

TREAT

By

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2015 Steve Miles

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**FADE IN:**

**INT. CLOVER MOTEL - LOBBY - NIGHT**

The only light is from a handful of candles on a check-in desk. Outside a storm rages. Thunder peals. Wind howls. The building creaks under the strain.

A vending machine displays a single candy bar held by a spiral retainer.

HOWARD, late 50s, bleary eyed, travel worn, empties the dregs of a coffee pot into a cup.

He spots a desk calendar on the check-in. Flips the date from October 30th to the 31st.

DENISE and LYLE, both early 20s, hunker nervously against the wall opposite. They wear matching T-shirts with the slogan: 'I HEART SUPER SMILEY FUN-PARK LAND.'

They watch Howard take up position in a doorway linking a back room.

DENISE

Mister you plannin' on holdin' out there the whole night?

HOWARD

Would that be a problem?

LYLE

Making us nervous. Feel like maybe this whole place gonna lift off.

HOWARD

Late sixties build like this? Maybe it will. Know what they made these places outta back then?

They stare back, blank.

Howard produces a business card with a practiced flourish.

HOWARD

Howard Briggs. Construction.

DENISE

Like an engineer?

HOWARD  
It's like an engineer.

LYLE  
Is it more like a salesman?

Howard feigns a smile.

HOWARD  
How was super smiley world?

DENISE  
It's a Land. It rained.

HOWARD  
No shit...

PERCY, 70s, stooped and grey, shuffles out from a closet behind the check-in, arms heaped with blankets.

PERCY  
Sir, I got somethin' here make your stay more comfortable.

HOWARD  
Is it a room?

PERCY  
No can do. Honeymoon suite damn near blew clear into next county last storm round. Lobby's the safest place on account of the foundations.

Howard flicks Denise and Lyle a look -- told you so.

PERCY  
Insurance people what says. Up to me I'd have more to offer'n cold coffee an' blankets but it ain't. Not my time no more, no sir.

Howard raps on the door-frame.

HOWARD  
Looks like I'm pitchin' my stand right here. Safest place in the safest place.

DENISE  
Thought that was earthquakes.

HOWARD

Earthquake, twister, adversarial  
legal process, nothing like a door  
frame when Mother Nature cracks the  
ugly knuckle.

He looks back to find a stone-faced Percy waiting for him to  
take a blanket. Howard studies Percy a beat before  
reluctantly taking one.

HOWARD

There's a honeymoon suite?

Percy shuffles away.

PERCY

We cater to all occasions. Bad  
weather exceptin'.

KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK. Slow, deliberate.

Percy looks from the door to the desk calendar. He frowns.

PERCY

Who changed my calendar?

HOWARD

It was a day behind. Still it's  
closer than the rest of this place.

Percy squints at the vending machine, bristles at the sight  
of the lone candy bar. The blankets slip from his arms.

PERCY

Goddamn sonnoffa--

KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK.

LYLE

Hey, old man, your door.

PERCY

Motel's closed.

DENISE

You opened for us.

PERCY

It's after dark. Don't open after  
dark. Not today.

Howard gives the blanket a tentative sniff.

HOWARD

Hell of a business model you got here, Percy.

DENISE

You just gonna leave them out there?

PERCY

They'll find their way.

LYLE

Mister, we a ways from nowhere out here, an' they don't go namin' rainy afternoons, that's a category three roll of the dice out there.

PERCY

I knows' what it is.

DENISE

It's plain mean's what it is.

Lyle stands.

Denise pulls herself up beside him in support.

The KNOCKING comes again. Impatient.

LYLE

I'm sorry, Mister.

He moves to the door, takes hold of the handle -- Percy's boney hand clasps his.

He looks back into Percy's frightened eyes.

PERCY

(whispered)

Motel's closed.

A VOICE from outside, a rasped, almost mocking tone.

VOICE (O.S.)

Trick or treat?

The colour drains from Percy's face.

DENISE

They're just children--

Percy clamps a hand across her mouth.

Howard sips a coffee, bemused.

BANG! The door shudders.

VOICE (O.S.)  
Trick? Or treat?

Percy guides Denise and Lyle back, stepping over the heap of dropped blankets.

LAUGHTER. They turn to see Howard near doubled over at the sight of the three of them.

HOWARD  
You kids don't get out much--

WHAMM! -- The door shudders.

Howard starts, sloshes coffee down his shirt.

HOWARD  
Trick you little bastard!

Percy sags.

PERCY  
Oh, mister...

Howard raises his eyes to the ceiling.

The roof CREAKS.

CRYING, faint at first. It draws closer to the door.

GIRL (O.S.)  
Help us please. It's my little  
brother, he only wanted candy.

DENISE  
Lyle!

Lyle moves towards the door. Percy blocks his way.

PERCY  
No. Not here, not tonight.

LYLE  
Sir, it's unreasonable, illegal  
maybe, almost certainly  
unconstitutional.

PERCY  
I can't let you open that door.

GIRL (O.S.)  
Please help us. We're so scared.

PERCY  
It's not what you think.

GIRL (O.S.)  
Please, just save my puppy!

DENISE  
Lyle! There's a puppy!

GIRL (O.S.)  
He's Bichon Frise!

Denise brushes them aside, takes the handle...

PERCY  
You don't understand--

She pulls open the door. Wind rushes in, kills the candles.

PERCY  
It's a--

Lightning frames a small, willowy CREATURE in the entrance.

It wears a fright mask that may well be its own face. Gone is the Girl's voice, replaced by the raspy one from before.

CREATURE  
Trick.

A rope loops over Denise and she's pulled from the room.

Lyle rushes out into the darkness after her.

A chorus of VOICES, excited, maniacal. Their number unseen, unimaginable.

THE CREATURES (O.S.)  
Trick! Trick! Trick! Trick...

SCREAMS mingle with the storm.

Howard rushes the door and slams it shut. He braces his weight against it, muting the horror beyond.

Percy rummages behind the desk. He produces a pair of earmuffs and a thick book.

HOWARD

Help me!

PERCY

Motel's closed.

Percy dons the earmuffs. He grabs a candle and shuts himself in the closet. Several locks CLICK into place.

Howard stares open mouthed.

The SCREAMS subside.

Howard peeks through the blind.

Lightning reveals an empty forecourt.

WHAP! A shredded 'I HEART SUPER SMILEY FUN--' T-shirt is blown against the window. The rest of the slogan blocked out with blood.

Howard drops back in shock.

He turns, watches aghast as the door swings open.

Howard rushes for the back room, trips on the blankets and falls.

He scoots back on his haunches as the Creature pads across the room, backing him against the door-frame.

The Creature leans in, its face inches from his.

CREATURE

Trick? Or treat?

HOWARD

Treat..?

The Creature considers...

It slips a thin hand into Howard's suit breast, rummages, pulls out a coin.

The Creature pats Howard on the head like a good dog and pulls back to the vending machine.

The Creature inserts the coin. It CLATTERS through the machine landing with a CHINK!

A bony finger stabs a selection button.

Howard watches the retainer make its slow spin to freedom.

The Creature turns and flashes a coy grin.

CLUNK. The candy lands in the collection tray. The Creature retrieves it. Waggles the bar at Howard and exits.

Howard sags, relieved.

SWOOSH!

Howard frowns, looks down to find a rope looped about his foot. His eyes trace the other end to the front door.

The rope snaps tight.

He grabs the door frame -- it splinters free in his hands.

Howard claws at the carpet as he's dragged towards the exit.

THE CREATURES (O.S.)  
Treat! Treat! Treat! Treat...

**FADE OUT**