

AFTER THE DAY I'VE HAD, DEATH WOULD BE A BLESSING

by
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Cast of Characters

Mallory British, late 20s-30s, female, neglected girlfriend, British accent

Dennis American serial killer in large British city, mid 40s, no accent

Setting

Mallory's living room in a large British city.

Time

Current day, early evening.

ACT I
Scene 1

SETTING: Mallory's living room. Basic stuff – couch, chairs, coffee table. Exit to front door, kitchen, and hallway.

AT RISE: Dennis is dressed head-to-toe in black and has a ski mask on. He is holding a large butcher knife and looking between perceived curtains out perceived window, awaiting Mallory's arrival.

DENNIS

(Checks his watch.)

(to himself) She's late.

(Resumes looking out perceived window for a moment. Then reacts to MALLORY'S outside arrival.)

Finally.

(DENNIS tucks his knife inside of his jacket moves to the wall next to the front entry. He wants MALLORY to see him and react with fear. MALLORY, dressed in a business skirt, shirt, and heels but is very tattered...torn pantyhose, one broken heel, hair a mess, etc..., laden with two bags of groceries, a bunch of dry-cleaning, keys, purse, and a computer bag enters front door. She is very harried looking. During the following dialogue, she moves through the room, drops her purse and keys on the table, heads toward the kitchen exit, totally not seeing DENNIS.)

MALLORY (sarcastic)

(ranting to herself) Can't even stop at the supermarket. Oh no. You have to meet your mates at the pub! Like I really have the energy to go shopping after the day I've had! So please, by all means, I'll buy it! I'll cook it! And after you come home from the pub, completely pissed, you'll eat it and I'll end up cleaning up after you while you fall asleep watching the telly!

(MALLORY exits to kitchen. DENNIS is amazed/frustrated MALLORY did not see him and he repositions himself, so she will. However, during the following dialogue MALLORY enters from kitchen without grocery bags but with dry-cleaning which she drapes over the couch still totally not seeing DENNIS.)

MALLORY (Cont.)

-pickup your own bloody dry cleaning. Oh no. Heaven forbid you actually lift a finger! What the hell else would I want to do with all my free time? Better check the post.

(MALLORY exits front door. DENNIS is amazed/frustrated MALLORY did not see him and he repositions himself, so she will. However, during the following dialogue MALLORY still is so preoccupied she does not see DENNIS. MALLORY enters front door looking through a stack of mail and magazines. During the following dialogue, she walks toward the kitchen exit.)

MALLORY (Cont.)

Bill. Bill. Junk. Past due?!? Fantastic! Arse forgot to pay the electric. Ugg...Bill. Junk. Bill. Seriously Lawrence? GQ? What a wanker.

(MALLORY exits to Kitchen. DENNIS is very frustrated he's still not caught MALLORY'S eye. He positions himself in the middle of the room. MALLORY enters from kitchen with an open bottle of wine and a glass. She is pouring the wine as she walks and is still oblivious to DENNIS.)

MALLORY (Cont.)

God I'm knackered. I deserve two glasses tonight.

(Puts wine bottle on table, sits on chair and is about to take a sip of wine when she sees DENNIS but has no physical reaction at all.)

What's this then?

DENNIS

Hello.

MALLORY

Sorry. Do I know you? Friend of Lawrence? Or are you here to steal the silver? Sorry to disappoint but-

(DENNIS brandishes his knife.)

MALLORY (annoyed)

Are you kidding me? This is perfect. Just perfect.

DENNIS

You see this knife?

MALLORY

Yes. (pause) And?

DENNIS

And?

MALLORY

And what? (pause) You want to scream hysterically?

DENNIS

What? No. Um...I mean...Don't scream or I'll slit your throat.

MALLORY

Of course. This is just perfect.

(DENNIS takes the wine glass out of MALLORY'S hand.)

MALLORY (Cont.)

Wait, wait! I didn't even get a sip yet.

(DENNIS puts the glass on the table and, during the following dialogue, he proceeds to tie MALLORY'S hands and feet to the chair. MALLORY looks on with mild interest and keeps talking.)

MALLORY

You couldn't have waited until after I had a glass of wine?

DENNIS

Shut up.

MALLORY

What are you, some kind of serial killer?

DENNIS

I said shut up or I'll kill you!

MALLORY

And you're American! What...not enough potential murder victims in the states?

DENNIS

Will you please shut up!

MALLORY

Oh my God. Are you the fellow on the telly? The one they're calling the Hackney Hacker?

DENNIS

I don't believe in labels.

MALLORY

Hackney is miles away. What are you doing here?

DENNIS

(Finishes tying MALLORY to chair.)

You talk too much.

MALLORY

You're him, aren't you? (pause) They'll have to rename you then. Doesn't make much sense to have the Hackney Hacker hacking outside of Hackney, don't you think?

(DENNIS stares at MALLORY and again brandishes his knife.)

MALLORY (matter-of-fact)

(pause) Right. (pause) Go ahead then.

(Throws her head back, exposing her neck.)

MALLORY (Cont.)

(head still back) Cut away.

(DENNIS approaches but hesitates.)

MALLORY (Cont.)

(head still back) Come on then. (pause) What are you waiting for?

DENNIS

This is not a game. Are you ready to die?

MALLORY

(head still back) I'll get a crick in my neck!

DENNIS

I really am going to kill you.

MALLORY

(head still back) So you keep saying. Stop fannying around and get on with it then!

DENNIS

You really should be afraid, you know.

MALLORY

(Brings her head back to normal.)

Are you kidding? After the day I've had? Death would be a blessing. (long pause) So, go ahead.

(MALLORY throws her head back again, exposing her neck. DENNIS approaches with knife, holds it to MALLORY'S neck, but can't follow through and withdraws.)

MALLORY (Cont.)

(Brings her head back to normal.)

What. What is it?

DENNIS (frustrated)

I don't know.

MALLORY

I think I know.

DENNIS (sarcastic)

I'm sure you'll want to enlighten me.

MALLORY

It's like in the detective programs about the minds of psychopaths. No offense.

DENNIS

None taken.

MALLORY

Perhaps you're one of those types that needs your victims to be afraid. (pause) I know! Why don't you try jumping out at me. That might work.

DENNIS

You think?

MALLORY

Couldn't hurt to try.

DENNIS

Alright.

(DENNIS moves outside of line of vision and then, making a growling noise, jumps out at MALLORY with knife. MALLORY does not react.)

DENNIS (Cont.)

Nothing?

MALLORY

No. Sorry.

DENNIS

Was the growl too much?

MALLORY

No! It was a nice growl. (pause) Well...it was a little too...what's the word?

DENNIS

Inauthentic?

MALLORY

Exactly.

DENNIS

Well, I knew you'd be expecting me to jump out, so I thought I'd add an element of surprise.

MALLORY

Makes sense. (pause) I've got it! What if you jump out without the mask? That might do it.

DENNIS

But then you could identify me.

MALLORY

Does it really matter, what with you eventually killing me and all?

DENNIS

Right. Right.

MALLORY

Let's give it a whirl.

(DENNIS moves outside of line of vision, removes his mask, and then, making a growling noise, jumps out at MALLORY with knife. MALLORY does not react.)

DENNIS

Nothing?

MALLORY

I thought we decided not to go with the growl.

DENNIS

I just thought that between the jumping, the growl, and my face...But I can try it again without the growl.

MALLORY

I don't think it's going to work now that I've already seen your face. By the way, you're very attractive.

DENNIS

You think? I've always thought my nose could be smaller.

MALLORY

No. I think your nose is in perfect proportion to the rest of your face.

DENNIS

Thanks. Sorry about the growl. It was dumb.

MALLORY

No. It's not your fault. I think I'm just wound up from my day. Why don't you let me have a glass of wine and perhaps I'll mellow up enough to be afraid, you know, so you can kill me. (pause) What do you say?

DENNIS

Alright.

(DENNIS unties MALLORY'S hands and gives her the already full glass of wine and she chugs half of it quickly.)

MALLORY

Oh my God. Thank you. This is just what I needed.

MALLORY (Cont.)

(Finishes the glass of wine.)

I could use one more. Oh! Where are my manners? Would you care for one? Glasses are in the kitchen.

(DENNIS exits to kitchen as MALLORY starts to pour herself another glass of wine.)

DENNIS

(OS) Where?

MALLORY (shouting)

In the cupboard! (long pause) Above the sink!

(DENNIS returns with wine glass.)

I usually don't drink on the job but-

MALLORY

On the job? Wait...are you a hitman? Did Lawrence put you up to this?

DENNIS

No, no. Just an expression. I assure you...I'm no (with distain) hitman.

(DENNIS holds his glass out to MALLORY who fills while speaking. They both sip on their wine during dialogue.)

MALLORY

Well thank goodness for that. If anyone deserves killing, it's Lawrence, not me!

DENNIS

And who's Lawrence? Your husband?

MALLORY

Hardly. Live in boyfriend. He's married to his job. And his mates. He could give a squat about me.

DENNIS

I'm sure that can't be true. A beautiful, intelligent, articulate woman like you.

MALLORY

You flatter me. But it's true. For instance, I called and told him I'd had a really horrible day. You know what he had the nerve to say? Would hurt my feelings if he still went out with his mates.

DENNIS

Unbelievable! Go on.

MALLORY

And what am I supposed to say to that? Men are such idiots. No offense.

DENNIS

None taken. So, he wasn't sympathetic at all?

MALLORY

Oh, he said he loved me and that he'd hear about my horrible day later. Bollocks he will!

DENNIS

Sounds like a real asshole. (long pause) Well, why don't you tell me?

MALLORY

Tell you what?

DENNIS

About your terrible day.

MALLORY

Really? You have time?

DENNIS

He's out with his friends so I expect we have a bit of time.

MALLORY

Right then. (pause) Well, first off, I ironed my clothes and set them out in the bathroom last night. Lawrence used my shirt to wipe down the mirror after his shower. Said he thought it was a towel. I had to iron another shirt which made me late for the tube which made me late for my first meeting at work and it just so happens that head of our department chose this morning of all mornings to sit in on the meeting, so there goes my promotion.

DENNIS

Sounds terrible. Is there more?

MALLORY

So much more. I had a lunch meeting with a potential client and on the way my heel got caught a grate and I fell in some rubbish and tore my tights. See here.

(Indicates her leg with the torn tights.)

DENNIS

Yes. I noticed that when I was tying you up.

MALLORY

Right. Well of course I was late to my lunch meeting and arrived a sight...not to mention the smell from the rubbish. Needless to say, I didn't sign the account. Plus, my meal was crap. I ordered vegetarian and they served it with chicken. I unwittingly ate chicken. I haven't eaten meat in 12 years. Until today.

DENNIS

Really terrible. Is there more?

MALLORY

Oh yes.

DENNIS

Great!

MALLORY

Pardon?

DENNIS

I mean it's great that you're able to get all this out. Talk about it, you know?

MALLORY

Quite right. Let's see...Oh yes...My desk mate wants to play footsie with me, my computer crashed three times, Mum's coming for week-long visit and I've not yet told her about Lawrence having moved in. She hates Lawrence. Oh, and everything my freezer defrosted because Lawrence unplugged it to plug in his charger.

DENNIS

Wow.

MALLORY

And my dog ate my favorite lipstick.

DENNIS (nervous)

(Looks around worried about there being a dog.)

You have a dog?

MALLORY

Oh yea...and my dog's missing. Lawrence left her out to do her business this morning and forgot to let her back in. I've had her for 8 years.

DENNIS

No wonder you needed two glasses of wine.

MALLORY

Exactly. And, if I'm being honest, I'm pretty sure Lawrence is not with his mates. I think he's having an affair. (long pause) Wow! It feels good to get all that off my chest! (long pause) But you know, I'll bet whatever happened to you...you know, to make you a serial killer, must be much worse. I kind of feel like I shouldn't be complaining.

DENNIS

No, no. I'm so glad I could be here for you. However, full disclosure, I should tell you that there are two things that, well, get my engine revving, so to speak.

MALLORY

Oh, yes?

DENNIS

Yes...Fear is one, as you brilliantly pointed out.

MALLORY

And the other?

DENNIS

Complaining!

(DENNIS stands and brandishes his knife while MALLORY, finally afraid, raises her arms up, shielding her face.)

END