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# The Presence

By Tom Provost

Would you like to come in for  
a cup of coffee or something?  
I can't, dear.  
The Missus is alone in the store.  
I should get back by sundown anyways.  
All right, well, I do so appreciate your coming so soon.  
Are you sure you're okay out here?  
Not gettin' too lonely?  
Oh! No, no. I needed this...you can't imagine.  
'cause it'd scare me a little bit.  
Oh, no, honestly, I'll be fine.  
It's kinda creepy.  
I'll be fine.  
All right, then.  
I brought you a coupla fresh chickens.  
They oughta roast up right  
nice in that old stove of yours.  
Just keep 'em in the shed  
out back 'til you're ready.  
Weather like this,  
works like a refrigerator.  
Thank you very much, it's very sweet.  
Hello, is Mr. Browman there, please.  
Do you know when he'll be back?  
What?  
Yeah... yeah.  
No, no, no, there's no need for you to do that.  
No thank you, that's fine.  
You...it's...don't trouble yourself.  
I think there's a storm coming anyway.  
No, no, just tell Mr. Browman  
I was just checking in. Okay? Thank you.  
It's okay. It's okay.  
Hi. It's me.  
Tony.  
Oh, hey. Nice  
I thought you might be angry.  
Okay. Let me get my bag,  
it's gonna get soaked.  
How did you get here?  
The old man, what's his name? Browman?  
Poor guy, it's gonna be a wet trip gettin' back.  
He said the same thing happened  
when he brought you over, huh?

- That's kinda weird.

- Yeah.

So, this is the place. this is the place where you spent your summers as a kid, huh?

- Nice.

- I always liked it...

Yeah, I like it, too.

I think.

Wanna show me around?

That's pretty cool.

Oh, that's an old Victrola, nothing special.

Well, wait, don't you wanna listen to it sometime?

- Why don't we get you unpacked.

- Whoa! Slow down, slow down...it's okay.

Show me around first, we can unpack later.

You okay?

Come here.

Oh, my god.

I missed you.

Yeah, it's true, I did.

You know what else?

Okay.

So...

Living room?

Come here, you!

How many people would come out here at one time?

Gosh! Sometimes as many as 20,

but, we'd sleep anywhere,

and in the summertime we'd like to sleep outside.

Oh, yeah, I'll bet.

And this is the master suite.

Do I get to stay in here, too?

Where should I put my stuff?

Anywhere. The closet...the chest of drawers.

Just make yourself at home.

Thanks.

So...what did you do when you came out here?

Gosh, we'd play and play.

I used to love this game where

I was the fairy queen.

and I had all these magical powers

but chief among them was the ability to

disappear and make other people disappear.

Came in very handy  
when we were playing hide and seek  
because everyone thought  
I had actually disappeared  
when I just happened to have  
the best hiding place on the entire island.  
- I'll show it to you sometime, if you want.  
- Yeah! I wanna see it.  
Look what I brought.  
- You remembered!  
- I did!  
- Should we have this tonight?  
- Ah huh.  
- Thanks.  
- Sure.  
- Look, is that your grandparents?  
- Yeah.  
She's beautiful.  
-Yeah. She meant the world to me.  
-I know.  
Your grandfather was the one  
who bought this place, right?  
Yeah, but he only bought it  
because she wanted him to.  
He hardly ever came out here. I think...  
I think it made it easier on him.  
You never really talk about him.  
No need. He wasn't a good guy.  
Like your dad?  
Sort of.  
I mean, he was laid out!  
I guess with a raise and  
a move, he deserved it.  
But it was a really good party.  
I wish you'd been there.  
I needed to be here.  
It was important.  
-I know, yeah, I didn't...  
I didn't mean it like that. I just...  
I just like having you around.  
I guess I'm greedy about it.  
Well, you'll get a lot of me around here.  
Yeah. Well, that's a good thing.  
Very good.

I hope it's okay that I came.

You awake?

Baby?

What? What's wrong? What is it?

I gotta go to the bathroom.

- I told you to go before we went to bed, young man.

- Yeah, but I didn't have to go then.

All right. Hang on a second.

All right. There you go

What do you mean?

-That's all you need. You're on your own, big guy.

-Huh?

Just go pee off the porch. Take it.

That's not what I gotta do.

All right, just go down the stairs,

go through the kitchen,

out the back, and follow the path.

It's not very far.

You're not gonna walk me out there?

All right.

Oh, Honey, just make sure that you use one

of the sticks by the door to get rid of the spiders in the seat.

You gotta be kidding me.

Shit.

Hey. How'd it go? Okay?

We played all day long. Hide and seek,

ghost in the graveyard, whatever. They never found me.

So, I get to see the secret place?

Et voila.

-You crawled down there?

-Yeah. All the time.

Sometimes not even when we were playing.

It was just a great place to be alone.

-Weren't you scared?

-No.

It was really cool down there in the summer,

and when I was down there, I could hear Grandma

moving around the kitchen,

making her food and talking to people.

It felt safe.

Hey!

What about your visit to the outhouse?

Were you scared?

Come on, you've seen that place.

Uh, huh! That's why I don't  
go there in the dark.

Wouldn't have been so bad,  
except for all the banging.

- Banging?

- Yeah, when I was inside.

Just the branches banging  
against the walls in the wind.

Come on, let's take that walk.

Wow!

Another one of my secret places.

Yeah. Yeah, it's really beautiful.

I've always loved it here.

You're really beautiful.

The last three years with you  
have been the best of my life.

I know you have your doubts,

I understand why,

but I want you to know, I don't have any.

I wanna spend my life with you.

I wanna start a family...with you.

I can't think of a better place  
than here

for this...

Will you marry me?

I'm not like those men in your family.

I know sometimes it's hard for you  
to believe that, but I'm a good man.

Not perfect in any way, but I'm good.

You can trust me.

You can have faith in me.

Just think about it.

I'm here...

Hold on! Come on!

Grab my jacket!

You've got it. You've got it.

Yeah, that's it.

You really are a mountain woman.

- Are you okay?

- Uh-huh.

Are you okay?

I love you.

Yeah?

Yeah!

That's nice to hear.

- You know what?

- What?

Yes.

- Yeah?

- Yeah!

You think anybody in your family  
ever made love out here?

- I think we'll be the first.

- Yeah?

- What?

- Oh, my God.

- What, what, what, what?

- Oh, no, no, no...

What is it?

The ring, the ring.

Oh, shit...

I had it, I had it.

I had it in my hand...

but then you fell and

I tried to help you and

All right. All right.

All right, let's keep...

Let's look around, we'll find it.

- I'm so sorry.

- I know, I know.

Nobody's fault.

Besides, you were saving my life, right?

Yeah.

Hey, if that's what it takes

to get you to say yes...

- It's still a yes, right?

- Right.

I'm sorry.

Honey?

Hon?

Oh, my gosh. It's freezing out here.

I'm fine.

How come you didn't wake me up?

'Cause I thought you needed sleep.

We gonna eat?

I think Im gonna keep working.

Okay, can you help me light the stove, then?

I've never done that before.

If you wanna be here,  
you have to take care of yourself.

It's not that hard.

I'll do it.

- Hey, thanks.

- Sure.

- It's a peace offering.

- For?

- I'm sorry about last night.

- No, it's okay.

Maybe I should go back. I can leave  
when the old man comes out again.

- No.

- No?

No, I'm glad you're here.

Me, too.

- Here.

- Thanks for helping.

Yeah. Well, I always said

I'd make a good wife.

I'll tell you what...

I'm gonna get out of here. I'm gonna go  
explore the island, leave you to your work.

Thanks.

And then I'll come back and cook dinner.

We'll see how well that I do.

What?

You know I can cook,

And we'll see if that stove gets the best  
of me, but, you know...

- You want me to come help you light it?

- No, no, no, no, no. I've seen you do it,  
I can figure it out.

- You do your work.

- Yeah.

- All right, have fun.

- Yep.

- Hey! Cute!

- Yeah

You having a good day?

Yeah, I'm having a little trouble  
getting focused. It'll come. How about you?

Yeah, I did. I took the world's longest hike.

This island's a lot bigger than I thought.



Well, I'm gonna start dinner.  
Be ready to eat in five hours.

- That sounds perfect.  
- All right.  
- All right.  
- Bye.  
- Thanks for the flowers.  
- You're welcome.

Dinner is served!  
Come on, let's go.  
Enough work for today.  
I made spaghetti.  
I think it's pretty good.  
I'm going to keep working...  
I'm finally on a roll.  
Uh-huh! Heh-heh.

But you...  
I have work,  
that's why I came.  
Right. I just thought we would...  
It's not fair of you to keep asking me  
to spend time with you  
when I didn't even want you here.  
Honey..  
what happened?  
- I don't...  
- Don't!  
Yes, that's right. Don't!  
Don't do anything.  
Just leave me be.  
Want some coffee?  
I did all right for my virgin try.  
Getting pretty good  
in there, actually.  
I gotta get started.  
See how easy it can be?  
It wouldn't take much, you know.  
She'd be all yours.  
Oh, I know you've thought about it.  
I've watched you.  
But then...  
what can you do?  
You know you can't.  
Why would you even try?

You can't do much of anything, really.  
Well, not right now.  
You could have many things.  
Pleasures that have been  
denied you a long time.  
An old vice, for instance,  
that can no longer  
do you harm.  
Escape...  
from this place.  
Surely, you haven't forgotten  
what it's like.  
Oh, I know it must seem  
like an eternity,  
But your eternity is  
only just beginning.  
Do you really want to  
spend it trapped here?  
Imagine...  
being anywhere you want.  
Anytime.  
Freedom.  
Or...  
would you rather spend it  
even in a different way?  
I can give you many things.  
I can give you everything..  
It's your choice.  
You can see it when you look in his eyes.  
I cannot warn you enough.  
He's going to torture you.  
You don't want that, do you?  
What makes you think  
he's not gonna do the same thing?  
He's gonna molest your children.  
You have to see that. You have to see that.  
You have to understand that she does not  
want any commitment at all.  
She can't handle that sort of thing.  
Easy.  
Just give me your hand  
and you'll be free.  
You only have to do one thing.  
And she can be all yours.

Think about it.  
You'll be no different  
than you are now.  
He may even take your place.  
You can't get something for nothing.  
You of all people should know that.  
Easy...  
It's okay.  
Trust me.  
Hey...  
So, you're just not talking to me now?  
First you say you'll marry me  
and now you act like  
you don't want anything to do with me.  
All right. All right.  
What do you want me to say?  
Oh...  
I don't know, I don't know.  
Something like,  
"Hey, gee, we're engaged."  
"Oh, my gosh, I'm so happy, I'm so glad  
I didn't waste three years of his life,  
"while I tried to decide  
if I was capable of being with somebody."  
Something like that.  
Would that be all right?  
Maybe for once you could, you could...  
- be happy about something?  
- Happy?  
Happy with you with you pushing me  
and needling me?  
"Why can't you be more this?"  
"Why can't you just let go?"  
I'm never gonna be good enough  
for you the way that I am,  
which is kind of broken,  
but you just wanna sweep everything under the rug,  
like nothing ever happened.  
just like they did when I was a kid!  
"Let's make everything perfect!"  
"You have to be perfect"  
Well, you know what? I'm not going to be.  
It's not going to be perfect, ever.  
All right, all right.

My fault. It's my fault.  
Always the guy's fault.  
Especially the one guy who  
always stays when you run  
even out here, in the middle of nowhere.  
Where I didn't even want you to come.  
This is my special place,  
and you won't even let me have that.  
You come here. You invade. You take over.  
You start following me around and...  
And don't look at me like that!  
You're trying to control me  
I know it. Just like he did.  
How can you say that?  
What have I ever done  
that you could compare me to your father?  
My mother didn't even know.  
She wouldn't know. She wouldn't see it.  
But I am not gonna sign up  
for a life like that.  
will not bring children...  
- into a world...  
-Stop it. Stop!  
Stop! Stop! Stop! Stop!  
Who are you?  
Calm down.  
Do you know how many people came  
to my father's funeral?  
Five hundred.  
Practically the whole goddamn town!  
And there they were. They were singing  
the praises of this good man.  
They had no idea  
what he had been doing to me.  
So, how can you know me?  
And how can I know you?  
You know me.  
You know me.  
Yeah, maybe I do. Maybe...  
Maybe finally I can see behind those calm...  
beautiful blue eyes and...  
and finally see you for...  
for who you really are.  
I'm done.

Done?

I'm done.

This was a mistake.

You shouldn't have come here.

All right, all right, I'll...

I'll leave as soon

as Mr. What's-His-Name comes back...

- and he can take me to the mainland.

- He won't come back for three days.

- I'll take the boat, then.

You can't take the boat. You're gonna get lost,  
and Im gonna have to come and save you.

What do you want me to do?

I want you to call Mr. Browman, take charge...

and call him and ask him to pick you up

and get off my goddamn island, now.!

All right.

All right.

Unbelievable!

Phone's dead.

You left it on.

I'm taking the boat.

Okay.

Okay, All right.

We're done.

We're...

Fuck...

I'm not like those men in your family.

I know sometimes it's hard for you  
to believe that, but I'm a good man.

Not perfect in any way, but I'm...

...good.

You can trust me

You can have faith in me.

Thank god.

Honey?

You all right?

Honey?

Honey, Honey.

Honey, I'm such an idiot.

I don't know what came over me, I...

It gets easier.

You'll see.

It becomes fun, even.

And the rewards...  
With each one, you grow in  
the master's eyes. He is...  
good to those who serve him.  
Freedom comes with a price.  
Not yet.  
With each task, you get more and more.  
The wants you to prove yourself.  
But first things first.  
Let's have a little fun.  
If you tell Mommy, I'm going to slap you.  
I will slap you and I will slap your mother.  
You hear me?  
You hear me?  
Do you hear me?  
Good girl. Come over here.  
Come on.  
I wanna tell you a story. Come on.  
Open your little book.  
Open your little book!  
Do you remember...  
do you remember what he did to you?  
- I was helpless.  
- Like you were helpless.  
- Helpless. Defenseless.  
- I couldn't do anything.  
- Young. Naive. Impressionable.  
- I wish I could have done something.  
- He took advantage of you.  
What did you do?  
He'd better be dead.  
Hello?  
Is there someone here?  
Who are you?  
Are you still here?  
Why? Why are you here?  
Do you live here?  
Should I be afraid of them?  
Did you see my fianc leave?  
Did he leave?  
Is he okay?  
Where is he?  
Do you know where he is?  
Where?

Is he in the house?  
Is he outside?  
Are you still here?  
Was that you?  
Who else is here?  
Is there someone else here?  
Should I be afraid of them?  
Honey! Oh, thank god.  
How stupid do you think I am?  
You thought your existence  
in this place was bad?  
You have no idea what true hell is.  
When I finish with that stupid bitch,  
you'll both wish you'd never been born.  
Please say something....  
Please, god.  
You were right about him.  
He's gonna do to you  
what your father did.  
He's going to do it to your children.  
No.  
- "I'm a good man. You can trust me."  
- You remember that?  
Its what your father said  
to your mother...  
the day he proposed to her.  
Yet we both know it wasn't true.  
How can you know that?  
I was there.  
I watched over her as I  
watch over you. I've seen it all.  
I know why you used to come down here.  
Just you and me.  
Come and sit. Come and sit.  
It wasn't my fault.  
It's the way you behave in front of him.  
- Now he wants to do it, too.  
- The bastard.  
It's the real reason he came out here.  
He's never gonna leave you alone.  
- They never do.  
- It's gonna happen again.  
Until they die.  
No one knows what goes on here,

but you and me.  
- You could be free of him.  
- You could be free of him.  
You could be free of him forever.  
And I can help you.  
"I'm the one you can trust."  
Help me, help me,  
help me, help me...  
"I wanna spend my life with you."  
"I'm a good man.  
You can trust me."  
"You know me, you know me."  
What are you doing?  
You have to stop it.  
I'm going to stop it.  
I know him.  
He does really love me.  
And I love him.  
And I know you,  
I recognize you.  
You're the liar I've always felt.  
You're the liar.  
And I'm not going to listen to you anymore.  
I'm not scared of you.  
Baby?  
Listen, I'm gonna...  
I'm gonna run outside and I'm gonna find  
something to help me get you out of here.  
But I'll be right back.  
Do your worst.  
Forgive me.  
No.  
Sorry, Missy,  
it's just me.  
I was going to ask if you were okay, but...  
I gotta say, it doesn't look  
as if you're doing too well.  
Why are you here?  
Just been having this funny feeling all day  
that something was the matter.  
I kept trying to call  
but I couldn't get you on the cell phone.  
My fianc is hurt really badly.  
We need to get him some help.



- Where is he?

- Under the house.

Well then, let's go get him.

Looks like you had to save me again.

Not really.

What happened?

You need your rest.

I'll tell you later, all right?

I love you.

Ready, Missy?