

MARATHON MAN

by

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ACT ONE

SUPER - SOUTHSIDE CHICAGO 1984

MONTAGE OF THE BLACK EXPERIENCE. BY DAY, AND BY NIGHT.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Wood paneling, linoleum, bamboo spoons, and forks grace the wall.

MOMMA(60s) fresh curl and set, housecoat, fancy earrings. She is BURNIN on the stove and taste testing everything.

BIG MOMMA

Momma ain't playing no games
tonight!

LANCE(40) birthday boy, work shirt, and greasy nails. He talks on the wall phone to his boss.

Lance's son JACKIE(16) BOX FADE, popped Polo collar. He plays in his food.

LANCE

No problem, Sir. Thank you anyway.
See you on Monday.

A disappointed Lance removes a beer from the fridge. Momma places her hand on his shoulder for support.

MOMMA

There's a little something extra in
the greens for the birthday boy.

Lance quenches his thirst. He sets his disappointed crosshairs on Jackie.

Momma adjusts her wristwatch. She checks the wall clock for accuracy.

LANCE chews slowly and watches Jackie like prey. Jackie holds his head in his hand.

Lance polishes off the beer, then pulls the trigger.

LANCE
 Why you not eating, it's my
 birthday?

Jackie shrugs his shoulders; a Lance, no, go.

LANCE
 What does this mean?

Jackie mumbles. Another Lance, no go.

JACKIE
 Not hungry.

LANCE
 What? Speak up.

Jackie mumbles again.

JACKIE
 Not hungry.

LANCE
 Boy - open your mouth and speak up.

JACKIE
 I'M NOT HUNGRY!

Momma drops the washed plate in the sink water.

Lance carefully places his utensils down. He pushes himself
 away from the table.

Momma offers her famous deserts to ease the tension.

MOMMA
 Sweet Potato and German Chocolate?

Lance grabs the German chocolate with his hand. He puts it on
 his plate and licks his fingers clean. Momma throws her hands
 up in disgust.

LANCE
 My birthday. My cake.

JACKIE
 It's okay, grandma.

LANCE
 So, you a man now?

MOMMA
 Son - please?

LANCE
He raised his voice like he is.
It's just a question.

JACKIE
No!

LANCE
Good. Now we getting someplace.

Jackie takes a breath.

JACKIE
Neither are you.

LANCE
What you say, boy?

Lance aggressively stands. Momma pushes him down into his seat.

MOMMA
This is still your father, Jackie.
Have some respect. You were raised better.

LANCE
It's cool. Let him get, whatever's bothering him off that bird chest.

Jackie unleashes his razored tongue.

JACKIE
He only cares about working for that old white man. News flash - he don't give a damn about you. Why would you think he'd come to Momma's funeral?

Lance is visibly shaken. Momma intervenes.

MOMMA
That's enough, Jackie. Apologize!

JACKIE
Can I be excused?

Jackie walks off. Permission or not. Momma takes a seat. Lance exhales frustrated air.

LANCE
Maybe he's right! I've been running away from everything, especially him.

Lance hands Momma, a plugger from his pocket.

LANCE

Your grandson wants to be a DJ.
That's club business, and he's too
young. It ain't happening.

"Looking for the next." Housemusic battle tonight at the
Underground night club. Sponsored by the Marathon Man.

MOMMA

Hold on. This could be a good
thing.

LANCE

You always babying him.

MOMMA

Watch your tone. You ain't too old
to get a belt across your backside.

Lance throws his hands up.

MOMMA

You ever think he's struggling with
his mother's death - no different
than you? This might be that small
thing he needs to get by.

LANCE

It can't be all on me.

MOMMA

I'm not saying you are, but maybe
this will help him heal.

Momma takes Lance's hand. Lance has a light bulb moment.

MOMMA

And you too.

LANCE

I'm tired of running.

Momma smiles.

MOMMA

Well - my job here is done.

She QUICKLY removes her kitchen fare. Lance jokes. Momma
drops an ego crusher on him.

LANCE

You move like you got a hot date.

MOMMA

I do - and with that handsome Mr.
Issacs.

LANCE

From Church? But it's my birthday.
Wait - when you start dating?

MOMMA

Yes. Sorry - and, none of your
business.

Momma grabs a sweet potato pie. She leaves Lance food for
thought.

MOMMA

Talk to your son. He needs you, and
you need him.

LANCE

I thought that pie was for me?

MOMMA

Don't wait up.

Momma walks out the SQUEAKY BACKDOOR.

The KITCHEN GARBAGE CAN calls out to Lance.

He wipes the CASSETTE TAPE CLEAN.

Jackie's mix!

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. JACKIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Descend through an oscillating ceiling fan. Jackie stares at the rotating blades. He listens to a cassette tape on his WALKMAN.

The music INTENSIFIES. Jackie nods and shakes his feet.

D.J. equipment sits on milk crates in the corner. Vintage Record liners and Party posters cover the walls. Cassette tapes rest in the colorful shag carpet.

Jackie tosses his Walkman on the bed. He paces the floor and talks to himself, angrily gripping the party plugger.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Lance stops just shy of Jackie's room. His shadow creeps under the door. The creaking floor announces him to Jackie.

INT. JACKIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jackie listens closely. He smugly turns off the light.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Lance walks away with a clearly sent message.

INT. LANCE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lance tosses and turns in a puddle of sweat.

DREAM SEQUENCE BEGINS.

EVELYN(30s) deceased wife, every man's fantasy. Her hands appear from nowhere. She methodically rubs his torso. She calms him with a whisper. She straddles him, sexually caressing his chest.

Evelyn's dance of seduction begins.

Lance smells her skin. He's captivated by the scent.

LANCE
I miss this.

She speaks softly into his ear.

EVELYN
Our son needs you, dear heart.

Evelyn peers into his eyes. She snaps her fingers.

INT. COLD - WHITE - BLANK - SPACE - MOMENTS LATER

Evelyn, Jackie, and Momma surround Lance in a perfect triangle. Lance is somber and confused.

JACKIE
Dad, let mom go.

MOMMA
It's time, son. Time to move on.

Lance reaches for Evelyn. She smiles and slowly drifts backward and out of reach. His feet are frozen in place.

LANCE
Please don't go.

EVELYN
It's time, dear heart.

MOMMA
Say goodbye.

JACKIE
You have to say goodbye.

LANCE
I can't.

Evelyn becomes faint, blurry, then disappears.

EVELYN
Goodbye, my love. Our son needs you
now.

Lance's legs buckle from under him. He collapses to the ground.

LANCE
I can't live without her.

MOMMA
Son. It's time.

LANCE
No. I need her.

Momma shouts loudly.

MOMMA
WAKE UP LANCE - it's Jackie.

DREAM SEQUENCE ENDS.

INT. LANCE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lance springs up covered in sweat and gasping for air. He sniffs his clothes for remnants of Evelyn's scent.

A barking dog outside grabs his attention. The digital clock flashes 11:45pm.

EXT. SQUEAKY BACKDOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Jackie closes the door with minimal sound effects. He sighs with relief and adjusts his record bag. Jackie briskly makes his way towards the alley.

EXT. BEDROOM WINDOW - NIGHT

Lance spots the closing fence.

LANCE
Shit.

He grabs a shirt and dashes down the stairs.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Lance runs full steam, calling to his son. Jackie listens to his Walkman.

EXT. ALLEY - STREET - NIGHT

Jackie turns to face Lance. He removes his headphones. Lance struggles to speak.

LANCE
Son. Please. Hear me out.

JACKIE
Why?

Lance is lost with words. Jackie shakes his head and continues his stride, headphones, and all.

LANCE
I FUCKED UP! That's why.

Jackie stops cold in his tracks. Lance pours out his heart. Jackie walks into manhood.

LANCE
You were right. I haven't been the father you need. You deserve so much better.

JACKIE
You might as well, had jumped in the coffin with her. You don't know what it's like to be so alone.

Lance sits deflated on the sidewalk curb.

LANCE
I've been running from loneliness for years. Guess I didn't take time to consider how you felt. I'm sorry about that. We can't change any of the past, but maybe we can work on a new future.

JACKIE
Yeah. I'd like that.

They both clear their eyes of tears.

LANCE
Let me see what you're working with?

Lance refers to Jackie's bag.

JACKIE
I got some bangers.

LANCE
C'mon then, let me see.

Lance peruses Jackie's vinyl.

LANCE
You got some heat. A little advice?

JACKIE
Sure.

LANCE

The best DJ's use of music uplifts, heals and inspires. It's relationship earned. Never take it for granted.

JACKIE

Thanks. I'll remember that.

They hug it out. The healing begins.

LANCE

I love you, son.

JACKIE

Love you too, pops.

LANCE

By the way - you got some skills.

Lance pulls out the cassette from his shirt pocket.

JACKIE

Got it from my daddy.

LANCE

Damn, right, you did. Need a ride?

JACKIE

I get to roll the Grand National?

LANCE

You must really want to ride the train.

JACKIE

Nah.

They walk off laughing it out.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. LOWER WACKER - NIGHT

Lance and Jackie sit easy in the Buick Grand National. Empty parking meters, loading docks, and Chicago homeless.

INT. GRAND NATIONAL - NIGHT

Jackie stares at the UNDERGROUND CLUB. Long lines filled with "THE CHILDREN", as they wait to be chosen.

OPENING AND CLOSING DOORS only intensifies The Children's longing to enter.

INT. BUICK GRAND NATIONAL - MOMENTS LATER

Pounding bass, screams, and chants echo throughout Lower Wacker.

Jackie gets the bubble guts and clammy palms.

MICKI(16) shimmering lip gloss, stands in line. She spots Jackie and waves with enthusiasm.

INT. BUICK GRAND NATIONAL - NIGHT

Lance spots Micki.

LANCE

You sure you here for the contest?

Jackie cheeses from ear to ear.

JACKIE

Half and half.

They laugh.

HOMELESS MAN abruptly knocks on the window. He startles and gestures for help.

Lance gives him money. The homeless man flashes his "I LOVE HOUSEMUSIC" shirt and walks off.

Jackie spots Micki gesturing to her SWATCH WATCH.

JACKIE
I better go.

LANCE
Maybe we grab a Maxwell polish
later, extra onions?

Micki walks up. Jackie and Lance look each other in the eye.

MICKI
Hi. I'm Micki.

LANCE
Very nice to meet you, Micki.

MICKI
You too, Sir.

Jackie takes Micki's hand. They walk away. Lance reminisces.

FLASHBACK BEGINS.

EXT. NIGHTCLUB ENTRANCE NYC - NIGHT

A teenage Lance and Evelyn walk into the Paradise Garage holding hands.

FLASHBACK ENDS.

INT. BUICK GRAND NATIONAL - NIGHT

Lance presses play. Jackie's mix bumps hard.

INT. UNDERGROUND CLUB - NIGHT

Walls and floors GLISTEN. Humidity is thick, and so is the crowd. Legendary party posters cover the walls like trophies. Colorful lights and dense fog make it difficult to see. Heavy bass pound in Jackie's chest. He grips Micki's hand tightly and smiles like he's home.

INT. DANCE FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Jackie navigates the crowd and heads towards the D.J. booth. He stares in "awe" at the Marathon Man. His father's words play in his head as he looks around at the "all nations" of Children.

LANCE (V.O.)
DJ's use of music uplifts, heals
and inspires. It's relationship
earned.

"The Children" are enslaved to the Marathon Man's rhythm. He wears a JUG-HEAD hat and gives them life.

Rushing security BUMPS Jackie. He and Micki are separated. They warn a few of the Children about removing party posters.

BRASWELL(30s) leather beanie, jean jacket, walks up to Jackie.

BRASWELL
Nobody's ever played after him.
Good luck!

Jackie looks for Micki. She smiles and waves from the other side of the floor.

INT. DJ BOOTH - MOMENTS LATER

The Marathon Man exits. He and Jackie's eyes meet.

MARATHON MAN
Bring the heat, kid.

Jackie looks into the crowd. He struggles with confidence.

CLOSE ON the record plays out.

Jackie locks eyes with Micki. Her smile gives him confidence.

Jackie digs out a blank-labeled record. He sets the needle, headphones, and readies the fader.

Marathon Man's record plays to silence and crackling.

The Children await.

Jackie looks to the heavens and speaks a silent prayer.

Braswell heads towards the DJ booth. Marathon Man stops him.

MARATHON MAN
Give him a chance.

Jackie stares into the eyes of the Children. They stare back.

Jackie exhales and lets loose the live version of Star Love by Cheryl Lynn.

THE CHILDREN SCREAM AND THROW THEIR HANDS IN THE AIR WITH APPROVAL!

INT. DANCE FLOOR - NIGHT

WHISTLES AND TAMBORINES play in-sync. "The Children go crazy."

EXT/INT. CUTLASS SUPREME - NIGHT

Cheers echo. The non-chosen beg and plead to enter.

Lance smiles and turns off the radio. He lays back and enjoy's Jackie the "live version."

CRUSH TO BLACK.

SUPER - NOW, THIS IS HOW IT STARTED.