

THE DEVIL'S DOORMAN

Written by

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FADE IN

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - HALLOWEEN NIGHT

This is a HOTEL LOBBY much like what you'd expect in a medium sized town. Maybe 80 rooms, three stories, strange interior design that doesn't really make sense aesthetically.

INT. OUTSIDE THE REC ROOM - SAME TIME

A SMALL ROOM partitioned off the lobby not too far from the desk, outfitted with a vending machine, a couple arcade games, and an old PINBALL MACHINE.

Large block letters spell "Curse of the Devil's Doorman" across the top. It's a retro style machine with a cartoonish DEVIL CHARACTER on the front, wearing a double breasted suit at the gates of Hell. Installed a few months ago, it's never worked. Until today.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Beleaguered hotel worker PETER (30s), standing dutifully behind the front desk. Unremarkable and unfulfilled, he's been in the hospitality industry for most of his adult life. Despite having been "over it" for some time, there's no other jobs in this small town and, well, at least it's a job.

JACOB, 11 years old, walks in. A normal if not slightly annoying middle school kid, he lives down the street and comes by regularly to waste time and quarters on arcade games and junk food.

JACOB

Hey, Pete. What's up?

PETER

The usual. People are needy. But hey! You know that busted pinball machine you've been bugging me about forever? Finally got it fixed.

JACOB

No way!! How'd you fix it?

PETER

Well, I didn't actually "fix" it. It just randomly started up today. Not sure what was wrong with it, but it works now so have at it. You get to be the first player!

JACOB

Sweet! Thanks man!

Jacob excitedly scampers off towards the rec room.

INT. REC ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Jacob puts a quarter into the slot of the machine. It immediately bursts into a cacophony of lights and noises. A demonic voice emits from the speakers.

DEVIL'S DOORMAN

HA HA HA HAAAA. Welcome to Hell! I am the Devil's Doorman, how may I be of assistance?

JACOB

Cool.

BACK TO:

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

The desk phone starts to ring as the PINBALL noises continue in the background.

Peter looks at the caller ID and sees room 301 is calling down... again. He rolls his eyes, knowing housekeeping probably forgot her stupid coffee, and answers on the third ring with his usual spiel.

PETER

Good evening, thank you for calling guest reception. This is Peter, how may I be of assistance?

(MORE)

PETER (CONT'D)

(pause)

Yes, Ms. Ross. I understand, we just--

(long pause)

Yes, ma'am. I did put your request in. Unfortunately--

(pause...)

Right, I understand. I'll get it right away for you. Thank you, Ms. Ross.

Peter hangs up the phone, frustrated. He starts to put up his "Will Return Shortly" sign but is interrupted by ROOM 304 trying to call. He picks up quickly and tries but fails not to rush through his scripted greeting.

PETER

Good evening, thank you for calling guest reception. This is Peter, how may I assist you?

He listens as the guest on the other line tears him a new one. He can see ROOM 301 is calling down, *again*. The guy is going on and on that his room is too hot. Peter makes a note.

PETER

Yes sir, absolutely. I apologize, but do you mind if I place you on a brief hold? Thank you so much.

He puts the phone down for a moment. 301's call is still ringing. Another call starts to come in on a third line.

PETER

Oh my GOD.

Peter attempts to get Jacob's attention while the phone keeps ringing. He is now laser focused on the pinball game, frantically smashing the paddle buttons.

PETER

Hey Jacob?
... JACOB!

JACOB

(without looking up)
What?!

PETER

Can you do me a favor and take some coffee packets up to 301 before this lady has an aneurysm?

JACOB

Why don't you do it? You work here. Besides I just got the game going!

The phone is still ringing, obnoxiously.

PETER

Because I'm busy! Just do it please? You already know where to find it. I'll spot you some more quarters for the game.

Jacob steps away from the machine, begrudgingly.

JACOB

Won't she think it's weird that a kid is bringing her coffee?

PETER

If she says anything, just say there's a staffing shortage and we were desperate. It's true, anyway.

JACOB

Fine. But child labor is illegal, you know.

PETER

I *promise* she will not care. Just hurry up.

Peter goes to pick up the call he'd placed on hold as Jacob scurries off, but finds the caller from 304 has already hung up. He feels a combination of relief and annoyance for the waste of time. Does he want his AC fixed or not?

CUT TO:

INT. THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Jacob is walking down the empty hall, carrying a couple handfuls of single serve coffee packets.

He shifts them into his left hand and starts to knock on her door, until...

JACOB
What the...?

The carpet around his feet is *saturated* with... is that coffee? The smell is strong and unmistakable.

Jacob is perplexed, and goes to knock again when suddenly the door FLIES OPEN. Jacob peers in and GASPS.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. INSIDE ROOM 301 - SAME TIME

MS. ROSS is face down on the floor. The coffee maker is somehow pouring out gallons of steaming hot coffee, flooding the room. Is she... dead?! Jacob screams, drops the coffee packets and bolts down the hall.

INT. LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Jacob bursts back into the lobby from the stairwell entrance, huffing and puffing, unable to catch his breath. Peter has just hung up the phone.

JACOB
 PETER!!!

PETER
 What?! What's the matter??

JACOB
 Dude! There's something wrong with that lady! I think she's dead!

PETER
 What are you talking about? She JUST called. Don't mess with me, man. I'm already annoyed--

JACOB
 --I'm not messing with you!

The desk phone rings again, ROOM 110. Peter answers it right away, gesturing Jacob to be quiet.

PETER
Guest reception. This is Peter.

JACOB
ARE YOU SERIOUS?!

PETER
Fresh towels. You got it.

Jacob, in disbelief at Peter's disinterest, notices the pinball machine is still fully animated despite his absence. An ominous laugh is emanating from the speakers.

Peter hangs up the phone.

PETER
Okay so what's going on? What was she mad about?

JACOB
She wasn't mad, dude. She's dead! She was on the floor, I think she drowned! Like, there was all this coffee...

PETER
She drowned in the carpet?

JACOB
Just go look!

PETER
Fine! But when I get 100 missed calls and pissed off people, I'm giving them YOUR number!

FADE IN:

INT. THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Peter and Jacob slowly walk down the hall towards room 301, the very last room.

They're nearly there when they both pause after sensing a gush of cold air.

PETER
Do you feel that? Where is that coming from?

JACOB

LOOK!

Jacob points at the ground underneath ROOM 304. The doorframe is covered in ICE, with frosty air seeping out into the hall.

PETER

What in the hell??

Suddenly the door BURSTS open and a surge of frozen air knocks Peter and Jacob nearly off their feet.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. INSIDE ROOM 304 - THAT MOMENT

A MAN is standing completely still, the phone's RECEIVER still in his hand. He is *frozen solid*. The entire room is coated in ice. The HVAC unit is BLASTING snow and ice.

HARD CUT TO:

INT. THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Peter and Jacob SPRINT down the hall, stomping past the coffee soaked carpet outside 301 and straight down the stairs.

INT. FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY - SECONDS LATER

The guys have made it back to the first floor in record time and are rushing towards the desk. Their mad dash is suddenly interrupted by an AVALANCHE OF TOWELS pouring out of one of the rooms. Room 110. If anyone's in there, they're not breathing.

JACOB

I tried to tell you something was going on!

PETER

No, you tried to tell me some lady drowned in her coffee!

JACOB

SHE DID!

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL LOBBY BY REC ROOM - SAME TIME

The pinball machine is flashing and dinging chaotically.

DEVIL'S DOORMAN
 HA HA HA HAAAA! Your towels
 have been delivered. *It was my
 pleasure to serve you...*

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Peter and Jacob look at each other, their faces showing mutual shock and terror. They rush over to the machine. Meanwhile the desk phone starts to ring.

JACOB
 Dude, do NOT answer that!

PETER
 Ya think?! It's that janky
 pinball machine! It's cursed or
 something and it's killing all
 the guests!!

JACOB
 NO. No it's not!
 Listen. It killed the lady who
 wanted coffee, with coffee...
 and... what did the frozen guy
 want?

PETER
 Uhhh... oh, his room was too
 hot! He wanted colder AC! And
 110 called right after...

PETER AND JACOB
 (in unison)
TOWELS!!

Meanwhile the machine is still flashing, the Doorman laughing maniacally as the desk phone starts to ring again and again presumably by needy hotel guests.

Jacob approaches it, reaching for the paddle buttons... the last ball is spring-loaded and ready for the final go.

JACOB

This might sound super obvious but... I think I'm supposed to finish the game.

PETER

No offense but I 100% do not trust you. Turning that thing on is what started this insanity in the first place. I'm pulling the plug!

JACOB

NO, WAIT! DON'T--!

Before Jacob could stop him, Peter rips the plug out of the wall. The machine powers down immediately and unceremoniously. The two look at each other... not sure what to expect...

Everything is completely still. The phone is no longer ringing, and Peter and Jacob just stare at each other in disbelief. Suddenly, a shrill voice pierces through the silence, startling them both.

WOMAN (O.C.)

EXCUSE ME!

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Peter and Jacob approach the desk. An ANGRY WOMAN is standing alone, tapping her foot. Peter recognizes her right away.

MS. ROSS

I called the front desk this morning, and said I have no coffee. They said housekeeping would bring it later. They never did. I called AGAIN, you said you would bring some right away. You NEVER DID. This is some of the worst hotel service I've ever encountered, and I travel all the time. Just wait till you see my review!

CUT TO BLACK.