks back down at her book, tries to refocus, takes a long drag- but she keeps finding her eyes wandering back up at the door. Curiosity overtaking her, she gives in and gets out of bed.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Sam edges her door open and slips out. She silently makes her way down the stairs and through the hall, checking around every corner.

As she gets closer to the basement door, she can hear the sound of voices again. The speakers are now locked in heated conversation; louder and sharper, though no words can be made out.

Red light spills out from under the door.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

The door opens just a crack and Sam peers through, checking the coast is clear. When she's sure, she opens it a little more, then a little more, until she can slip through and onto the steps, which creak uncomfortably beneath her.

The first of the voices is now undeniably Alex's, but the second has fallen too low to hear. Alex is speaking in a hushed tone now, but desperation is clear behind his forced manner.

ALEX

I know that's... but if you'd just...
listen to me- no I know... you know
that I am... I would never...

Sam's curiosity is turning gradually into concern. She creeps a little further down the steps to see more clearly. Alex is huddled very close to the wall, speaking into the small door, his energy erratic. Sam leans forward to watch through the banister, eyes wide.

The whisper on the other side of the door speaks softly. Tears have appeared on Alex's face and his voice is shaky.

ALEX (cont'd)

Yes of course... what's necessary...
I... give gladly and I do not expect
reward...

Sam's foot suddenly slips and slams down onto the next step, making a loud crack. Alex whips around and looks straight at us, terror in his face. Sam gasps as she locks eyes with him. They stare at each other, both frozen for a fraction of a second, and then Sam lurches backwards and up the stairs.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

She bursts out of the basement door and rushes down the hallway. She's breathless, walking fast and looking over her shoulder as she scrambles up the stairs.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

She lets a out deep breath and pushes her back against the door as it shuts. She pauses for a second, then hastily locks the door behind her. She stands there breathing, back still against the door. She begins to realise that no one has chased her, no sound has followed her up the steps. She waits a while longer, just to make sure, then slowly composes herself and backs away from the door.

Some time later, she's sat up in bed, eyes still on the door. We hear the creaking of the stairs as Alex carefully ascends. His shadow creeps across the wall again as he passes Sam's door, this time stopping for a moment, considering, and then moving on.

Sam looks terrified now, sheets pulled up to her chin, shivering, eyes never leaving the locked door. As the noises cease, we stay with her in silence as she tries to settle herself. Sleep is now an impossibility.

FADE OUT

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

We suddenly cut from black to various shots of food being prepared; vegetables chopped, meat simmering in a pan, steam rising.

INT. HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

A beautifully prepared steak is presented to us. It's tender and raw. We pull out to see that Alex is stood at Sam's bedroom door, holding out the plate to her. She looks doubtfully at it, then up at him. Heavy bags have appeared around her eyes.

SAM

What the fuck was going on last night
Alex? What is this?

Alex looks almost taken aback, as if he was expecting fanfare

ALEX

Listen... I think you got a little freaked out last night and I know we've only lived together a short while so I thought I'd try to make you feel a little more-

SAM

I saw you talking to someone... you were talking to someone in the basement and they were... talking back

ALEX

I... what?? You might have heard me talking to *myself*, I do that sometimes

SAM

(frustrated)

No it... it wasn't... it was in the wall, it was angry

Alex looks dubiously at her

ALEX

Were you smoking by any chance?

SAM

Well yeah but that's not... I know what I saw Alex

ALEX

No I know you do, I know... you did see me down there last night, but I was checking the boiler that's it. I just think you might be... embellishing slightly

Sam does not look convinced. Alex plows on.

ALEX (cont'd)

anyway I could tell you were a bit rattled so... peace offering?

He holds out the steak once more.

Sam takes the plate from him and shuts the door in his smiling face.

EXT. GARDEN - MOMENTS LATER

We're looking up at Sam's window as she scoops the steak off the plate. It plummets and splats down onto concrete. We pan up to the kitchen window. Alex opens it absently, letting some air in, suddenly sees the discarded steak. He just stands there staring at it a while, with a look of cold disdain; of rage simmering just below the surface.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Sam walks home through the lamp-lit suburbs, wrapped up in a hat and scarf.

INT. ENTRANCE HALL - NIGHT

All the lights are off inside. We hear Sam's keys turn and she walks through the door, into the dim hallway. She turns the light on and begins taking off her layers, too warm all of a sudden.

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK

The sound comes suddenly and echos through the entire house.

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK

It comes again, and then again. Sam looks around for a source; not the door behind her, nor the rooms upstairs, but from below. It's loud, as if someone is rapping on her skull. She stalks towards the sound.

As she gets closer to the basement door, the knocking becomes louder and more impatient.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Blue moonlight floods the basement. Sam stands at the top of the steps again, wanting more than anything to close the door and run, knowing she cannot.

SAM

Alex?

Nothing.

SAM (cont'd)

... who's down there?

No voice replies. She takes a shaky breath and begins edging down the steps one at a time.

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK

The knocking eggs her on, draws her closer. She gets to the bottom of the steps and moves past us. Behind her in the shadows, Alex stands watching.

Now she's in the room, she can tell the knocking is coming from that tiny wooden door in the wall; something on the other side is hammering on it. We move towards it as she does.

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK

The sound reaches fever pitch, louder and more persistent than ever. At last, curiosity overtakes Sam; she reaches out, grabs the handle and pulls the door open. She takes a step back as if expecting something to jump out at her, but nothing does. Instead, there's just darkness- a black void on the other side. The knocking has stopped and silence presses down. Sam takes a step closer to peer into the door, to try and make out anything in the blackness.

As she leans in, we see Alex step into the doorway behind her. Sam feels his presence suddenly and turns to look at him. He's looking at her with an odd expression on his face, somewhere between remorse and conviction. Sam looks confused, dazed, angry; above all scared. He raises a hand, like a sad sort of wave.

Sam is suddenly and harshly pulled through the door and out of sight by hands cloaked in black.

We hear the beginning of a scream, but no more. Alex flinches as sounds of crunching and churning echo out from beyond the door. He closes his eyes, like it will help.

Now we're looking out from inside the door; the basement a tiny square in the center. Alex steps into view, looking at his shoes, not wanting to look into the door

ALEX

Is... it done? Are you satisfied?

We go to a wide of the room and slowly pan away from Alex over to the washing machine, which has been juddering away in the background. Alex grows more panicked as we pan away from him

ALEX (cont'd)
But you said... you said you needed
her, you said it would fix everything

We move towards the spinning washer

ALEX (cont'd)
I... I've given you everything...

Another voice is suddenly heard- deep and full, but barely
more than a whisper

VOICE
give gladly, and do not expect reward

ALEX
...Bu-

The sound of Alex being pulled beyond is more drawn out; he
threshes and pleads and screams. We cut suddenly from the
spinning washer to Alex's fingernails clawing at the door
frame, trying desperately to hold on. He's finally dragged
inside and his scream stops like the needle being lifted
from a record.

We go back to the now empty room, stay there in silence for
a beat. The washer suddenly stops its churning and lets out
a chirp to signal the end of it's cycle.

We begin pushing into the open door. As we do, we can hear a
delirious, shrieking laugh from within. As we move past the
threshold and into darkness, the laughter grows louder and
louder; so loud it could be inside our heads. And then we

CUT TO BLACK