

COME SATURDAY MOURNING

BY

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EXT. VALEMONT GRAVEYARD

We rush to catch up with him: The leaves whip around at our feet; then it's a nice stroll through the headstones with an **anonymous** friend in black who honors our presence:

RUPERT FONTAINE (V.O.)

This is a growing up story. Well, sort of- if growing up is wrinkling in your teens. But Dad did. He learned what it meant to be a real father. He even did the right thing and buried me out back - all that bad stuff planted. And he promised that he'd never sell the house. Time to move on though - always had faith in my brother - faith in the town? Well, that's another story. They never believed in OTHER PEOPLE'S problems - kind of blind to trouble - even when it's right in their own backyards.

EXT./INT. ROLLS ROYCE - ENTERING TOWN OF VALEMONT

A 1951 Rolls Royce, Silver Dawn breezes past.

Now together with the dream vehicle, traveling along-singing a song: such a pretty day in such simple times before a single mega store, and after the pain of the 2nd World War.

A milkman waves at us. An overly happy boy rides his bike to deliver papers - he doesn't just toss it on the doorstep, he sets his bike down neatly, marches confidently to the door and elastic-bands it to the door knob.

In the back seat, two 14 year old twins, REGINALD and PHILIP, both with matching Brylcreem hairdos and black creased pants seem terribly uncomfortable in their white starched shirts. In unison, they tug at their ties.

Their parents, CLARISSA and DONALD BENNET are wearing parfume-de-stinking-rich; they're two of the beautiful people:

Clarissa in her pearls and off-the-shoulder dress, an Haute Couture prototype as she marvels at her manicured nails.

And Donald, with his Buddy Holly glasses and grey fedora topping his head - so full of the American Dream he must actually be another Willy Loman before he kills himself.

But he's not suicidal: He's glowing since his acquisition of THE FONTAINE HOUSE with a NOT FOR SALE SIGN.

A cartoon cloud appears above his head manufacturing his bargain basement red brick dream house.

O.S. REGINALD

Why do we gotta move into an old wreck of a house anyways?

DONALD

'Cause I made a deal and it's a deal that's gonna keep us rolling in it. I'll show Tucker he was a fool to fire me! I'll show 'em all!

DONALD REMEMBERING: INT. GILBERT FONTAINE'S HOME OF RESIDENCE

GILBERT, FONTAINE, (60s) ultra conservative, nods a firm no.

GILBERT

I'm not selling it. To do such a thing would mean chaos in Valemont. The house needs to remain. Do you understand? No tearing it down. No developments. What's locked inside needs to stay.

DONALD

And what happens when you die?

GILBERT

Well, I don't have control after that do I? But maybe I'll find someone--

DONALD

Me! What if I made you a promise? A promise that I'd look after the house after you (clears throat) pass on, with respect to you sir. If you don't want to sell it, would you PAY ME to take it? NOT to tear it down or try and buy out the block?

A stare down. Gilbert sees: Donald is like he "was"- a snake.

GILBERT

Did you know I'm psychic?

DONALD

What's that got to do with my proposal?

GILBERT
 (smiling wide)
 Everything my man. Everything! It
 means I can see you're a
 trustworthy soul and you honor your
 word.

Donald's smile rises- his ego, impossibly large.

GILBERT
 You've got yourself a deal my good
 fellow!

Gilbert extends his hand for a shake. Donald begins to
 reciprocate, but Gilbert PULLS HIS HAND AWAY suddenly.

GILBERT
 On one condition.

Donald pulls back- an "oh really" face.

GILBERT
 You've gotta move in and live there
 for at least two weeks. After that,
 I think you'll have learned the
 meaning of why it's so important
 that the house stay and you might
 even be made into a "new man"
 (implying with ethics).

Donald thinks "new man" means even richer. He holds his chin.

DONALD
 Richer than I am? Show the old boss
 the stuff I'm really made of?

GILBERT
 I think I know what you're made of
 Donald... And that's why I'm going
 to give you this chance. I'll pay
 you 30 grand. Sound decent?

DONALD
 Live in the house for fourteen? I'd
 be glad to! You've got yourself a
 deal Mr. Fontaine!

A firm handshake seals the deal.

BACK TO:

INT. ROLLS ROYCE

DONALD

I had him easily convinced I was
the man to look after his haunted
house.

TWINS

(excited)
Haunted?!

CLARISSA

(fearful)
Haunted!

The twins ad lib the wow factor.

DONALD

Now don't get your pearls in a
knot, snookims. I know how to deal
with ghosties and ghouls- even
bought an authentic banishing book.

Clarissa's pretty face wrinkles- her eyes lose the twinkles.

She applies a pair of sunglasses.

Now the street is colored green through Clarissa's shades.

CLARISSA

Oh I guess I'm afraid for nothing.

And the outside of one glass lens reveals a creepy face.

EXT. VALEMONT STREETS/INT. ROLLS

Still rolling with the Rolls, until it halts just before
turning the corner where the sign reads: MALDON DRIVE...

... but only the twins in the back of the car notice: MALDON
turn into GURDONO WRYWAN.

PHILIP

(to Reginald)
You see that?!

REGINALD

It changed!

CLARISSA

What changed honey?

REGINALD

The sign changed! It said something weird (struggling to pronounce) Gur-dono... Wry--

PHILIP

Wry-wan. (clearly the smarter one)
Gurdono Wrywan.

CLARISSA

Alright boys, quit your April fools, Halloween's coming next Saturday - a ways to go for fools.

REGINALD

No fool Mom. Serious!

DONALD

I see you're both a chip off the old block...

The twins whisper something to each other, still amazed by their sighting.

Donald blathers on...

DONALD

Did I ever tell you about the time I told everyone that I was given a charm by an old Shaman friend of my mother's? I sold these rocks for a dime a crack. Plain rocks!
(Laughing) Hoo-hoo-haw. (Struggling to breath) Hoo-haw-hoo! Mother always told the people: I must have meant, Mr. Shaman. Hoo-hee-haw-hoo... That was my mother's friend's name! Mr. Shaman! She never did find out.

A final "haw"- Clarissa powders her face, disapprovingly.

CLARISSA

That was wrong Donald.

EXT. THE HAUNTED HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

It's a large brick 1800s character home. What to make of it?

The family studies it from the curb.

DONALD
Doesn't look haunted.

CLARISSA
Looks charming actually.

PHILIP
Pretty swell I'd say.

REGINALD
Sweller when we get the check.

Reginald pulls at his tie.

REGINALD
I thought the photographer you
ordered was supposed to meet us
here. I don't wanna stay in this
cardboard getup any longer.

DONALD
(checking his watch)
He's probably parked in the lane.
Let's go get him and have our
pictures taken before we enter into
our dream home shall we?

Follow Donald to the back: Not easy with the overgrowth.

THE PHOTOGRAPHER awaits on a small bench in the overgrown
yard. He's handsome, but ghostly white. Maybe "he's" a ghost.

DONALD
There you are! How's biz?

It's as if Donald is speaking another language.

THE PHOTOGRAPHER
Huh? I lost something. I don't know
what? But I gotta find it.

Donald heaves The Photographer up. He leads him and the
family back to the front of the house.

DONALD
Ah- you're alright. Probably just
in shock by the big tip you know
you're gonna get.

EXT. HAUNTED HOUSE

The Bennets are posed as a tableau. Snap goes the picture.

This image turns into The Family Photo and next week.

INT. HAUNTED HOUSE

It's mounted on the wall at the bottom of the staircase.

It shakes, then smashes on the floor.

Scrambling down the stairs are the unkempt Bennets.

CLARISSA

That's the third time this week!
Donald, I can't stand it anymore! I
need to get out of here! The
Photographer shows up ever day like
clockwork asking where he should
look! You've done every single
banishing that banishing book has
to offer and nothing! I've hardly
slept this week! My skin feels like
it's crawling all the time! And
LOOK at the boys!

The boys are a mess from their previous ironed-up look.
They're good with that!

REGINALD

Oh don't worry about us Mom.
(tugging at his clothes)
We're good-really.

PHILIP

Yeah, don't worry about the
laundry- ironing- (waving
off) Ironing shmironing. Who
needs it!

DONALD

And I'll hire us a maid when our
check rolls in.

CLARISSA

Oh no! I take pride my ability to
ensure things run smoothly and I
don't need any help. This is MY
domain and it will remain my--

The ceiling buckles, the chandelier shakes- it smashes down.

DONALD

Ok-look, I want everyone to search
through the house- maybe we'll find
a clue. If this place is haunted,
there's gotta be a reason why.
Fontaine's too thick to figure it.

INT. ATTIC - LATER

Clarissa digs through an assortment of old boxes and dusty debris. Philip notices her staring at something.

PHILIP
What did you find?

He kneels down next to her. An old newspaper clipping reads:
BENCH MAKER DIES FROM RARE BLOOD DISEASE AT 25.

PHILIP
Progeria. I've heard of that. It's
a disease that causes premature
aging.

CLARISSA
His benches- they're beautiful.
I've seen them all over town.

EXT. BACKYARD - HAUNTED HOUSE

Reginald investigates an old bird bath, another bench: carved like bird's wings. Exquisite. He cocks his head at a sound:

WHISPERER V.O.
Reginald- do you love your father?

EXT./INT. NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE - MR. & MRS. HUBBARD

Philip knocks and the pretty but old Mrs. Hubbard answers:

MRS. HUBBARD
(whispering)
Thanks for coming. (pointing a
shush finger at her lips) A smart
boy like you can help your mother-
your father- (hesitant) Follow me.

She leads him down the CUPBOARD LINED hall to a back room.

MRS. HUBBARD
My husband never wants me to have
anything to do with anyone who ever
moves into the Fonataine house, but
I'm afraid for your family. Your
mother said your father's been
trying to do all kinds of rituals,
but they've all been done before.

All kinds of exorcists have been through that house from top to bottom with no success- I know why.

She pulls out an old photo album and opens to:

A DWARFED BOY/OLD MAN. He's deformed and clearly diseased.

MRS. HUBBARD

He never had a chance to grow up- he just grew old. The kids made fun until his father, Gilbert, kept him home and taught him a few things.

PHILIP

Like making benches?

MRS. HUBBARD

Like making benches. Gilbert changed when his son became ill. His wife had left him years before. She couldn't stand him he was such a liar and a-- (looking up and crossing herself) Lord have mercy on my judgements, but I think that "all" that was wrong with Gilbert manifested in the physical form of Rupert's disease- in order to teach somehow- for compassion. When the boy died, the disease moved on...

Philip, getting it.

PHILIP

To the house.

MRS. HUBBARD

And that's why Mr. Fontaine doesn't want to disturb anything. Just let all that negative energy be. Let it sit with the house- Don't dig anything up.

EXT. BACKYARD - HAUNTED HOUSE

The Photographer and Donald are digging **fanatically**.

PHILIP

What are you doing?!

DONALD

Money solves everything son! When I offered our Photastic friend some big time cash- he INSTANTLY remembered what he was looking for... and it looks like we...

PHILIP

(running)

No don't! Cover it up!

Looking down: A casket.

Philip grabs the shovel from The Photographer and tries to shovel the dirt back in, but Donald shoves him away.

DONALD

Get outta here Philip. I'm not playing around here. Gilbert's check is gonna blow a lot bigger after he finds out my discovery!

Moments later:

The lid is lifted. Rupert Fontain, not decomposed at all.

DONALD

Pictures! Get pictures, we'll sell 'em to tourists! Make postcards!

PHILIP

Dad!

Donald doesn't listen- he looks crazed. Philip's head is wavering indecisively... He runs to:

INT. KITCHEN

PHILIP

Mom! It's too late, we gotta get outta of here. Dad's not Dad anymore- he's--

His mother turns around. Mom's not Mom anymore either. She's an old hag of a witch.

PHILIP

Mom?!!

CLARISSA

Oh Honey it's Halloween! Do you think I'm gonna let this house get me down and ruin all the fun. I'm making treat bags... The works!

Philip sighs in relief.

PHILIP

Mom, something really bad was just dug up and now that it's released into the environment- well it's like Hiroshima all over again!

CLARISSA

Philip, I expect Reginald to be excitable, but not you- You're the rational thinker. You're the reason why I decided not to let all this get to me.

PHILIP

You're right. Rational I am- So I've got a real rational plan.

CLARISSA

Good dear.

PHILIP

We're getting the Hell outta here!

Philip pulls his mother along and she runs despite her confusion.

CLARISSA

But where's Reggie?

EXT. FRONT YARD - HAUNTED HOUSE - NIGHT

The yard, bedecked for Halloween has the familiar green sunglass tinge. They race through the gate; the hinge breaks.

PHILIP

(scanning)

Reggie!

Crawling pathetically- into view is Reggie, the effects of progeria setting in. Mrs. Hubbard's get away car honking...

MRS. HUBBARD

Come on! We've gotta leave quick. Halloween's the only time!

REGINALD

Go now. Dad's got some growing up to do. Reginald chucks a mysterious sack to Philip. Make sure every home gets one. It'll protect them.

Philip catches the sack. Looks inside. It's empty. A "what's this" look. Behind Reggie, a black mist approaches.

REGINALD

Just load it in the car.

Philip heads to hug his brother, but Reggie turns and runs/limps/staggers. A frozen moment; then they escape to Mrs. Hubbard's car.

INT./EXT. MRS. HUBBARD'S CAR

Speeding away, the black mist chasing, until they get to the end of the street corner where they stop to see the sign:

MALDON DRIVE. The letters transpose into: OLD MAN DRIVE; then, GURDONO WRYWAN and these transpose to: WRONG WAY ROUND.

Clarissa stutters and stares as Mrs. Hubbard opens the car door and motions Clarissa to the driver's side.

CLARISSA

How come you never left the street?

MRS. HUBBARD

'Cause I'm the lift out of here for people like you.

Mrs. Hubbard exits the car and turns to walk past the black foggy barrier that's encroaching upon the street sign.

She turns around once before disappearing into the mist.

MRS. HUBBARD

Deliver what's in the sack before it's too late- (doubtful) or try.

PHILIP

But there's nothing-

But children busy trick or treating. A full moon rises.

Frantic, Clarissa drives hard to their first stop.

Philip digs in the bag and suddenly, it's GROWING rocks.

Clarissa hands one to a "Stepford Wife" who gives it back:

STEPFORD WIFE 1

I don't need any lucky rock. But
you need a beautician sweety.

CLARISSA

Wake up! Don't you understand?

Clarissa and Philip turn to watch the mist drawing nearer.

PHILIP

(pointing)
Don't you see it?

The Stepford Wife sees nothing.

The process repeats at many doorsteps until Clarissa and Philip drive away, depositing the entire sack, minus two they pocket, at the sign: LEAVING VALEMONT - COME AGAIN SOON.

RUPERT FONTAINE (V.O.)

All those lucky rocks and they
couldn't even give 'em away, but
what's worth a lot is free: Like
our house. Donald never paid a dime
for that.

EXT. HAUNTED HOUSE - NIGHT

Donald cradles Reggie in his arms.

DONALD

We'll figure this out together son.

The Photographer snaps a picture. He strolls off towing the casket; then runs to catch up with our anonymous friend in black, Rupert Fontaine. What does he look like now? Handsome we must guess, since he's twins with The Photographer.

The sun is strangely seen to rise out of the night.

THE PHOTOGRAPHER

We'll deliver this good and proper
to the cemetery.

RUPERT FONTAINE (V.O.)

Thanks brother. I knew you'd
finally remember me. I was waiting
for you to come on Saturday.

They walk through the mist, out of sight.