

POWER-CUT

by

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EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - EARLY MORNING

A middle-class area: neat, quiet.

INT. KITCHEN

JACOB (30s), still in a dressing-gown, fills the cat bowl with biscuits.

He stands and watches the cat wander in, an almost meditative expression on his face.

LIVING ROOM

A dead silence pervades the whole house. Occasional traces of outside noise -- passing cars, voices, dogs -- float in.

He sits on the sofa in the corner, eating a bowl of cereal. The room is sparsely furnished: the sofa, a TV and DVD-player alongside a modest DVD collection.

There are no photos. No ornaments.

STUDY

Dressed for the day now, he sits himself in front of a computer and waits for it to start up.

He sips from a mug of tea. Waits patiently.

EXT. FRONT GARDEN - AFTERNOON

Returning home with two bags of shopping.

He reaches the front door, puts the bags down as he rummages around for his keys.

BECKY (O.S)

Hi.

He turns to find BECKY (late-20s) stood next door, apparently on her way out.

BECKY (CONT'D)

I'm Becky. I've just moved in.

Jacob stares at her, annoyed at being interrupted.

JACOB

Hello.

Goes back to looking for his keys.

BECKY

I'm sorry, I didn't manage to
catch your name.

JACOB

Jacob.

He unlocks the front door, takes the bags inside and then
closes it behind him.

BECKY

(To herself)

Nice meeting you, Jacob.

INT. KITCHEN

Jacob puts the shopping away. The cat snakes its way
around the bags.

He picks her up gently.

JACOB

Nothing for you, I'm afraid.

STUDY

Back at the computer.

EXT. FRONT GARDEN - EVENING

The street lights have just come on.

INT. KITCHEN

He pours himself a glass of red wine.

LIVING ROOM

Wine in one hand, he crouches down in front of the DVD
collection (all arthouse-type flicks) and runs his finger
over the titles until he finds the one he wants.

He takes it out of the case and puts it in the DVD tray of
the machine. Just as he's about to press play...

The power goes off.

Complete darkness.

HALLWAY

A torchlight illuminates the fusebox. Jacob flicks the switches a couple of times, but nothing happens.

LIVING ROOM

He places a few candles around, just enough to reasonably light up the room.

That done he settles down on the sofa with the wine in one hand and a book in the other. He starts reading by the candlelight.

Someone knocks insistently at the front door.

LIVING ROOM - SHORTLY AFTER

Jacob is back on the sofa. The book lies closed on the floor. He sips from the glass of wine, staring out into the darkness. Becky is sat on the opposite end of the sofa. Both clearly uncomfortable.

Becky smiles nervously, tries to make the best of it.

BECKY

It's silly, I know... being scared of the dark. But it's been ever since I was tiny. I'm not normally this bad... I think it was just being in a new house on my own...

JACOB

I'm sure they'll get the power back on soon.

BECKY

I'm sure.

She tries to think of something more to say but fails. He doesn't bother even making the effort.

Eventually:

BECKY
It's a nice place you have. Very
roomy. Uncluttered.

No response.

BECKY (CONT'D)
So... what is it you do?

JACOB
Sorry?

BECKY
Your job.

JACOB
Oh. I work from home, building
websites... mainly for small
businesses, stuff like that.

BECKY
Sounds interesting.

JACOB
It's okay.

She waits for him to ask her. He doesn't.

BECKY
I'm a nursery school teacher
myself. At least I was... and
will be again. Hopefully. I'm
just waiting to hear back from
places at the moment.

JACOB
Right.

He drains the last of his wine. Gets up.

JACOB (CONT'D)
Excuse me.

Heads towards the door. Suddenly thinks:

JACOB (CONT'D)
Would you like a glass?

BECKY
Um. Yes please.

He disappears off to

KITCHEN

Lit by a single candle.

Jacob reaches up for another wine glass.

LIVING ROOM

Becky's discomfort clearly shows now she's alone.

She looks around... notices the DVD collection.

She kneels down in front of it and tries to make out the titles in the gloom.

JACOB

Here you are.

Not having heard him come in, Becky almost has a heart attack. She quickly recovers. Takes the glass.

BECKY

Thank you.

They return to their ends of the sofa.

BECKY (CONT'D)

Have you lived here long?

JACOB

About ten years.

BECKY

It seems a nice neighbourhood.

JACOB

It is.

BECKY

Nice and peaceful. What are the people like?

JACOB

Nice.

BECKY

Friendly bunch?

JACOB

I don't really know them that well, I'm afraid.

BECKY

Oh.

JACOB

I'm not really a... people
person.

Both sip their wine in silence.

The cat wanders over to them.

BECKY

(To the cat)

Hello.

JACOB

I'd be careful. She's not good
with strangers.

Becky strokes the cat, who purrs contentedly.

BECKY

She seems to like me. What's her
name?

JACOB

Cat.

BECKY

Cat?

JACOB

Just cat.

Okay.

BECKY

How long have you had her?

JACOB

Six years. I got her from a
rescue centre. She's normally not
good around people she doesn't
know well.

BECKY

(To the cat)

Who'd mistreat a cat like you?

The cat wanders away into the darkness.

BECKY

I always wanted a cat. But my
boyfriend- my ex-boyfriend, he
wasn't keen.

JACOB
He wasn't a cat person?

BECKY
No. I had some goldfish.

JACOB
You didn't bring them with you?

BECKY
My leaving was... a little
hectic. I couldn't bring a lot of
things I wish I had.

This is obviously a painful subject. Even Jacob can't help
feeling a little sorry for her.

BECKY
But that's behind me. I'm making
a fresh start.

JACOB
How's that working out for you?

BECKY
Not so great, actually. But you
have to give these things time,
don't you?. You can't expect
miracles.

He hesitantly raises his glass.

JACOB
To new beginnings.

BECKY
New beginnings.

They drink.

There's a slight, nervous moment between them.

BECKY (CONT'D)
So... you live here alone?

JACOB
Just me and the cat.

BECKY
There's no-one special?

JACOB
No.

BECKY
Sorry, I shouldn't be so nosey.

JACOB
No, that's okay.

BECKY
It's none of my business.

JACOB
Really. It's okay... There was
someone. Long ago. But-

Suddenly the power comes back on, surprising them both. It
breaks the cosiness of only moments before.

BECKY
There we go.

JACOB
There we go.

Pause.

BECKY
It's shame. I was starting to
quite like the candlelight.

He smiles awkwardly, unsure what to say.

JACOB
Would you like some more wine?

BECKY
I should probably be getting
back. Make sure every thing's
come back on okay.

JACOB
(Disappointed)
That's probably a good idea.

FRONT DOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Jacob opens the door, stands aside.

BECKY
Thank you for putting up with me.
I know how stupid it must look.

JACOB
No, not at all.

BECKY

Well... I'll try not to make a habit of imposing on you like this.

JACOB

I... It wasn't a problem.

BECKY

A grown woman, scared of the dark...

JACOB

I don't mind.

Becky heads out past him. Pauses on the doorstep. She goes to say something and then thinks better of it.

BECKY

Bye then.

JACOB

Bye.

She walks off. Jacob watches her for a moment then softly shuts the door.

KITCHEN

He puts the glasses into the sink, starts to run the tap.

LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

He blows out and collects up the candles.

KITCHEN - SHORTLY AFTER

Finishes drying off the washing-up. Stacks the glasses and plates neatly back in the cupboards.

The house is eerily still once again.

The cat walks in. Jacob crouches down.

JACOB

What do you think? I know... stupid, huh? Guess it's just you and me again.

LIVING ROOM

He slumps dejectedly on the sofa.

With nothing else to do he leans forward and checks the DVD player. He presses play.

The film starts.

THE END