

SILENCE IS GOLDEN

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. KLUGMAN RESIDENCE - DAY

The sun rises on a one-story suburban house.

INT. MEREDITH'S BEDROOM - DAY

F.W. Murnau's Nosferatu plays on a 60-inch HDTV, in its proper aspect ratio.

SUPER: OCTOBER 22

The vampire Count Orlok's (Max Schreck) shadow ascends a flight of stairs in search of Ellen (Greta Schröder).

MEREDITH KLUGMAN (35) -- an ardent cinephile, a rarity in her family -- watches from her computer chair, in awe of the artistry before her.

Suddenly, a CUPBOARD BANGS in the kitchen. Meredith groans, the passion quickly fading from her face.

Her small-to-medium bedroom, formerly a living room, lacks a fourth wall to separate it from the dining room and kitchen.

Meredith's aunt, MARGE (50), BLABBERS INDISTINCTLY, too fast for the human ear. Meredith palms her face and shakes her head, another groan.

Marge runs the GARBAGE DISPOSAL and BANGS DISHES around.

Finally, silence.

Meredith tries to focus on the film. LOUD, STOMPING FOOTSTEPS approach.

MARGE walks by, homely with a brown "Karen" haircut. She glances at the movie.

MARGE

What in the world are you watching,
Meredith?

Meredith is dumbfounded. Her face says "Fuck you, you artless philistine!"

MEREDITH

It's Nosferatu.

MARGE

Never heard of it.

(beat)

Must be pretty boring.

Meredith makes the most "What the fuck?" face you've ever seen in your life.

MEREDITH

Uh, not really.

MARGE

You know, if you get bored, we have
Flag of Honor 2 on DVD.

MEREDITH

Aunt Marge. Please.

MARGE

Oh. Enjoy your movie.

She returns to the kitchen. Meredith exhales deeply.

The GARBAGE DISPOSAL runs again. Marge BANGS MORE DISHES.

MEREDITH

Story of my life.

On the coffee table is a movie watchlist with only a few
crossed out. The list is extensive and includes many popular
classic and contemporary films: The Godfather Saga, The Big
Lebowski, Midsommar, Rashomon among them.

Meredith pauses the movie on Greta Schröder's terrified
face. She picks up her watchlist and sighs.

MEREDITH

A third of my life I'll never get
back.

She sets her list down and heads to her old toy box in the
closet. She pulls out a toy genie lamp.

A child's voice, YOUNG MEREDITH (10), swirls around adult
Meredith's head.

YOUNG MEREDITH (V.O.)

...And action! Cut! Beautiful.
That's a wrap.

Meredith smiles at the memory, chuckles.

She rubs the lamp, knowing it's just a plastic toy.

MEREDITH

I wish...

The GARBAGE DISPOSAL muffles.

In a puff of smoke, a GENIE appears. Not your stereotypical
genie, mind you. Slicked-back hair and goatee, with a red
business suit.

GENIE

Pardon me, but did you just say "I wish?"

MEREDITH

What are you, some kind of corporate genie? Who are you?

GENIE

Vincent Stirling, at your service. I understand you fancy yourself a cinephile?

Meredith is caught off guard.

MEREDITH

Oh, God, yes. It's in my blood. I made a genie movie when I was ten. With this same lamp.

GENIE

Impressive, my dear. Now, if I may, I couldn't help but overhear your dilemma.

MEREDITH

And...?

The Genie strokes his beard.

GENIE

May I interest you in my upstart film and TV service? Vinfinity has every film and TV series in existence, all under one roof. All the peace and quiet you've been seeking. No strings attached.

Meredith, skeptical, hesitates to answer.

MEREDITH

Where are you getting all these movies? Is this legal? How much--

GENIE

Relax. I've got it all covered.

MEREDITH

Thanks, but--

GENIE

Too late, my dear! Once you say "I wish," you're locked in. The wish cannot be undone.

MEREDITH

But--

In a puff of smoke, the Genie disappears.

The GARBAGE DISPOSAL returns to full volume, turns off.

Marge enters the room.

MARGE

Meredith, who the heck were you talking to, silly?

MEREDITH

Uh, nobody.

MARGE

Guess what we're having for din--

Marge fades away, disappears.

MEREDITH

Aunt Marge? What the hell? Genie!

Nosferatu resumes on its own.

MEREDITH

What--

Count Orlok's shadow ascends the stairs in the film.

Meredith, confused and frightened, returns to her computer chair to finish the movie.

Suddenly, dark sunglasses appear on her face. She maneuvers her arms as if she's blind.

MEREDITH

Anybody there? Help! Genie?

Meredith feels her face. She reaches up to her sunglasses and attempts to remove them, but they barely budge.

MEREDITH

Why won't they come off?

Finally, the sunglasses fly off her face and land on her lap. Her eyes are missing from their sockets. Meredith feels her face and notices this. She screams in horror.

At the exact same time, Orlok grabs Ellen's chest in the film. She struggles.

The Genie laughs as she reappears in a puff of smoke.

GENIE

Don't you see? One must be careful
of what they wish. One must think
long and hard.

MEREDITH

I want everything to return to
normal.

GENIE

Remember when I said that a wish
cannot be undone?

Meredith realizes.

MEREDITH

You sick son of a bitch!

The Genie grins evilly.

GENIE

I lied.

He paces around the room in front of Meredith.

GENIE

Everything can be undone, and your
contract shall be null and void.

MEREDITH

Yes! Please! I wish everything
could be normal. And quiet.

The Genie folds his arms and waits a beat before speaking.

GENIE

Granted.

FADE TO WHITE.

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The sun rises exactly the same as before.

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proper aspect ratio.

SUPER: OCTOBER 22

Count Orlok's shadow ascends a flight of stairs in search of
poor Ellen.

Meredith Klugman (35), an ardent cinephile, watches from her computer chair, in awe of the artistry before her.

Finally, free of all the distracting noise that has robbed Meredith of her life.

MARGE, now sporting shoulder-length hair, walks by. She glances at the movie.

MARGE

Oh my God, I love Nosferatu.

Meredith is perplexed.

MEREDITH

You... do?

MARGE

Of course. Doesn't everyone?

MEREDITH

Oh, yeah, Of course.

MARGE

Mind if I watch it with you?

MEREDITH

(still bewildered)

Sure.

FADE OUT.

THE END