

The Horror Writer

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A screenplay for short film by Leland Gaines

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Synopsis: A celebrity interviewer is contracted to interview a well-known horror fiction author. During the course of the interview, the interviewer becomes cocky and obnoxious, asking the author questions that insinuate that the author is a plagiarist. By the end of the interview, the author has literally become a character from one of his books, and exacts his revenge on the interviewer for his actions.

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FADE IN ON:

INT. THE HOME OF HORROR AUTHOR DERRICK DARK – DAY

The small but tidy apartment of horror author DERRICK DARK. It is adorned with book reviews and critical praise, having been framed and hung behind the large oak desk. Some large posters adorn the walls, too, showcasing his book covers. We see DARK sitting behind his desk. He is tall, slim, dark-haired and pleasant looking, almost devilishly handsome. We see another MAN, DELANEY RICE, who is going to interview DARK, sitting in a chair in front of the desk, setting a small recording device on the desk, and turning it on. RICE is short, dumpy looking, sloppily dressed and reminds the viewer of a low-life who works for one of the supermarket checkout tabloids.

RICE

Just about ready, Derrick?

DARK

As ready as I'll ever be. Shoot.

RICE

{Pushing the record button}

This is Delaney Rice, reporter for Night Parade magazine, interviewing Mr. Derrick Dark, author of numerous Bram Stoker award winning books, including the book Stealing the Night, which has already garnished some rave reviews within the horror fiction community. Good morning, Derrick. How are you on this fine spring day?

DARK

Just great, thank you. And I appreciate the kind words.

RICE

You deserve it. Speaking of one's just deserts, I understand you have recently been accused of – oh my God! – plagiarism, in regards to your new book, Stealing the Night. What's that all about?

DARK

{Waving his hand dismissively}

Yes, I've heard all about these accusations, and they are all unwarranted. Now may we move on to something else?

RICE

Sure, but first, just one question about the accusations, if you wouldn't mind?

DARK

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That's just it; I DO MIND, and would rather not answer any questions pertaining to this matter. You may direct any and all inquires about this matter to my attorney, whose number I will be happy to supply you with after this interview. Okay?

RICE

I understand your reluctance in answering these types of questions without legal counsel present, but I only have ONE question, then I will drop the subject, okay? I promise it won't be too intrusive, or personal.

DARK

Well...okay, shoot. But make it short and sweet, and to the point.

RICE

{Leaning his face in toward the desk}

Wonderful! Now, here's the question; it is said that a whole chapter in your new book is actually an abbreviated – and plagiarized – version of a story written by the up and coming horror writer, Tobey Cook, entitled Stealing the Nightmare. Any comment?

DARK

As I've already stated, the accusation is unwarranted, and you may ask my legal counsel about this AFTER this interview.

RICE

As I've stated, I understand your reluctance in talking about this subject, but, the fact still remains, if you continue to avoid answering any questions, you will begin to look GUILTY in the public eye, and worst of all, to your many fans. And in the age of the ebook, with print books becoming obsolete, well....

DARK

What does the ebook revolution have to do with my success or failure?

RICE

{Thumbing through his notebook}

Ah...here it is. In March of last year, you said, quote: Ebooks are for losers. And electronic readers? What a joke! I will never, I repeat NEVER, publish in any format other than print.

DARK

So? A lot of writers don't like the ebook format. Why am I being singled out as an asshole for my remarks pertaining to the ebook format? I heard Stephen King doesn't like them either. You gonna call him an asshole? Besides, I have the right to my opinion, don't I?

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RICE

Sure you do, but Mr. King's reputation isn't the one at stake here.

DARK

And mine IS?!

RICE

Maybe not yet, but it could be, if you don't start appeasing some of the fans out there that deserve an answer. You are worth what now...forty million? Where do you think that money came from? From your FANS buying your BOOKS.

DARK

{Obviously becoming agitated}

Why should I have to APPEASE anybody? Besides, my sale record speaks for itself, wouldn't you say?

RICE

True. But, a fat bank account doesn't necessarily make for an honest man. Look at-

DARK

Now I am a THIEF?! I TOOK their money? They didn't spend it WILLINGLY?

RICE

I didn't CALL you a thief, did I?

DARK

In a roundabout way, yes, you did. I've done enough interviews to know when some asshole reporter is insinuating something about someone else.

RICE

{Cracking a cocky grin}

So...now I am an ASSHOLE?

CUT TO:

A view of DARK'S hand under the desk. His left hand, which has been resting on his leg, is now beginning to swell, as if changing, morphing into something unnatural. We hear bones cracking, and skin stretching out of shape.

CUT TO:

DARK's face. His neck seems to be swelling slightly as well, but not enough for RICE to notice it yet.

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DARK

If the shoe fits, WEAR IT, ASSHOLE.

RICE

{Holding up his hands in a defensive position}

Whoa...let's both calm down, and be nice, okay? I admit I went a bit overboard, and I will try to play nice from now on, okay?

DARK

{Apprehensively}

Well...okay, I guess so. I admit I got a little defensive, too.

RICE

Great! Now, on with the interview. So...you do deny these accusations?

DARK

{Rolling his eyes}

Yes, yes. I DENY them. My story, Stealing the Night, came from an original idea from one of my early books, Stealing the Daylight, about mutant vampires.

RICE

Oh...I see. Sort of a prequel, then?

DARK

Of sorts, yes.

RICE

Of sorts? Good enough...I guess. Not one to give away any spoilers, are you?

DARK

{Shrugging his shoulders and smiling}

Nope! I will say this, though; This book will make the previous installment look like a Walt Disney book, all HIGH GRADE HORROR.

RICE

Sounds great! Hey...I have an idea. Why don't do a reading for us? Read a couple of paragraphs from the book?

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DARK
{Apprehensively}

Well...okay, but just a little bit.

DARK reached under his desk, and pulls out a book, opens it, and begins reading aloud.

DARK

Am I not the sole conductor of my symphony? Yes...I AM. You consider the female body a vastly fine-tuned instrument, and yourself an accomplished musician. You have been borrowing bodies for what? – millenniums now, and-

RICE
{Holding up his hands}

Whoa! That's enough.

RICE reaches into a bag resting on the floor next to his chair, and pulls out a book, begins flipping through it, the stops and begins reading aloud.

RICE
{Leaning in closer to recording device}

Am I not the sole conductor of my symphony? Yes...I AM. You consider the female body a vastly fine-tuned instrument, and yourself an accomplished musician. You have been borrowing bodies for what? – millenniums now, and....sound familiar, Mr. Dark?

DARK

How flattering, you have a copy of my new book.

RICE

NO, I have a copy of TOBEY COOK'S book, Stealing the Nightmare.

DARK
{Flipping his book back to the copyright page}

Ah-ha! He, himself, is the plagiarist then. Look; my book was published in October, 2008.

RICE

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Ah-ha! Cook's book was published in October of 2005.

DARK

{Placing both hands on his desk, and leaning across the desk closer to RICE}

This was all a trap, then?

RICE

{Scooting back in his chair}

Come again?

DARK's arms begin swelling again, and we hear bones cracking, skin stretching. His eyes now glow a bright green, and he sticks out his tongue, which is forked and blood red in color. He speaks in a low, guttural tone.

DARK

You puny humans and your insignificant threats. First, it was garlic, wooden stakes, and decapitation, that supposedly threatened our existence. Now it is trying to trap us within popular media? HA! Why do you think we KNOW so much about vampirism? We write from EXPERIENCE!

RICE

{Standing to his feet to run}

No! I wasn't trying to trap you! I swear!

DARK reaches out and grabs RICE, lifts him off of his feet as if he weighs nothing. As RICE struggles to get free, DARK tightens his grip on RICE'S throat, and pulls him closer.

DARK

YOU, and people just like you, have been stealing from US, for over a century now! The book Dracula? What a travesty! And your cheesy, cheaply made Hollywood films about us? Ridiculous! It was OUR story and our LIVES, that provided you with the material for your films and literature! And you dare to patronize us, even romanticize us? STEAL from us?!

RICE

I'm sorry! Please! Let me go! I won't tell your story! I swear!

DARK

{Picking up the recorder with one hand, and lifting it up to RICE'S face}

That's it! Speak up, puny one! Tell all of your fans the REAL story!

RICE

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I swear! I lied, yes. I lied! Derrick Dark is NOT a thief! I am! It was all a trap!

DARK sets the recorder down now, and picks up his book, and flips it open, and places it in front of RICE'S face.

DARK

READ! Tell the REAL story!

RICE

The fear of being caught is terrifying, being recognized for what you REALLY are. An abomination in the eyes of God, doomed to eternal damnation and loneliness, and you know the humans will never try to understand your plight, be kind to you. They only pass immediate judgment upon you, label you a freak, a murderer, then make their feeble attempts at disposing of you accordingly. They do not see you are merely a victim of circumstance, an unwilling participant in life-long curse, brought upon by your blood line-

DARK

ENOUGH! You blaspheme by even looking upon my book!

DARK drops the book now, and grabs RICE with both hands again, and begins to squeeze his throat tightly, pulling RICE closer to his own face, and opens his mouth, revealing long, sharp canines, dripping with drool. He leans his head back, and as he lowers it to RICE'S throat-

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE WINDOW OF A BOOK STORE-DAY

WE see people milling around inside the book store, smiling and exchanging friendly banter. The CAMERA PANS left, and we see big posters advertising DARK'S new audio-book, Stealing the Truth.

CUT TO:

INT. INSIDE OF BOOK STORE – DAY

We see a young man sitting in a lounge chair, wearing a pair of headphones, and listening intensely at the audio-book on his player. He removes the headphones now and motions to a girl standing close by. She walks over, and leans down to listen to him.

YOUNG MAN

Check this out! Ebooks my ass. This audio-book is better! The realism is uncanny.

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The YOUNG GIRL leans in, and listens as the YOUNG MAN turns up the volume on his cassette player. We hear the audio-book clearly now.

DARK'S VOICE

READ! Tell the REAL story!

RICE'S VOICE

The fear of being caught is terrifying, being recognized for what you REALLY are. An abomination in the eyes of God, doomed to eternal damnation and loneliness, and you know the humans will never try to understand your plight, be kind to you. They only pass immediate judgment upon you, label you a freak, a murderer, then make their feeble attempts at disposing of you accordingly. They do not see you are merely a victim of circumstance, an unwilling participant in life-long curse, brought upon by your blood line-

DARK'S VOICE

ENOUGH! You blaspheme by even looking upon my book!

The CAMERA PANS AWAY from the YOUNG COUPLE now, and over to a table where DERRICK DARK sits signing copies of his audio-books. There is a long line of people in front of the table holding copies of the book to be signed, all of them excited and smiling. The CAMERA SLOWLY ZOOMS IN on DARK now, and he is smiling, too, and listening to the audio-books being played close by. The next person in line, a blond haired WOMAN wearing a light green sundress, praises him about the book.

YOUNG WOMAN
{Blushing}

Thank you, Mr. Dark. Your book sounds so...realistic.

DARK
{Grinning devilishly}

Thank you my dear. It helps when you write from experience.

FADE OUT.

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