

THE ANNIVERSARY

Written by

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INT. HOUSE - DAY

CLOSE UP: A wall calendar. Days are crossed off leading up to a marked date: **ANNIVERSARY**

A hand comes into view and crosses off the day before the marked date.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

A match **HISSES** to life as it scrapes against a matchbox.

JOHN (31 going on 32) throws the match into the fireplace, which slowly grows into a small fire. It glows and flickers against his face.

He pulls out his phone, stares at the wallpaper screen: it's a photo of John and a woman, **MAY**.

JOHN
(to his phone)
First night here and the power's out. I'm sure you would've found it romantic.

He lights another match and lowers it to a candle wick, lighting it. He holds the candle up.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Happy birthday to me.

He walks around the cabin, opens drawers and cabinet doors, exploring the place. He walks into the--

BEDROOM

He opens more drawers to cabinets and dressers. He looks in the ottoman at the end of the bed, then looks under the bed.

Something sits on the floor beneath the bed. He reaches under and pulls it out.

It's an old, worn box for a **OUIJA BOARD**.

LIVING ROOM

John sets the box on the coffee table. He pulls the board out and examines it.

The board is nothing glamorous, essentially cardboard, and printed material with a plastic planchette.

John sets the planchette on the board, then rests his fingers on top of it.

He SIGHS, takes his fingers off and rests his hands on his knees. He taps his knees, taps his feet, looks back at the board.

The planchette sits still on the board.

John puts his fingers back on the planchette, closes his eyes.

The planchette moves slightly.

John opens his eyes.

The planchette hovers over the letter 'M'.

His mouth opens in shock.

It moves to the letter 'A'.

All sound seems to drown out as the planchette moves to yet another letter.

It lands over the letter 'Y'.

John stares in horror.

JOHN (CONT'D)

May?

Nothing.

JOHN (CONT'D)

May? Are you here?

John waits.

The planchette moves slowly to 'YES'.

John exhales a surprised breath. He takes his hands off the planchette, unsure whether he should believe his own eyes.

He reluctantly lays his fingers back on the planchette.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I miss you so much. I want to see you again.

The planchette slowly moves across the board. It spells out:
H-E-R-E

John is near tears.

JOHN (CONT'D)
I know you're here.

The planchette moves to '**NO**'.

JOHN (CONT'D)
No? You're not here?

The planchette moves across the board some more: **M-E-E-T**

JOHN (CONT'D)
You want to meet?

The planchette moves across the board again: **H-E-R-E**

JOHN (CONT'D)
Meet...here? I'm already here, May.
I'm here.

The planchette moves again, faster this time: **S-O-O-N**

JOHN (CONT'D)
When do you want to meet me here?

The planchette moves some more.

END FLASHBACK

INT. HOUSE - DAY

John stands in front of the calendar and stares at the circled date.

His phone PINGS with a notification. He looks at it: **CHECK IN TO YOUR VACATION RENTAL**

He clears the notification, stares at the photo of he and May.

He runs his thumb along her face.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

John sets a suitcase into the back of his orange Subaru Crosstrek.

He hops in the car and drives away.

INT. SUBARU - DAY

John drives in the car to silence.

INT. LIQUOR STORE - DAY

John picks out a handle of whiskey.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - DAY

The mountains greet him, while the city disappears as it fades away goodbye.

The sun travels across the sky.

Shadows stretch.

Mountains glow.

EXT. CABIN - DAY (EVENING)

A secluded cabin.

The nearest neighbor is not even in sight, and there's only woods and mountain landscape as far as the eye can see.

The sun sets and casts fire into the sky as John's Subaru pulls up to the cabin.

He turns off the car, climbs out, grabs his suitcase, and heads for the cabin entrance.

INT. CABIN - DAY (EVENING)

The front door opens and daylight bleeds into the dark cabin.

John stands in the doorway, suitcase in tow.

He takes his suitcase to the bedroom.

MOMENTS LATER

John lights the fireplace.

He pours himself a glass of whiskey on the rocks. He takes a swig, then another.

A SIGH.

Finishes the drink off.

He pours himself another one.

EXT. CABIN - NIGHT

There's no moon. Even the stars seem dim. Silence has overtaken the area.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

John sits on the sofa with his drink in hand. He takes another sip, sets the glass down on the coffee table before him.

The box of the ouija board sits on the table.

John pulls the ouija board out.

He sets the planchette on the board and holds his fingers to it.

He closes his eyes, takes a breath.

Silence.

All that is heard is his deep, deep BREATHING...

The silence is DEAFENING--

John opens his eyes. The planchette has not moved.

He SIGHS, takes another sip of his drink. Taps his glass with his finger. Thinks.

He pours a second glass and sets it down across from him on the coffee table. An invitation for company, should any join.

He sits, and waits.

LATER

John wobbles as he stands over the ouija board. He finishes off his drink.

LATER

John paces back and forth in the living room as he stares down the ouija board.

JOHN
(to the ouija board)
Do something!!!

The planchette ignores him.

John stands back upright and pours himself another drink.

EVEN LATER

John sits on the sofa. He GURGLES a BURP.

 JOHN (CONT'D)
 (slurred)
 Come on...

The planchette remains still.

 JOHN (CONT'D)
 (slurred)
 Come on!!!

Nothing.

John stares. Then--

He SWIPES at the board and clears it off the coffee table. It knocks the second glass of whiskey off, which SHATTERS on the wood floor.

 JOHN (CONT'D)
 (to the ouija board)
 You told me tonight would be the
 night.

He stands.

 JOHN (CONT'D)
 You told me I'd see her again...

He walks to the kitchen where he pours himself his umpteenth drink.

He turns around with the glass to his lips before he stops. Stares. At the living room.

The ouija board is on the table, the planchette in the same spot that it was before.

John lowers his glass.

A KNOCK at the door startles him. He stares at the door.

Another KNOCK.

 JOHN (CONT'D)
 Who's there?

Silence.

John looks at the ouija board.

JOHN (CONT'D)
(to the ouija board)
Who's at the door?

The planchette remains still.

JOHN (CONT'D)
(to the ouija board)
Are you at the door?

More silence.

The planchette moves sharply to '**YES**'.

John steps backward in shock.

Persistent, loud KNOCKING at the door.

John slowly steps toward the door.

The KNOCKING continues.

He grabs the door handle, pulls the door open--

Reveals--

NOTHING.

Instead, a breeze flows in. Something has entered.

The fire in the fireplace blows and flickers.

John backs away from the front door and follows the breeze as it travels through the cabin. It blows through curtains, ruffles plastic plants, flips papers and other light objects.

The front door slowly closes on its own, CLICKS shut.

John doesn't even notice the door shut. His gaze hones in on--

A WOMAN. She stands in the bedroom toward the back of the cabin, just far enough into the shadows that she's almost invisible. A faint figure.

JOHN (CONT'D)
M...May?

John looks over at the planchette, which grinds like nails on a chalkboard as it slowly slides to '**NO**'.

A deep, guttural CHUCKLE emits from the dark bedroom. John looks ahead and into the darkness.

The woman glides along the floor slowly out of the bedroom.

John backs away toward the front door.

The woman flickers into the living space as the fireplace illuminates her horrific figure.

It is May. But...

Her mouth is stretched beyond belief in a permanent, nightmarish smile. Her skin squeezes against her bones, giving sunken eye sockets a space for darkness that surrounds her wide eyeballs.

Her raggedy clothes hang off her decrepit body which hovers ever so slightly above the floor while she floats through the cabin.

She opens her skeletal smile and LAUGHS.

John attempts to open the front door, but it won't budge. He SCREAMS.

May gets CLOSER.

She reaches out for him.

John dives onto the sofa. He rolls off and onto the floor, sits up and looks at the ouija board.

May turns 90-degrees, continues toward John.

He grabs the ouija board, hugs it and the planchette as he backs away toward the fireplace.

He turns around and looks at the flames, then at the ouija board.

He looks back at May, who stares at him with her nightmarish smile. The firelight flickers against her face ominously.

John throws the ouija board into the fire.

May combusts into a fiery blaze.

She SCREAMS.

John runs.

The front door manages to open this time, and John runs out of the cabin.

EXT. CABIN - NIGHT

May SCREAMS from within the cabin. It's a horrifying scream. Confused. Agonizing.

John runs to his Subaru and jumps inside.

INT. SUBARU - NIGHT

John unfolds the visor mirror and the keys fall into his lap. He puts the key into ignition, starts the car, slams on the gas pedal.

EXT. CABIN - NIGHT

Dirt and rock spit up from behind the tires as the Subaru speeds off.

May continues to SCREAM as the fire glows inside the cabin that smokes from the windows and door.

INT. SUBARU - NIGHT

John continues to drive on the dirt road.

It's pitch black outside.

He pulls onto a paved road that winds every which way through the mountains.

His headlights shine down on the pavement. All of his surroundings, however, are eaten away by the night.

John's heavy breathing finally calms as he continues to drive.

EXT. CABIN - DAY

The cabin smolders, but is not completely burned down.

A fire truck sits outside the house, along with some police vehicles and other cars.

A NEIGHBOR talks to a police officer.

NEIGHBOR

Oh, it was awful. I heard the screamin'.

(MORE)

NEIGHBOR (CONT'D)

It was like a banshee, like
 somethin' I'd never heard of...!
 And then I smelled the smoke...

Continue onward to the cabin, and then--

INT. CABIN - DAY

More police and investigators peruse the scene. The living room is a charred mess, but recoverable.

A FIREFIGHTER speaks with an OFFICER, points at the fireplace and the scene around it.

FIREFIGHTER

...source was the fireplace.
 Must've gotten too close...

OFFICER

...No surprise. The guy probably
 had the entire handle of whiskey
 all in one night...

Before them lies the roasted body of John. He hugs the OUIJA BOARD AND PLANCHETTE, which are UNHARMED.

FIREFIGHTER

...Not sure how that board didn't
 get burned...

OFFICER

You believe in that kinda stuff?

HOLD ON: John's body hugging the ouija board--

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. SUBARU - NIGHT

John continues to drive through the darkness.

The headlights shine into nothing, onto the road that leads to nothing.

He continues to drive.

And he drives.

And drives.

FADE OUT.
THE END.