

MARIE-LAURE

Written by

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Based on, If Any

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INT. CHRIS'S HOUSE - CHRIS'S BEDROOM - DAY

A bare basic bedroom. A broken wardrobe and a mattress on the floor.

CHRIS, 21, handsome with a haircut he's clearly given himself stands over the top of a large stuffed dog. In his hands he holds onto a dog training manual.

Chris takes down a deep breath and puffs out his chest.

CHRIS
(authoritative)
Sit. Stay. Good boy. Stay. Stay.

Chris backs away from the toy dog. He checks his manual.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Lay down.

Using hand signals he gestures for the toy dog to follow his commands.

A shrill old woman's voice suddenly booms out.

SHANNON
(O.S)
Chris!

Chris's whole demeanor changes. He calls back.

CHRIS
(Depressed)
Yeah.

SHANNON
(O.S)
Chris!

Chris turns to look over at his closed bedroom door.

CHRIS
(yelling)
Yeah?

SHANNON
(O.S)
Chris!

CHRIS
(muttering)
Oh my god.

He opens his bedroom door.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
What's the matter?

SHANNON
(O.S)
Chris!

INT. CHRIS'S HOUSE - FRONT ROOM - DAY

Spacious but with outdated décor. A comfortable looking armchair positioned in front of wide screen television.

Chris rushes in. SHANNON, 50, is sat in the armchair. Overweight with greasy hair, she sits with a white cane in hand and a pair of large black sunglasses on. She's blind.

SHANNON
Jesus Christ I've been sat here for how long? Moron, fresh bread. Are you thick? How many times do I have to me tell you?

Chris gestures to the clock on the wall.

CHRIS
You have your breakfast at 9 it's not even 8 yet.

SHANNON
So you're going to leave me to stave?

CHRIS
It won't even be open.

SHANNON
(furious)
So I'll have to go myself. Your blind mother. You piece of shit.

CHRIS
I'll go.

SHANNON
Bastard. Leave me to starve.
Fucking bastard.

INT. CHRIS'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Chris puts on his shoes and coat. Shannon's voice screams through the walls.

SHANNON

(O.S)

White bread. Dumb, dumb. Get it right or I will be sending you back out again.

EXT. BAKERY - DAY

Chris waits outside the closed entrance to the corner store bakery. Stares at the closed sign. Checks his watch. Another thirty minutes to go.

INT. CHRIS'S HOUSE - FRONT ROOM - DAY

Shannon is eating fresh buttered bread with the television on. The volume up incredibly loud.

Chris hovers up the floor. Shannon scowls at him.

SHANNON

Do the bathroom when your done in here. That toilet fucking stinks. Try and not fuck it up. I might be blind but I can still see when this place is a mess. That kitchen was like a fucking bomb had hit it the other day. I'm fucking sick of it.

CHRIS

Ok Mum.

Finished with the hoover Chris hurries out.

INT. CHRIS'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY

Chris scrubs the toilet clean. Again Shannon's voice echoes up from downstairs.

SHANNON

(O.S)

Chris get down here now!

Chris. Defeated lowers his head, lets out a long deep breath, he continues scrubbing.

INT. CHRIS'S HOUSE - CHRIS'S BEDROOM - DAY

Early morning, Chris is sound asleep in bed. In a peaceful deep sleep.

Shannon comes charging in. Swinging her cane wildly about in front.

SHANNON
Wake up you lazy pig. Wake up.

Chris jolts up with a start. Sitting up.

CHRIS
(scared)
What? What's happened?

SHANNON
(furious)
Up. Get up.

She keeps swinging, hits him across the back.

EXT. BAKERY - DAY

Chris is first in line. The bakery not yet open. Chris sees an elderly MAN with his DOG.

CHRIS
(happy)
That's such a cute dog.

The old man nods and smiles in acknowledgement.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
(nervous)
Can I pet him?

OLD MAN
It's a girl.

CHRIS
Can I pet her?

Again the old man nods and smiles.

Chris comes over drops down to his knees, gives the dog a good old fussing.

The old man then pulls the dog away. Chris still down on his knees looks over towards the back entrance of the bakery.

He sees two human legs sticking out the top of an industrial sized trash can.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
What the hell?

Chris heads over, lifts up the lid he sees a pretty girl, MARIE-LAURE, 27, dressed in a thick oversized jumper, colourful windbreaker and a tattered baseball cap. She's digging through thrown out food. Tries to find something that might be edible.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
(shocked)
Are you OK?

She leaps out of the trash can, backs away, not knowing any English she speaks French.

MARIE-LAURE
(embarrassed)
I'm sorry. I'm not normally this kind of person. I've had nothing to eat for three days already.

Chris hears her, but doesn't understand her.

CHRIS
(confused)
What's that?

MARIE-LAURE
Don't call the cops. I'm going now.

CHRIS
Is that French?

She gestures to the bakery.

MARIE-LAURE
(curious)
You work here?

Chris frowns, trying to make sense out of what she's saying.

CHRIS
I only speak English sorry.

She continues to gesture to the bakery.

MARIE-LAURE
(slowly)
Do you work here?

He nods, thinking he knows what she's asking.

CHRIS
Stay here. It'll be open soon. Stay here. OK?

She shrugs.

MARIE-LAURE

OK.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Marie-Laure and Chris walk along together. Marie-Laure is biting down into a delicious looking fresh croissant. Chris carries a couple of bags filled with fresh food.

They glance across at each other, smiling.

INT. CHRIS'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Chris closes the front door shut behind him. He places a finger to his lips. She nods, understanding.

Shannon screams out from another room.

SHANNON

(O.S)

Chris, about damn time. Where the hell have you been. Chris. Get in here now.

Marie-Laure is terrified at hearing this screaming woman. Chris keeps a finger to his lips and guides Marie-Laure over towards the staircase.

INT. CHRIS'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY

Marie-Laure sits on the closed lid of the toilet, looking tense.

Chris places down a couple of fresh towels. The bath is filling up with warm soapy water. He points to the bath and gives Marie-Laure a thumbs up.

CHRIS

This is for you.

MARIE-LAURE

Who is that awful woman?

Shannon can still be heard from down below.

SHANNON

(O.S)

Chris. What are you doing up there? You lazy shit, get down here now.

Chris backs out of the bathroom.

INT. CHRIS'S HOUSE - FRONT ROOM - DAY

Shannon is in her armchair listening to the television, Chris is down on the floor rubbing her bare feet. Using a thick blob of moisturising cream.

SHANNON

(annoyed)

Not so hard you idiot. You want to hurt me?

CHRIS

Sorry.

SHANNON

Can't you do anything right? How many times do I have to teach you to do this properly before you learn?

The sound of a door slamming shut from upstairs echoes out around them.

SHANNON (CONT'D)

What the hell was that?

Chris leaps up to his feet.

CHRIS

(panicked)

I'll go check. Just stay here.

SHANNON

Who the hell are you giving orders to?

Chris rushes out of the front room, slams the door shut behind him.

SHANNON (CONT'D)

(furious)

What are you doing!

INT. CHRIS'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Marie-Laure with a towel wrapped around her looks towards Chris with fear as he comes running into the bedroom.

CHRIS

What happened, are you OK?

MARIE-LAURE

I'm sorry for the noise. The door,
it just slammed shut behind me. I
didn't mean to. I'm sorry.

CHRIS

My Mum can't know you're here.
She'd never let you stay. I really
want to help you.

MARIE-LAURE

I'm sorry.

Chris sits down on the bed.

CHRIS

My Mum, she wasn't always such a
bitch.

Marie-Laure sees the toy dog, smirking.

MARIE-LAURE

(amused)

You like dogs? Don't you?

CHRIS

My dog?

She reaches down, picks it up.

MARIE-LAURE

Bow, bow.

CHRIS

Woof, woof.

She laughs.

MARIE-LAURE

You know, a real dog would be
better.

Chris does a cute impression of a dog.

CHRIS

Woof, woof.

Marie-Laure laughs again.

MARIE-LAURE

Oh my.

The bedroom door opens. Shannon is on the other side.

SHANNON

Someone is here aren't they? I
fucking told you never to bring
anyone into my house.

Marie-Laure backs away, terrified. Chris leaps up and gets in
front of Shannon.

CHRIS

Mum, you shouldn't be up here.

SHANNON

Who's in here?

CHRIS

No one.

SHANNON

Then I'm calling the police.

CHRIS

No, please.

Shannon swings her cane.

SHANNON

Who the fuck is in here?

Chris takes a couple of hard blows from the cane.

CHRIS

Mum stop.

SHANNON

Who the fuck is here?

Shannon keeps swinging, her cane keeps connecting with Chris.
Now hitting him across the head.

MARIE-LAURE

(angry)

Stop it now. What's wrong with you?

SHANNON

What the fuck is that? A foreigner!
Get out of my house.

Shannon charges towards Marie-Laure, hearing her voice,
guessing where she might be. Shannon swings her cane, trying
to hit Marie-Laure.

Marie-Laure ducks out of the way, screaming.

CHRIS

(angry)

Mum stop it. After everything I've
done for you. Given up for you.
Just stop it.

Shannon keeps swinging for Marie-Laure, trying to hit her.
Only just missing.

SHANNON

You're nothing but a disappointment
Chris. A failure.

CHRIS

Stop it.

Shannon lands a blow against Marie-Laure's exploded back.

MARIE-LAURE

Shit that hurts.

Chris grabs onto Shannon, pulls her away from Marie-Laure.

SHANNON

You bastard.

CHRIS

Don't make me hurt you.

SHANNON

I'll have you arrested you
ungrateful rat. I wish you had
never been born.

MARIE-LAURE

I've had enough of this bitch.

Marie-Laure matches over and delivers a solid punch,
connecting to the side of Shannon's face. Knocks her out
cold. Shannon collapses onto the bed.

Chris turns to Marie-Laure, grinning.

CHRIS

(stunned)

You just knocked my Mum out.

MARIE-LAURE

You best be thanking me?

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Marie-Laure back in her street clothes is running down the street with Chris. The sound of police sirens around them. They look across at each other and smile.

CHRIS

Where are we going?

MARIE-LAURE

I hope you know where you're going?

EXT. PET STORE - DAY

Marie-Laure exits out the pet store with a puppy in her arms. She hands it over to Chris.

MARIE-LAURE

I've just spent all the money I had. I must be crazy.

Chris, overjoyed takes the puppy into his arms. Kisses it.

CHRIS

(grateful)

I'll never forget this.

(to Marie-Laure)

I'm going to keep you safe. I promise.

She shakes her head.

MARIE-LAURE

Either I'm going to have to learn English or you're going to have to learn French. Shit.

EXT. CITY PARK - DAY

Chris is playing with his new puppy. Marie-Laure watches them. Both Marie-Laure and Chris are happy. Smiling and laughing.

Chris attempts to teach the puppy a few simple tricks.

FADE TO BLACK

THE END