

MRS. ROSZAK

Written by

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EXT. TRAILER PARK - DAY

BLACK SLITS CUT ACROSS GREEN.

A Calico's eyes follow the motion of a rusted pickup as it pulls around to the dirt driveway of a rickety trailer.

The engine POPS then CUTS DEAD, causing the Calico to leap down from its perch out of frame.

The driver sits for a moment. His name is ROBERT (40s). A grizzled family man. Honest worker. Never bought a name brand cereal in his life.

He eyes a bucket of cleaning supplies in the passenger seat. A clothespin rests atop the pile of sponges and detergents.

He decides against the bucket, exiting the truck empty-handed. His work boots kick up dirt before he ascends the couple steps to the front door and --

KNOCK. KNOCK.

A few seconds of quiet. Muffled RUSTLES and FOOTFALLS inside.

A face presses up against the front window. Weary glass renders the features distorted, blurred.

LIZ(O.S.)
Whadja want?

ROBERT
I gotta talk to you, Liz.

The blur recedes from the glass. Front door creaks open a few inches. Standing in the dark crack is LIZ (70s). Eyes sunken and skin loose. Grey hair frazzles down round the collar of her nightgown.

LIZ
'Bout?

ROBERT
People been complaining. 'Bout the condition of your home here.

She peers over his shoulder at his pickup.

LIZ
And?

ROBERT
People been complaining that you're not doing your neighborly upkeep.

Liz narrows her eyes.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
That it smells.

She opens the door wide.

LIZ
Yeah? Who said?

Robert's heel presses back involuntarily, but he catches himself. Powers through the stench.

ROBERT
Not obliged to divulge that.

LIZ
Joseph said that? Or that whore,
Alice?

ROBERT
Wasn't Alice.

LIZ
That fucking whore.
(Projecting loud)
She sneakin' around here with other
men but I don't say nothin'.

ROBERT
Just tell me you'll clean up--

She presses her finger into his shoulder.

LIZ
You're with 'em. You think I'm
crazy.

ROBERT
Never said that.

LIZ
I ain't cleanin'. Not hurting
nobody. Mindin' my business.

ROBERT
Gotta look after the feelings of
the whole park here, not just you.
Tell me you'll address the smell
and I can get out of your hair.

LIZ
Nothin' to fix. Liars lookin' for
trouble. All it is.

ROBERT

Else, I'm going to have to call the big guys and they're going to come and kick you out again.

LIZ

Don't call 'em, Robert. I don't like 'em. They rearrange my furniture.

ROBERT

Just telling you the facts. You're in control here, Liz.

LIZ

I ain't in control cause there ain't no smell. If these complainers of yours can smell it so good, why don't they come in and clean it? Matter of fact, why don't you?

ROBERT

Alright if you'll just --

LIZ

And that's Mrs. Roszak to you.

Liz slams the door, but Robert jams his boot in the frame.

ROBERT

Can I come in?

INT. LIZ'S TRAILER - MOMENTS LATER

The rough side of a sponge SCRUBS a yellow stain in the carpet. Urine. It's stubborn. Barely fades.

Robert rises. A clothespin pinches the bridge of his nose. He looks about the state of the bedroom.

Wallpaper peels off the walls. Furniture shoves to the periphery. An air of decay suffocates everything.

THE TEAR OF FAILING ADHESIVE.

A ceiling panel caves in. Amber goo seeps down. Robert watches as a bead coalesces and drops onto his cheek.

Liz hands him a dirty rag. He opts to wipe the goo with the back of his hand.

LIZ
Ain't crazy.

ROBERT
I know it.

LIZ
You tell some of 'em out there
then. Make 'em believe it.

ROBERT
You haven't talked to any of 'em in
a while, Liz. Trust me, they aren't
talking 'bout you.

Robert comes to a curtain partition. He passes through,
entering THE DEN

A polar opposite to the main bedroom. It's neat. Tidy. Almost
inviting. Facing the television set rests a puffy armchair,
fit for a creature thrice Liz's size.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Cats not allowed in here?

LIZ
Naw. Me neither. This is Bud's den.

Robert fiddles with his sponge.

ROBERT
We gotta barbecue scheduled next
Thursday.

LIZ
Don't eat meat. Don't like people
who do.

He drops into the BATHROOM. Similarly clean. Rifles through
the medicine cabinet and other drawers, searching for
something.

ROBERT
Well maybe you could stop in to
chat for a little bit.

LIZ
(shaking her head)
Nope, nope, nope, nope. No time.

ROBERT
Where's your soap, Liz?

LIZ
Don't got none. Hadn't got no time
to make it to the store.

Robert emerges from the bathroom.

ROBERT
You don't have soap?

LIZ
You done yet?

Robert drops the sponge in the tub. Shakes his head.

ROBERT
You got serious mildew problems
and... urine buildup all throughout
the carpet. Think it's seeped down
into the exterior layer of the
trailer. Mind if I take a look?

He crosses back through the curtain and into the KITCHEN.

LIZ
No need. Can handle it myself.

ROBERT
I'm already here. Need to know what
we're dealing with.

He peeks into a few cabinets. Only finds canned beans and
half a dozen heaving bags of cat food.

LIZ
You think I can't handle myself
what with Bud gone. I can handle
myself just fine.

ROBERT
And you got all this cat food.

LIZ
They ain't going hungry. I promised
'em that.

ROBERT
Always thought you'd make a good
mom. Where the critters at, anyhow?
That striped one, Leo?

LIZ
They're indoor outdoor. Could be
anywhere.

ROBERT

Hiding cause they know they done something wrong. My boy's the same way. I'ma go out and check the foundation.

LIZ

Robert, you don't hafta --

He chews on a flashlight and exits into --

EXT. TRAILER PARK - CONTINUOUS

Liz follows him out through the door. Robert crouches in the dirt, then lays on his back. He shimmies shoulder to shoulder underneath the trailer - removing the clothespin pinching his nose to fit. Holds his breath.

LIZ

It's no trouble, Robert. Really.

ROBERT

That's why I'm doing it. Never did like trouble.

He feels around for the bottom panel, props it up, and pushes it aside.

LIZ

Robert. Robert, I gotta do it. There's stuff down there -- there's stuff that's very personal. I'on want you to see.

He shines his light, illuminating plumbing pipes and other trailer innards. All tainted a pale yellow. His light catches on a glint of plastic. Within arm's distance. He reaches his hand out for it. Fingers clench around the CRINKLING mass.

ROBERT

Never considered myself much'a judge of character. God knows I got no pedestal to stand on. Anything you got, I can assure you...

He yanks the plastic down. It's a trash bag labeled **Leo**. Flies BUZZ. A rotting ear peeks out through the top.

His brow furrows. He shines his flashlight up at the cavity. Dozens of trash bags all press up against each other. All labeled with various cat names.

SOMETHING TUGS. GIVES.

An avalanche of plastic bags and colored goo breaks free and tumbles down, smothering Robert.

He shimmies out from under the trailer and rises, skin coated in red goo and yellow pus. He brings a hand up to wipe his eyes. Glares daggers at Liz.

LIZ
I'm not crazy.

ROBERT
How many cats you have, Liz?

LIZ
I'm not crazy, Robert.

ROBERT
You even got any?

LIZ
I do. I do.

ROBERT
Not in a fucking ziploc?

LIZ
I got one.

Her voice lowers. Long pauses. Hard to get the words out.

LIZ (CONT'D)
'Bout one anyhow. Dumb Calico started comin' round same time Bud left. They all started dying when he left. Started gettin' sick or something but I couldn't... I didn't know what to... This Calico kept comin' back and he saw 'em all off. Felt like they could die when he came round. I'on know what I done but they never felt comfortable with me after Bud left. I'ma bury 'em, just hadn't any time. Dumb cat ain't been back for 'bout a month now. Ain't nothin' left.

Robert's face drops.

LIZ (CONT'D)
I'on know what I done wrong, Robert.

(MORE)

LIZ (CONT'D)

I'on know what I done wrong. But I gotta be here. I told 'em I would so that's what I'm doin'.

ROBERT

When's the last time you left the park, Liz?

She can't face him. Eyes rest in the dirt.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

He don't want this for you.

LIZ

You'd happen to know that?

ROBERT

I happen to think I do.

LIZ

You spoken to him recently, huh? I know what he said. He's coming back.

ROBERT

Yeah and you gonna take him? Way he's made you wait? That the kinda man you deserve? I been waiting to tell you till you were good and ready but I guess I been waiting too long. Bud ain't never cared 'bout no one but himself. Much less one'a your cats. I thought you'da seen that when he walked out. He wasn't keeping them alive. Sure as hell wasn't keeping you alive.

Robert crosses over to his truck. Grabs a Baby Wipe from the glove compartment. He catches his reflection in the sideview mirror.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Good lord.

He CHUCKLES, wiping himself down.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Good lord, look at me.

INT. LIZ'S TRAILER - DAY

Robert props the armchair back up against the kitchen sink. Pulls the side lever, reclining the top section down near the faucet.

Liz slouches back in the chair, hair spreading thin against the white porcelain.

Robert cranks the faucet alive, drenching her hair. He squirts a healthy dollop of shampoo into his hand. Rubs the foam together. And runs his hands through her hair.

He does this for a long while without the two exchanging a word.

LIZ

This part of the park's too quiet.
Since Celine passed. What's that
make? Three months now?

Robert nods.

ROBERT

Joseph's a good man.

LIZ

(coy)
I'on know 'bout that.

A long pause. He runs her hair under the faucet. Soap and bubbles ebb down the drain.

LIZ (CONT'D)

He usually go to those barbecues?

ROBERT

Time and again, he does. I could
ask.

He grabs a towel. Dries her off.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Matter of fact, think it might be
in my overseeing duties.

LIZ

That fine print'll get ya.

A CHUCKLE. A pause.

LIZ (CONT'D)

Yea. Yea, I think that'd be
alright.

