

THE HOUND OF MAE ZAELYNN

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FADE IN

INT. OFFICE - DAY

A squeegee is scraped against the outside glass of the office window by a window cleaner, breaking the room's silence. MARTY, a scruffy worn out man in his thirties stares at the glass cleaner from the other side of Mr. Brock's desk.

Mr. Brock, a man in his early fifties, reads through Marty's latest article. Marty can tell Mr. Brock is bored and unimpressed with his work. Mr. Brock finally stops reading the article and spins in his chair to look out the window.

MR. BROCK
It's no good, Marty.

Another squeegee scrape fills the silence.

MARTY
I mean, it's not my best, but you can run it.

MR. BROCK
I don't know what your best would even look like, Marty. I don't know what the hell you've been doing for the past six months, but it sure as shit hasn't been bringing me anything worth anything.

Mr. Brock turns back around and tosses the pages back to Marty.

MR. BROCK (CONT'D)
I have to let you go.

Marty leans forward out of his chair.

MARTY
Mr. Brock... Will... you can't.

MR. BROCK
I don't see any other way, Marty. It's not like you're going to change overnight. You're getting worse, not better.

MARTY
You can't, Will. What about the story I'm working on?
(MORE)

MARTY (CONT'D)

It's going to be the one, it's going to change everything. It's going to make my career.

Mr. Brock picks up the pages again with anger.

MR. BROCK

This baby diaper? Come on, man.

Marty sits back in his chair.

MARTY

No, that was just something I was trying to get in before the deadline. This other one is a longer piece.

MR. BROCK

Well? I'm listening. Last time I'll be listening, so make it good.

Marty scrambles for a moment.

CUT TO:

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Marty sits next to a vagrant at the bar. The vagrant hands him an old newspaper clipping. Marty laughs as he reads the clipping and listens to the vagrant.

VAGRANT

She made a pact with the devil, the devil himself! Met him on the crossroad of highway 61' at midnight. She sold her soul for a billion dollars. A billion!

CUT BACK:

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Marty reaches for his wallet and takes the clipping the vagrant gave to him in the bar.

MARTY

The piece is an interview. An exclusive with Mae Zaelynn.

Mr. Brock is amused.

MR. BROCK

The recluse billionaire Mae
Zaelynn? Get the fuck out of here.

MARTY

Dead serious.

MR. BROCK

You're going to get an exclusive
interview with her?

Marty sits back in ease and collects his papers.

MARTY

Already scheduled. I have a source,
an older gentleman that delivers
her groceries. He's setting the
whole thing up.

Mr. Brock sits back in his chair and thinks with interest. He
reaches into a desk draw and retrieves a liquor bottle and
two glasses.

MR. BROCK

I guess that could be considered
somewhat interesting.

Mr. Brock pours two drinks as Marty leans forward.

MARTY

No, what's interesting is what I'll
be asking her. I've done my
research. She isn't royalty, her
parents were considered poor, she
has no extremely rich relatives,
did not reach fame until after she
became a billionaire. Mae Zaelynn
is the inventor of nothing and
holds no record of even having a
bank account before the age of
seventeen.

Marty waits and prays.

MR. BROCK

Shit.

Mr. Brock hands Marty a glass. Marty smiles in relief.

MR. BROCK (CONT'D)

What's that all about?

MARTY

That's what you're going to continue to pay me to find out.

MR. BROCK

You bought yourself two weeks, my boy. I'll drink to that.

Mr. Brock sips his drink.

MR. BROCK (CONT'D)

So, what do you think it is? How'd she get all that damn money?

MARTY

I don't know, I don't know. Unless she found some kind of buried treasure, I'm honestly leaning toward something else.

MR. BROCK

What?

Marty thinks about telling Mr Brock, but instead finishes his drink and stands to leave.

MARTY

Nah, forget it. I don't need you firing me for insanity.

Marty leaves the office as Mr. Brock screams behind him.

MR. BROCK

Two weeks, nutcase.

EXT. CROSSROADS - MIDNIGHT

Marty stands alone in the silent darkness of the crossroads holding the old newspaper clipping and flipping it between his fingers while he smokes a cigarette. Marty checks his watch. The watch reads 12:45.

MARTY

I guess Mr. Scratch has better things to do tonight.

Marty takes out an old cellphone and dials.

VOICE ON PHONE

Leon's taxi service.

MARTY
Yeah, Hi, I need a cab out on
highway sixty...

Marty looks in the distance and sees car headlights. The taxi light on the roof of the car activates as it slowly approaches.

MARTY (CONT'D)
Never mind. I think one of your
boys is already out here.

Marty hangs up the phone. The taxi creeps to a halt beside Marty.

EST./EXT. SEASIDE TOWN - DAY

Marty walks through a small seaside town. He notices far up on the hill is a enormous mansion that is rundown and being taken back by nature.

EXT. MANSION - SOON AFTER

Marty approaches the mansion gates that are covered in vines. He stands for a minute and contemplates what he's doing there when a small BUZZ from a speaker buried in the vines activates.

SPEAKER VOICE
Go away.

Marty rushes toward the sound of the speaker and interacts with the box.

MARTY
Ms. Zaelynn, is that you?

SPEAKER VOICE
Go away.

MARTY
Ms. Zaelynn, my name is Martin
Davis and I'm a reporter with the
Washington Chronicle. I'm sorry to
bother you, but I just wondered if
I could ask you a few questions
about your situation?

Marty stands in silence.

SPEAKER VOICE

Haven't had a reporter in a while.
I don't talk to reporters.

MARTY

I know, Ms. Zaelynn. All of us
reporters actually know this, but I
still had to try. I just, I really
needed to ask you some questions
about your hound.

Marty stands in silence.

SPEAKER VOICE

It's not my hound.

MARTY

I know, Ms. Zaelynn. That's what I
wanted to talk to you about.

After a final moment of silence, another BUZZER sounds and
the gates creek open.

INT. LARGE ROOM - SOON AFTER

Marty is escorted by a MAID to a large room with a fireplace
burning and a large window wall showing a view of a
deteriorating garden outside. MAE ZAELYNN sits in a large
chair facing the window. A brindled hound lies on the floor
behind the chair.

MAE

Welcome, Mr. Davis. You'll excuse
me if I don't turn around. Please,
come sit.

Marty ENTERS the room and retrieves his notepad. As he gets
closer and looks at the hound again, although still brindled,
the hound has changed.

MARTY

Again, I'm sorry for bothering you
on such short notice.

MAE

I haven't had company in some time
and although I don't like
reporters, uglier have come to my
door. Someone I don't wish to speak
with is better than speaking with
no one at all.

Marty sits in a chair in Mae's eye-line. The Maid brings in a tray of coffee. Marty sits awkwardly.

MARTY

That's a lovely dog that you have.
Are their many on the property?

MAE

That's not my dog, Mr. Davis. He is
the only beast on the property.

MARTY

Who's dog is it?

Marty readies his pen.

MAE

I think you already know, or you
think you think you already know.
Maybe you need to know as I did.
What do you know, Mr. Davis?

Mae Closely watches Marty's eyes.

MARTY

I heard that you received your
fortune from a pact you made with
the devil on a crossroad out on
route sixty six.

MAE

Have you ever been out that way,
Mr. Davis? Lovely views.

MARTY

I have actually. Was out that way a
few days ago, after midnight.

MAE

Did anyone come?

MARTY

Not a soul.

MAE

Well, he came to me. I was
seventeen years old and full of
bullshit. I demanded a billion,
demanded it. He was so eager to
give it to me. Only one catch...

Marty writes fast and finally pauses to answer.

MARTY

So, you have to take care of the
devil's dog?

Marty again looks at the hound. The hound, though still
brindled, has changed. Marty is stunned.

MAE

No, nothing remotely kind like
that, Mr. Davis. I get to keep and
enjoy my money, my life, and my
soul as long as I do not look at
the dog that is always behind me.
As soon as my money was delivered,
I saw the beast in the mirror, just
sitting there. I almost turned
around in that instant, the devil
would have loved that, but instead,
I stared ahead. That's not my dog,
Mr. Davis, that is my keeper, my
curse, and my future.

Marty sits open mouthed and tries to sip on his coffee and
not look at the hound behind the chair that had already
morphed again. Mae feels the awkwardness and breaks it.

MAE (CONT'D)

I feel like a walk and talking
more, Mr. Davis. I would also like
a nice sandwich, but we are out of
bread. Would you accompany me to
the store?

Marty agrees. Mae stands, closes her eyes and begins to walk
backwards out of the room before turning around and opening
her eyes. The hound rises and follows before Marty does.

EXT. PATH TO TOWN - DAY

Mae and Marty walk down the road to the small seaside town as
a morphed, brindled hound follows behind and "Susan Beware of
The Devil" by Dandy Livingstone plays.

INT. MARKET - SOON AFTER

Mae and Marty ENTER a small market and walk to the deli
counter. Marty notices the Hound follow them inside. A
CASHIER notices the dog and complains.

CASHIER

Hey, Lady! You can't bring that dog
in here!

MAE

It's not my dog.

Mae begins walking the isles and picking up random things.

MAE (CONT'D)

We never had a lot of money, Mr.
Davis. I always dreamed of going to
the grocery store and buying
whatever I wanted. Late at night
when I was starving and crying
because my stomach hurt, I would
think of that shopping trip I would
take one day.

Mae approaches the counter and talks to the BUTCHER.

MAE (CONT'D)

A pound of roast beef, please.

Marty looks around the market as he waits. Suddenly there is
a GROWL and a SCREAM. The BUTCHER'S ASSISTANT leans over the
counter.

BUTCHER'S ASSISTANT

Lady, your dogs attacking that poor
kid! Someone help!

Marty turns in a panic and sees a different hound than they
entered with lying peacefully behind Mae. Marty turns back
and sees Mae giving the finger to the butcher's assistant.

MAE

Nice try, asshole.

The Butcher's Assistant laughs as one of his eyes glows gold
and sparkles before he runs out the back. Mae turns to Marty.

MAE (CONT'D)

Bastard takes every chance he can
get.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Mae and Marty walk along the beach eating sandwiches as they
talk and laugh and a different brindled hound follows behind
them.

INT. PRIVATE THEATRE - NIGHT

Mae and Marty watch Mae's favorite films as the hound sits in the row behind them.

INT. BEDROOM - SOON AFTER

Mae and Marty spend the night together.

EXT. MANOR GROUNDS - DAY

Mae shows Marty her favorite parts of the house as the hound follows.

INT. DINNING ROOM - NIGHT

Marty and Mae have dinner and drinks and enjoy each others company again which leads to making love on the table as the hound sits behind the table.

INT. LARGE ROOM - LATER

Both in robes, Mae sits on Marty's lap in the large chair in the room where he first interviewed her. They cuddle and drink brandy.

MARTY

Come with me, get out of here.

MAE

And where will we go, Marty?

MARTY

Anywhere, wherever you'd like. We can just travel. I don't want you to have to stay here anymore.

MAE

I choose to stay. I have nothing else besides this house and my money. I did a lot to get this house and this money.

MARTY

Now you have me.

MAE

You know I can't.

MARTY

Why, because of this fucking dog?

Marty stands and growls at the hound behind Mae.

MARTY (CONT'D)

You can't let this thing keep you from having a life, Mae. I won't let that happen to you. If the dog is the problem, let's take care of the dog!

Marty grabs a knife from a nearby discarded plate and attacks the hound behind Mae.

MAE

No, Marty! Please!

GROWLING and SCREAMS of pain come from Marty.

MAE (CONT'D)

Marty!

Mae stands and turns to help Marty.

Marty stands unharmed with a brindled hound sitting between him and a dark, shadowy figure with one golden, glimmering eye.

Mae realizes she's been tricked and becomes emotional.

MAE (CONT'D)

Oh. That was a very mean trick.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

A squeegee SQUEEKS on the other side of the window glass. Mr. Brock reads through Marty's story for the second time as Marty sits, impressed with himself.

MR. BROCK

I can't believe this, I just can't believe you wrote this. You're like a whole new person. This might get national coverage. Fuck, a Pulitzer or something.

MARTY

No, I doubt it.

MR. BROCK

Seriously, you'll be here a long time if you keep bringing me stuff like this. But, don't get all cocky, all right? And don't think you're above the rules. No pets allowed. Leave your dog at home, hotshot.

MARTY

What?

MR. BROCK

The dog lying behind you, I'm assuming you brought him. I don't have one.

MARTY

That's not my dog.

Marty stands in a huff, closes his eyes, walks backwards out of the room and turns.

INT. ELEVATOR HALL - SOON AFTER

Shaken, Marty walks toward the elevator as a JANITOR mops nearby.

Marty presses the elevator button and waits. SNARLING and SCREAMING are heard coming from behind Marty.

JANITOR

Sir, your dog, your dog is attacking that man!

Marty turns and looks at the Janitor as the elevator doors open. Marty sneers at the janitor and notices one of the janitor's eyes is gold and glimmering.

MARTY

Nice try, asshole.

Marty Enters the elevator.

END.