THE HORROR WRITER

By

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INT. HOTEL BEDROOM - NIGHT

A cheap, seedy hotel bedroom that looks a few decades out of place. The room consistently tremors and buzzes from the chaotic streets below.

JACK (35), a perpetually tired looking man, dressed in clothes he’s been wearing for days sits at a desk. He places his cigarette on an overflowing ashtray, grabbing one of the many books on his desk, all which have his name boldly printed along the spines.

He stares hatefully at the back of one of his books, his face plastered on the back. He glances up to his laptop, an empty word processor.

   JACK (V.O.)
   I’ve made my living off of people’s fears of hauntings, the supernatural, death. But what scares me, what taunts me, is the constant flicker of the blinking cursor. I can almost hear it. Tick. Tick.

Jack stares at the insertion point cursor, blinking.

RHIANNON (24), strikingly beautiful but a complete mess. She stumbles through the hotel door, her over-the-top fur coat dangling off of one shoulder. Jack’s eyes stay on the cursor.

Rhiannon aimlessly wanders around the room, seeking attention.

   JACK
   You reek of booze.

   RHIANNON
   (Slurred)
   It was a party Jack, another party I had to go to alone.

   JACK
   You don’t have to go to any party.

Rhiannon ignores him. She lights a cigarette and dramatically sprawls herself on the bed.

   RHIANNON
   When are we going to back to the beach house? Have you not gotten enough inspiration from this dump yet?
Jack doesn’t respond.

She picks up one of his books on the bed and reads the back spitefully.

RHIANNON
(Mockingly)
The best horror writer in decades.
Jack Holway delivers what horror fans have been craving, excitement.

Rhiannon laughs under her breath at the last word. She gets up and starts making herself a drink.

JACK (V.O.)
There had been plenty versions of her in my life. She prided herself on being unpredictable, I hated that. I married her when she did what many could not, she surprised me. However, even unpredictability can become boring.

Rhiannon attempts to be seductive as she slips into her night gown but to no avail.

She downs her drink and sits on the bed. After a moment, she stares him dead in the eye, a tear streaming down her face.

RHIANNON
I don’t know when it is that you started hating me.

JACK
You know what I’m like when I have a deadline.

RHIANNON
I know.

He makes eye contact with her. She shies away and lies in the bed.

JACK (V.O.)
She was right. I did hate her, I don’t even know when the feeling began but in that moment I realized it was true. I used to look at her with emotion, now it’s just as if I’m watching a movie, a pathetic film. That’s when the inspiration struck.
Jack now stares at her viciously. He lights another cigarette and suddenly, his fingers start rapidly typing.

INT. HOTEL BEDROOM - DAY

The morning sun beams through the hotel window through the tattered curtains.

Jack is in the same position, determined, eyes bloodshot. He stares at a completed chapter, satisfied.

Rhiannon awakes in bed with a coarse cough. She sits up, trying to catch her breath.

   RHIANNON
   (Raspy)
   Can you get me some water?

   JACK
   There’s only the tap.

Rhiannon stares at him, waiting for him to do something, anything. She gives up, walking resentfully to the washroom and pouring some water. She quickly drinks the glass, puts on her coat.

   RHIANNON
   I’m going out.

Jack looks to her, finally paying attention.

   JACK
   Where?

Rhiannon turns to him angrily.

   RHIANNON
   Since when do you fucking care?

Jack nods. He continues typing as she storms out the door. As the door slams shut, he looks upwards, closing his laptop. An ominous glare in his eyes.

INT. HALLWAY

Rhiannon walks down the hallway slowly, she waits for the antique elevator.

As she enters, Jack appears in the distance, following carefully.
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INT. HOTEL - BAR

The hotel bar has an old Hollywood charm to it that’s been lost over years of being unkempt.

Rhiannon sits at the bar, a martini in hand. She desperately flirts with another PATRON.

    RHIANNON
    What do you do for fun?

She twirls the stick of olives playfully.

The patron can’t believe his luck, he adjusts his tie.

    PATRON
    I don’t really know how to answer that. What do you do for fun -

He stalls, waiting for a name.

    RHIANNON
    Rhiannon.

Jack stands far from sight, but watches the interaction.

    JACK (V.O.)
    She already has him in her web. Too bad for him, she’s just trying to seek the attention I drained from her. I used to think she was the vampire.

Jack almost smiles as he watches. He backs up and enters the elevator.

INT. HOTEL BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jack sits back at his desk, he alternates from rampantly writing to pacing around the room.

Suddenly, he hears Rhiannon walking down the hallway, the creaking leaves no room for surprise.

He shuts off the light and sits in the corner with his laptop. He dims the monitor down to complete darkness, shielding him in the shadows.

He watches.

Rhiannon stumbles, almost falls into the hotel room. She looks terrible, ghastly sick. She coughs and then gains her stance.
She flicks on one of the lights then becomes distracted by the wall behind Jack’s desk.

A series of pictures of her are plastered on the wall with sticky pad notes.

She slowly approaches it.

RHIANNON
Jack?

Silence.

She stares at a larger picture of herself, a single tear emitting from her eye. The moment is interrupted by a hoarse cough, she almost falls to her knees holding her chest.

She starts to catch her breath. Suddenly, all that is heard is typing. Fast, unrestrained typing.

Rhiannon lifts her head in fear, she looks back but can’t make out anything in the shadows. She slowly gets up and quietly makes her way into the bed.

She clenches her eyes shut.

JACK (V.O.)
I was so close to finishing.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

The room is an ominous yellow from the sun. Jack lays in bed asleep. Rhiannon sits up in the bed, staring into the distance.

She makes her way over to a vanity. She sits down and attempts to smear makeup on her face. Her skin looks cold, almost white. Her eyes looks hollow and dark. The makeup does nothing for her.

She stares at herself in the mirror, scared of what she’s becoming.

She coughs, a string of blood falls from her mouth. She wipes her face and covers her mouth with horror.

She makes her way back to the bed but falls onto the ground, weak.

She lifts her head as the sound of typing re-emerges.

Jack walks over to Rhiannon, he lifts her on to the bed.
She coughs, gurgling blood, staring at him with fear.

He stands over her and lights a cigarette.

RHIANNON  
(Choking)  
You—You did this to me.

He takes a drag of his cigarette.

RHIANNON  
You’re stealing my soul.

Her words are hardly accessible due to the blood.

He stares down at her emotionless. He makes his way over to his laptop and writes a final sentence. He walks away from his work, stares at the final page.

He smiles.

JACK (V.O.)  
It was the best novel I’d ever written.