

THE LAUGHING FISHERMAN

written by

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(C)

A Horror Short

FADE IN:

EXT. THE LAUGHING FISHERMAN P.H - NIGHT

PUB SIGNAGE: Shows a FISHERMAN dressed in a black sou'wester hat and waterproof cape. He carries a huge grin upon his large face. His fishing rod secured to a stall, his float in the river.

CHALK BOARD: **Halloween Party 31st October - LIVE MUSIC - PARADOXUS.**

The huge thatched eighteenth century drinking house lies on the banks of the river.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Goth MARINA (20) Her mascara smudged. She is dressed in just her panties runs for dear life. She is chased by an undefined FIGURE who clutches an axe.

CU: The epitome of fear upon her pasty face.

BACK TO SCENE

Her foot catches a discarded LOG. She stumbles and rolls down a slippery gulley towards a RAVINE where she lies unconscious beneath a thick RIVER BUSH.

SUPER: EARLIER THAT NIGHT.

INT. THE LAUGHING FISHERMAN P.H - NIGHT

Leather clad PARADOXUS rock the stage with their electric guitars. Their fans go wild to the music.

Spaced out Marina makes her presence felt in front of the stage. Her black sequinned dress reveals her shapely figure.

POV: Colourful flashing lights beneath wooden beams that form part of the roof.

ON STAGE:

Long haired, leather clad vocalist IZZY STRANGE (22) pulls her up as he belts out the lyrics and gyrates his hips.

INT. LIMO - NIGHT

Izzy Strange bundles Marina in to the back. They are quickly joined by the rest of the group - SHADOW, WOLF, ANT, and STRIKE. All wear Goth make-up and are in their (late 20's).

IZZY STRANGE

(pants)

Phew! That was awesome, wasn't it, guy's?

WOLF

Yeah. Tops, bro.

STRIKE

Did you see the eyes on the dude in the fisherman's hat?

ANT

Luminous yellow.

STRIKE

They must've been contacts.

ANT

He looked cool.

Marina looks at him and grins.

MARINA

(London accent)

Where are we going?

Izzy Strange gives her a gentle squeeze.

IZZY STRANGE

To the cottage, luv.

(wipes forehead)

So, what's your name?

MARINA

Marina.

ANT

Pleased to meet you, Marina.

MARINA

Me too.

ANT

Your name has got a certain ring to it.

IZZY STRANGE

How old are you, luv?

MARINA

(coyly)

Old enough.

IZZY STRANGE

Not jail bait, then.

MARINA

Twenty isn't jail bait.

IZZY STRANGE

Did you come on your own?

MARINA

No. I got separated from my friends.

IZZY STRANGE

You can crash with me tonight, then.

MARINA

Just as long as I get home in the morning.

ANT

(interjects)

No chance, sweetheart. Your feet won't touch the ground for the next two days, I guarantee it.

IZZY STRANGE

(to Ant)

Neither will yours if you don't shut up, soft boy.

SHADOW

Ah, take no notice of him, babe. He's a fuckin' door knob.

STRIKE

No he isn't. a door knob is useful.

ANT

(gives the finger)

Yeah, alright.

IZZY STRANGE

(to Wolf)

Oi! Back off, guy's!

STRIKE

(to Izzy)

Yeah.

He pulls out an ice bucket of beers from under his seat and lobs one to everyone.

RING PULLS.

STRIKE

(after a gulp)

Amber nectar.

SHADOW

(to Marina)

Listen luv... the darker you go with him, the more fulfilling it'll be, trust me.

IZZY STRANGE

(gulps)

What the fuck are you talking about?

ANT

It's not rocket science.

CUT TO:

EXT. 18TH CENTURY COUNTRY COTTAGE - NIGHT

The Limo pulls up outside, through the thick fog a sensor lamp, lightens up the entrance.

They pile out of the car and one by one enter the thatched cottage.

The Limo drives off.

INT. LOUNGE - NIGHT

Izzy Strange lights the wood burner. Marina lies on the cosy sofa.

Beat.

Strike enters with a handful of beers. He places them on the wooden coffee table and they each take one.

Marina and Izzy Strange snuggle up in front of the roaring fire. The others lounge about with a spliff and bottles of booze.

DOOR CHIME.

IZZY STRANGE

Answer that somebody.

SHADOW

(sighs)

I'll go.

Shadow gets to his feet and opens the door to a howling wind.

A PIZZA GUY of no particular age. His face covered with a scarf as he stands with six boxes of pizzas.

SHADOW

(obliviously)

Cheers dude.

PIZZA GUY

There's a rave going on at the barn tonight.

SHADOW

Is there?

PIZZA GUY

Yeah. I just delivered a shit load of pizzas. It's a Halloween party.

SHADOW

Cool. Thanks.

He closes the door in the Pizza Guy's face and marches back with the boxes.

SHADOW

I suppose you all heard that?

ANT

I know.

STRIKE

Where the fuck have you been,
dude? We planned to go over there
later.

WOLF

(sits up)
I'm starving, man.

ANT

Deprived of food.

STRIKE

Pass me one.

SHADOW

I'm going to, man. Just chillax.

They rip into the pizza's like rabid dogs, then begin to eat like savages. Marina looks on, shakes her head and chuckles.

Beat.

Marina and Izzy Strange continue to lie in front of the log fire and cosy up top one another as the rest of the Group are about to exit.

ANT

(to Izzy Strange)
Are you two coming?

IZZY STRANGE

No. Just go.

Ant is the last to close the door behind him as they exit.

MARINA

I don't mind waiting for you.

IZZY STRANGE

-Nah. C'mon, let's go upstairs
and watch Netflix.

She looks at him imploringly.

MARINA

You will call me a cab in the
morning, wontcha?

IZZY STRANGE

Of course. I'm not that sad, am
I?

MARINA

I hope not.

BACK TO:

EXT. WOODS - CONT'D

Torrential rain as Marina regains consciousness and opens her eyes.

With her wild hair soaking in water and her mascara washed away from her face, she looks up at the eeriness of the huge trees that protect her.

Beat.

She climbs to her feet then stumbles across to the other side of the ravine, before she takes shelter beneath a tree as she shivers from the coldness of the winter breeze.

Her POV: a FISHERMAN in a SOU'WESTER HAT and WATERPROOF CAPE.

BACK TO SCENE.

She attempts to cover herself as she approaches him with caution.

He sits like a statue and stares at his little blue FLOAT bobbing up and down in the river. She stands behind him and lightly taps him on the shoulder.

MARINA

(timidly)

Excuse me, sir.

Unflinched, he ignores her and continues to stare at his float.

MARINA /

Excuse me. I'm sorry to dist-

He turns his head THREE-SIXTY.

His eyes - huge BLACK HOLES filled with MAGGOTS. His mouth furnished with SHARP METAL SPIKES covered in BLOOD. His nose a stump of ROAR FLESH.

SHRILLING SCREAM!

Like a bat out of hell she scarpers back through the woods.

Uncontrollable laughter as the Fisherman gets to his feet and chases after her.

EARLIER CONT'D

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Marina lies next to the sleeping Izzy Strange.

EERIE CREAK.

She opens her big brown eyes and sits up as a DARK SHADOW appears beneath the door then passes.

She begins to tremble.

She turns to Izzy and gives him a shove.

MARINA

Wake up. Izzy wake up.

He doesn't flinch. She leans over him and pulls his head towards her.

Her POV: His EYES wide open and bloodied. His THROAT SLICED from ear to ear.

She gasps then screams.

MARINA

(panicked)

OHMYGOD! OHMYGOD! OHMYGOD!

She leaps out of bed in her panties, then runs towards the open window and looks down.

POV: A slate grey rooftop.

BACK TO SCENE.

She climbs out of the window and drops down onto the rooftop before she falls into the darkness of the fog then disappears into the woods.

BACK TO:

EXT. WOODS - CONT'D

She scrambles through the density of the forest and trips over a blood soaked body.

POV: ANT'S LIMBLESS CADAVER.

Her eyes bulge with terror as she attempts to scream, but her trauma mutes her sound as she falls back and crashes to the muddied earth - her eyes transfixed upon his tattooed TORSO.

Exacting courage she gets to her feet and looks away as she sheepishly turns his torso over to one side, then removes his studded leather gilet. Then huddles up to herself as she shelters from the fear.

CRACK!

She screams and stares up at the treetops.

SNAP!

The lifeless body of SHADOW swings directly in front of her. His gut torn open as the BLOOD drips from his ripped up cadaver like a leaking tap.

She gets to her feet and stands agape before she spots the Fisherman who appears through the trees. He swings his AXE as heads towards her.

She runs. He chases.

She fools him as she hides and pants with nervous exhaustion.

Her POV: A BARN.

BACK TO SCENE

She sprints towards the well-lit entrance.

INT. BARN - NIGHT

REVELLERS stand around drinking and smoking as she shuffles through the crowded hallway and towards-

LARGE KITCHEN

She grabs a bottled beer from out of a bucket filled with ice water then bites off the lid, before she slings it down her throat.

She's confronted by someone in fancy dress - A DRACULA. He shows his fangs as he playfully goes to bite her neck.

MARINA /
 (angrily)
 Oh fuck off you weirdo!

DRACULA
 (deflated)
 Who did you come as then - Sarah
 Conner?

She pushes him aside and exits.

LOUNGE.

Revellers in fancy dress dance to garage beats as they soak up the chilling party atmosphere.

She soon spots Strike and Wolf. they stand in the corner of the room and smoke a spliff as they chat.

She immediately joins them.

STRIKE
 (concerned)
 Hey! Where's Izzy?

MARINA
 Come. Quick. Come with me,
 please. You need to see
 something. C'mon.

WOLF
 Calm down, babe. What's going on?

MARINA
 Just come. I'll show you.

They sigh their reluctance but follow her.

EXT. BARN - NIGHT

She leads them back through the woods towards Shadow and Ant's cadavers.

WOLF
 Where are you taking us for fuck
 sake?

MARINA
 They're in the woods.

STRIKE

Who is?

WOLF

She's wearing his waistcoat.

MARINA

You'll find out soon enough.

STRIKE

Where's Izzy?

MARINA

Dead.

STRIKE

Dead! What'd ya mean, dead?

WOLF

Did you kill him?

MARINA

Not funny. I was chased through the woods by somebody swinging an axe.

WOLF

It was probably a prank.

MARINA

No! It was not a prank!

STRIKE

Show us where they are, then.

She takes them to the approximate area of the woods, but their cadavers have vanished.

MARINA

They were right here! Shadow fell from this tree, I'm not lying! It was like something outta Predator.

(strokes tree)

Ant was was right there by your feet. I trod on him.

WOLF

(To Strike)

They were behind us... larking about, weren't they?

STRIKE

I'll call the Feds.

MARINA

There's a maniac on the loose, I swear, I'm not lying. Look at me. I'm shaking.

WOLF

Yeah, yeah. Alright luv, we believe you.

STRIKE

Stick together.

He takes out his iPhone and presses three digits.

STRIKE /

(on phone)

Yeah. Police please...

WOLF

No. Wait. Stop. There isn't any bodies. How can we justify ringing them?

STRIKE

(hangs up)

So what's the alternative, then?

WOLF

We go back to the barn and bring out a search party.

STRIKE

You sure?

WOLF

C'mon. We still don't know if she's telling us the truth, do we?

MARINA

(angrily)

Oh my God! Look at me! I'm fucking terrified. I'm wearing his leather gilet. Look at the blood stains on it!

WOLF

OK.OK. I believe you. I believe you. Just stick together.

They walk back through the woods with caution and in close proximity of one another when they hear the rustle of leaves within the zone.

SNAP!

STRIKE
(panicked)

RUN!

They separate as they run off in different directions.

Strike screams as he is dragged by the hair and into the density of the woods.

MORE SCREAMS!

CU: Blood spatters as his arms and legs are ripped off and consumed by the Laughing Fisherman.

Beat.

Marina sobs as she hears those screams.

EXT. BARN - NIGHT

She sprints back towards the lights.

CUT TO:

INT. COTTAGE - NIGHT

Wolf enters and flies up the staircase towards-

BEDROOM.

He opens the door and steps inside, then pulls back the blood soaked quilt.

He gasps at the frightful sight of the Laughing Fisherman, who jumps up and slices his throat from ear to ear with a huge knife.

Wolf's blood spatter squirts like a spinning fountain as he continues to be de-limbed.

CUT TO:

INT. BARN - NIGHT

Marina is violently shoved from PERSON to PERSON who don FISH MASKS.

INT. THE LAUGHING FISHERMAN P.H - DAY

BEDROOM.

The birds tweet as Marina looks up at the ceiling while she lies flat out on a bed. She wears a clean nighty and her hair has been brushed.

Her forty year old MOTHER and FATHER enter the room and gaze down at her with a sympathetic smile.

She looks at them questionably, then slides herself up against the pillows.

MARINA

Mum. Dad. Where am I?

MOTHER

You're at the Laughing Fisherman.

POV: A portrait hangs on the wall of the Laughing Fisherman. He stares at his float in the river.

DAD

You passed out last night. The landlady kindly let you stay here. She called us to come and get you.

MOTHER

She's even cooked us some breakfast.

MARINA

(confused)

But- but why?

FATHER

She said it was something you must have taken.

MOTHER

A pill, she said.

Marina looks across at the portrait of the laughing Fisherman. His head spins 360 to look at her.

She screams as her parents attempt to control her fear.

LAUGHING FISHERMAN VO

Hahahaaaa...! Haha...!

Haaahaa...!

CU: The demonic face of the Laughing Fisherman.

DISSOLVE:

THE END