

THE OTHER SIDE

By
Olga Tremaine

olga_tremaine@yahoo.com

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FADE IN:

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Dan, 35, stares into an open fridge. A phone to his ear. His eyes gawk at the leftovers.

OPERATOR (O.S.)
Mr. Waterman, please submit the following documents to the modification department: letter of hardship, bank statements for the last year --

DONNA (O.S.)
Dan, shut the fridge! Food will spoil!

Dan turns at Donna's voice, irritated.

DAN
(into phone)
I've submitted the damned package three times already, you should know every freakin' thing about me by now!

ANNOYING OPERATOR (O.S.)
I'm sorry Mr. Waterman, we don't have any information in the --

DAN
Can I speak to the manager?

DONNA, 34, her large bottom brushes Dan aside, her hand slams the fridge shut.

OPERATOR (O.S.)
Please hold.

DAN
Listen, I'm trying to save our house here.

Donna gives him a look.

DONNA
Then you should've held on to your job.

Dan fumes, staring at Donna, as the phone, being on hold, plays annoyingly calm music.

DAN
It's probably easier to live in
hell than with you...

He walks away.

DONNA
If not for my parents we'd be out
on the street years ago.

INT. STAIRS - NIGHT

Dan steps downstairs, phone to his ear, he's still on hold.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Dan's finger flips the light switch. The music in the phone
chokes, followed by clicks.

DAN
Hello? Hello! Idiots!

Hangs up. His eyes drift to see the basement corner where
household chemical cleaners are piled together. He goes
through them, plucking out several bottles. Then finds a
canister of diesel.

As he mixes some of them in a bucket:

DAN
Motherf... Submit the package my
ass...

He shuffles to the opposite corner and gets a stack of old
newspapers. Sticks them in the mixture.

DAN
(mimics Donna)
If not for my parents... If not for
my weird hippy parents, who
happened to be loaded...

He pulls out a pen and tears off a label from a paint can and
scribbles on it in capital letters: SEE YOU IN HELL, BITCH.
Makes a primitive paper plane out of it and sends flying
across the basement.

Lights a cigarette, puffs one time and flicks it in the
mixture. BAM! An explosion engulfs the basement.

INT. BASEMENT - LATER

Dan, black from smoke, opens his eyes. Nothing but thick tar-like fumes around. He feels his stomach - not injured. Starts crying.

DAN
Why? Why am I still alive?

DONNA (O.S.)
Dan! Dan?

Her voice gets him moving. He crawls to the corner as he hears her attempting to open the basement door.

DONNA (O.S.)
Nine-one-one? Hi...

Like a trapped animal, Dan hides in the corner, hopelessly digging in the pile of drywall fragments.

DONNA (O.S.)
... Big explosion. My husband is suicidal... He's bipolar, if that helps...

Dan crawls underneath drywall and sees a black hole in the floor, he crawls into it.

Donna coughs from smoke as she gets into the basement.

INT. BASEMENT HOLE - BLACK

Dan, fairly happy, shields the hole from the inside with debris.

Looks around, feeling the ground with hands, crawls on all fours further.

INT. BASEMENT HOLE - BLACK - LATER

Dan bumps his head and stops crawling. He sits up. He can see the light sipping through cracks. Starts clawing apart ply wood and bricks.

The opening widens, blinding Dan as he sticks his head out.

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

Dan gets out, confused, he sees his own basement, only clean, turns his head to see a shiny pool table and a wet bar.

Dan gets out and dusts himself, as he looks around, surprised, and sees a giant flat screen TV and delux home movie theater armchairs.

He prowls around, looking.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

No one is here, Dan's hand lovingly brushes against granite counter tops, opens the stainless fridge. Beer, dessert, a plate of elaborate Cordon Blue.

DONNA (O.S.)
Hungry, Tiger?

He freezes, recognizing her voice. Turns slowly, afraid to look. DONNA, a woman at least 15 years younger and much prettier than the Donna he knew.

DONNA
What's wrong? Why are you looking
at me like this?
(kisses him)
We're going to Erik's party,
remember? Don't eat anything.

She kisses him again, her slim leg nudges the fridge door shut.

DONNA
And go take a shower, freshen up.

INT. HALL - DAY

She leads him down the hall. His eyes question every expensive painting he sees on the way. They stop. The door opens into the luxurious bedroom. His eyes close in pleasure as she kisses him again.

INT. DAN'S OLD LIFE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

Dan, black and dusty, opens his eyes. Nothing but thick smoke around.

OLD DONNA (O.S.)
Dan? Dan?

He jumps up, startled. He crawls to the corner as he hears she's trying to open the basement door.

OLD DONNA (O.S.)
Nine-one-one?

Dan hides in the corner, just sits there, confused.

OLD DONNA (O.S.)
... Big explosion. My husband is
suicidal... He's bipolar...

Dan gasps for air in a panic attack.

DAN
(mumbles)
Of course, I'm such a fool. It was
too good to be true...

He just sits there, hopeless and depressed, as Donna makes her way through the debris, coughing.

OLD DONNA
Cops are on their way.

He doesn't respond, absolutely miserable.

She bends down to pick up crumpled half-burned paper plane. Her eyes widen in anger as she reads the message.

She jumps to him and starts strangling him.

OLD DONNA
Bitch? You called me bitch?!

They roll fighting on the pile of trash.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Sleeping Dan rolls in bed, moaning. His hands fight with someone invisible. He's choking. He coughs, it wakes him up. Sits up looking around.

He is in the beautiful bedroom of his new life. He rubs his forehead, thinking. Turns, sees sleeping young and gorgeous Donna next to him.

INT. BASEMENT - MORNING

Dan, in a robe, lights up a cigarette. Puffing, stares at the spot where used to be a hole from which he had climbed out. The floor is clean and polished - not a scratch.

He puffs once and puts out his cigarette. Runs back in the house.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Dan sits down on the bed. A bottle of medication catches his eyes. He picks it up, reads the label. His name is on there. Small font reads: Side effects: Dizziness. Hallucinations. He processes the information. He stares at the word HALLUCINATIONS.

He turns back. Donna is in bed, but her face is hard to see. He gulps. Confused. Then tip-toes around the bed, sits down next to her. Moves her arm off her face. It's the young Donna.

He tosses the meds out of the window.

FADE OUT.