

April's Fool
by
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FADE IN:

INT. APRIL'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

A door opens into a semi-lit bedroom. A couple lies in bed, out of focus. The room is tastefully decorated.

A dresser stands opposite the bed. On it a series of objects appear in sequence from left to right.

START SEQUENCE

- A TICKING clock. The time reads 6 am and the date April 1st.
- A beautiful silver, antique picture frame with a wedding photograph. An inscription on the frame says: "Jeff and April Forever".
- In the mirror -- an unfocused reflection of the couple sleeping on opposite sides of the bed with their backs toward each other.
- A cell phone. Beat. It suddenly blinks and BUZZES to life.

END SEQUENCE

Reflected in the mirror, APRIL REED reacts.

She shoots a nervous look at her partner. Beat. She slips out of bed. Her pedicured feet sink into the carpet and pad, catlike toward the dressing table.

April is a sultry brunette in her late thirties with intelligent, expressive eyes. She smiles and picks up the phone.

Her husband, JEFF REED, stirs and her smile vanishes. She sucks in her breath, eyes wide, studying his reflection. He settles down. She EXHALES and opens the message. Her face lights up as she reads.

TEXT APPEARS ON SCREEN

I can't stand it any more. I have to see you, today.

A smile curves once again at the corners of her lips. She types deftly.

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TEXT APPEARS ON SCREEN

Today's your lucky day. Balmoral hotel, 9 am, suite 317.

There's a low TONE as April hits send and quietly replaces the phone.

Her hand pushes a closet door OPEN and a light FLICKS on in a dressing room.

INT. UNKNOWN BEDROOM - MORNING (A LITTLE LATER)

A masculine hand holds a cell phone.

TEXT APPEARS ON SCREEN

Today's your lucky day. Balmoral Hotel, 9 am, suite 317.

INT. UNKNOWN DRESSING ROOM - MORNING (A LITTLE LATER)

A SHOWER cascades in the background. A man's fingers slowly trace black lingerie laid out over the back of a chair. We never see his face.

His hands reach into the top shelf of a closet and extract a wooden box. The box sits on a table-like surface. His hands unlock and slowly open it. In it lies a gleaming, chrome snub nose revolver.

INT. APRIL'S DRESSING ROOM/ RANDOM HOTEL ROOM - VARIOUS

START MONTAGE - APRIL DRESSES/ A COUPLE MAKES LOVE

A) INT. APRIL'S DRESSING ROOM - MORNING. April stands in her towel and applies lotion to her legs in a sensual way.

B) INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY. Curtains are drawn and a couple make love in a semi-dark room. No faces, just silhouetted, intertwined body parts. Soft moans, sighs, gasps. His hand slips up the outside of her thigh.

C) INT. APRIL'S DRESSING ROOM. April looks in a mirror and ties a beautiful necklace around her neck.

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D) INT. HOTEL ROOM. The man's hands glide along the smooth skin of his lover's shoulder and neck caressing her jawline. His lips descend and devour hers.

E) INT. APRIL'S DRESSING ROOM. April is dressed in a knee length wrap dress that reveals just enough to make you curious. She picks up her car keys and handbag from the dresser.

F) INT. HOTEL ROOM. The couple sleep in each others' arms. A set of keys lies on the bedside table.

G) INT. APRIL'S DRESSING ROOM. April BANGS the door shut. It's abrupt. Unexpected. Resembles a GUNSHOT. The screen goes black.

END MONTAGE.

INT. APRIL'S KITCHEN - MORNING (LATER)

April is a picture of sexy sophistication. She expertly negotiates the kitchen in heels, collecting an assortment of breakfast ingredients and utensils.

CLOSE UP of the coffee machine. The dark brown liquid in the glass jug starts to HISS and GURGLE as it heats up. Wisps of steam drift from the surface.

A large analog clock on the wall TICKS. The TICKING swells with echo-like volume and intensity. The time is 7.55 am.

INT. APRIL'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

An analog alarm clock on a bedside table TICKS distinctly but at normal volume. The ticking, the time and the movement of the hands synchronizes perfectly with the kitchen clock.

Jeff sleeps peacefully in bed facing his beside table. The alarm is set to go in 5 minutes.

INT. APRIL'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

April checks the wall clock. It synchronizes perfectly into the TICKING of the bedside clock. The time is 7.58 am.

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CONTINUED:

April stands at the stove and cracks eggs into a pan. They SIZZLE loudly as they make contact with the hot oil.

The coffee continues to percolate. The HISSING and BUBBLING and TICKING are all exaggerated.

INT. APRIL'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The clock registers 8.00 am. The alarm SCREAMS to life. It's a deafening, grating metallic sound. Jeff catapults into consciousness.

His hand SLAMS down on the clock. It sounds like a GUNSHOT. He flings himself back into the pillow. His eyes glaze over and close. It looks like he's dying. The screen closes like a pair of eyelids till it's black.

INT. APRIL'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Jeff stands shirtless in the doorway. He yawns and stretches, rubs his eyes. He appraises April from toe to head as she stands at the stove FRYING bacon.

JEFF

Morning.

APRIL

Hey.

He saunters over to the coffee machine and INHALES DEEPLY, savoring the aroma.

APRIL CONT.

Thought you were never gonna wake up.

Jeff turns and stares at her. Beat. He pours a mug of the dark, steaming liquid and PLUNKS himself down at the kitchen table.

JEFF

We all have to wake up sooner or later. Don't you think?

He sips slowly, his eyes fixed on her. She doesn't seem to hear him over the LOUD MECHANICAL WHIRRING of the blender. She pours the contents into a tall glass and turns to face him.

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APRIL

Did you say something?

She sips slowly watching over the top of her glass as he drinks her in with his eyes again.

JEFF

Big plans?

APRIL

No point in making small ones babe. Size does matter after all. Don't you think?

Jeff's face registers she's struck a nerve.

JEFF

What's that supposed to mean?

April LAUGHS and returns her attention to the SIZZLING pan.

APRIL

Don't be such a man.

JEFF

So I should be less of a man then?

She spins around, spatula in hand and looks at him in disbelief.

APRIL

Seriously?

JEFF

That's a question not an answer.

APRIL

Why are you being touchy?

JEFF

Why are you being evasive?

APRIL

Why are you being invasive?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

He notes her burgeoning irritation and laughs falsely at the ceiling to break the tension and escape her unflinching gaze. His hands lift in surrender.

JEFF

Okay, okay. Just relax. Why are you so uptight? I'm only teasing.

Her expression softens so he stands up to press his advantage. He walks up to her, takes her by the waist and pulls her in close.

She avoids eye contact and turns her head to the side and looks down instead.

He links his hands around the small of her back, encircling her but she swivels back round in his arms and resumes cooking.

He rubs his face in her hair, inhaling her scent, hands all over her as he kisses her neck passionately. She pulls her head forward and away.

APRIL

Jeff please. I'm really not in the mood.

He ignores her protests, his breathing ragged, his ministrations urgent.

APRIL (CONT'D)

DAMMIT Jeff!

She breaks free from his embrace, turns and pushes him away. He looks rejected, wounded, angry.

JEFF

Oh? So you dress like a party invitation for every other man but your husband isn't on the guest list?

Her eyes narrow with rage.

APRIL

Fuck you Jeff!

April SLAMS a plateful of breakfast onto the table. Food spills in every direction.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

She grabs her car keys and bag off the counter and exits, **SLAMMING** the door behind her. It sounds like a **GUNSHOT**.

Jeff flops down in the chair and stares at the greasy, half empty plate. He impales a displaced sausage with his fork and lifts it into the air.

He twirls the fork slowly, staring ruefully at the pathetic looking morsel for a bit and then tosses it back, fork and all, into the plate.

INT. JEFF'S CAR - DAY

Jeff watches from his car. April wears a blonde wig and movie star shades. She strides across the road toward a hotel.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Jeff **BANGS** the car door shut and runs across the street. April slips through the hotel doors.

INT. BALMORAL HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Jeff discreetly ducks into the hotel and skulks in the lounge, watching. April chats to the receptionist.

She suddenly turns around as if she suspects she's being followed. Jeff dives behind a couch to avoid detection.

A bellhop approaches him.

BELLHOP

Are you okay sir?

Jeff responds in an irritated, impatient tone.

JEFF

Fine. Just dropped a contact.

The bellhop moves off reluctantly. When Jeff gets up April is nowhere to be seen.

JEFF (CONT'D)

Shit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He hurries over to the receptionist.

INT. BALMORAL HOTEL - RECEPTION - CONTINUOUS

Excuse me.

The pretty receptionist looks up and smiles mechanically. Jeff addresses her in nervous hushed tones.

That woman, the blonde you just spoke to...

The telephone RINGS. The receptionist silently hands him a key as she answers.

RECEPTIONIST

Good morning. You've reached the Balmoral Hotel. How may I help you?

Jeff interrupts her.

JEFF

I'm sorry, I don't quite follow.

She sticks her finger in the air to silence him and continues with the conversation. Jeff stands there perplexed. She looks up irritated.

RECEPTIONIST

(To the caller, sweetly)

Just a minute please.

(To Jeff, impatiently)

Is there a problem?

JEFF

No. No problem.

RECEPTIONIST

Then do you mind?

She returns to her call. Jeff studies the key as he slowly walks toward the elevator.

INT. HOTEL ROOM FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

The elevator doors OPEN and Jeff steps out. From his POV we follow the doors down the passage.

He stands facing a door with the number 317 clearly displayed in the middle. We hear his heart, BEATING like a drum accompanied by laboured BREATHING.

He checks his watch which is TICKING abnormally loud like his BREATHING and in time with his POUNDING HEART. Beat. The BIOLOGICAL SOUNDS continue in the background.

He KNOCKS twice, loudly, and continues to stare at the number which appears to slowly move closer and grow larger. At the same time the BACKGROUND BIOLOGICAL SOUNDS are now out of sync and grow increasingly louder and more distracting.

He lifts his hand to knock again but the door is flung open by VALERIE MCQUEEN, a grinning blonde in black lingerie.

Jeff looks shocked. He opens his mouth to speak but Valerie flings her arms around his neck and pulls him into the room.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

She pushes him against the door, SHUTTING IT, as she plants a passionate kiss on his lips.

Jeff's overwhelmed but regains his senses and pushes her away. She stares at him questioningly.

JEFF

What the hell are you doing here?

VALERIE

What you mean?

Jeff grabs her by her upper arms and hauls her toward him. He speaks in low tones through clenched teeth.

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JEFF

I mean, what the fuck are you doing here, dressed like this, in this hotel room? How did you know I'd be here?

Valerie wrenches her arms from his grasp.

VALERIE

You're hurting me.

Her eyes fill with anger and confusion. She storms to the bedside table and pulls her cell phone from her bag. She holds the screen right up to his face.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

This was your damn arrangement. Why are you acting like this?

JEFF

But I never...

There's a KNOCK at the door.

Jeff shoots Valerie a glance. She takes a couple of steps back.

Another KNOCK.

Jeff's body visibly tenses up. He turns and opens the door, just a sliver.

Fear fills his face. He tries to shut the door but VICTOR MCQUEEN, a powerfully built man BARGES into the room. He looks at Valerie standing in her lingerie.

VALERIE

OH SHIT! VICTOR!

Valerie SCREAMS as Victor tears into Jeff with a brutal barrage of BLOWS. Jeff careens backward and CRASHES into the furniture.

Jeff's cell phone flies out of his pocket and LANDS on the floor. Victor stands there, chest heaving, his face a vicious scowl, his lips a snarl.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

The cell phone BUZZES loudly signalling an incoming message. No one moves a muscle.

The phone BUZZES again.

Victor looks at Jeff's bloody face and kicks the phone over to him. He hesitantly picks it up and reads the message.

TEXT APPEARS ON SCREEN

Happy April Fools Day

Victor reaches into his pocket and pulls out a gleaming chrome revolver.

VALERIE CONT.

Victor?

Victor doesn't respond, his face is expressionless as he lifts the gun.

Valerie SCREAMS as fiery gunshots EXPLODE from the barrel till there is nothing but the continuous CLICKING of the empty chamber. The sound echoes into silence.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. BALMORAL HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

April calmly walks down the road as police car sirens SHRIEK and WAIL. Her face twists into a delicious, self-satisfied smirk. As she passes a dumpster, she tosses a cell phone and blonde wig in and continues walking.

FADE OUT.

THE END