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Dark Circles

By Paul Soter

Hello?

Are... Are you okay?

Do you speak English?

Oh, my God.

Oh, my God. Here.

Come in, come in. Here.

I'm gonna get you a doctor.

Lie down right here.

You're okay?

Okay, yeah, just lie down.

Oh, my God. Oh, God.

Shit.

Okay.

Okay.

Oh, my God.

Please.

Please, please don't.

I'll do anything. Please.

Alex?

Alex?

What?

You thirsty?

Yeah.

Okay. All right.

All right. All right.

Careful.

- Thank you.

- You're welcome.

Thank y'all. Thank y'all.

All right, all right.

We let Alex shine a little bit
on that last one.

The bad news is our man won't be
with us too much longer.

He's decided to leave the nest.

Fly off on his own.

Think you can handle it?

All right. Two, three, four...

Look, there's a reason why you can
get a big house in the sticks for dirt cheap.

It's a wasteland.

It's not set.

I mean, one day she wants to go,
the next she wants to stay.

She's all over the map.
It's a pregnancy thing.
Well, if you think it's such a great idea,
then why wait?
I knew it.
You don't wanna go.
- You don't wanna go.
- It'll be fine.
Three hours away?
I'm never gonna see you.
I just can't imagine
raising a baby in the city.
This house, it is like
a Malibu Barbie dream house.
I mean, this would be a project for me,
not some client.
And Alex is cool with it?
Absolutely.
I mean, he's in the middle
of finishing up all these demos
and even if just a couple of them pay off,
then he can support me.
I'm very happy for you.
Thank you.
Oh, God.
You know what that look was, right?
Yes, I do.
I understand you're strapped,
but she'd be just as happy
with a placeholder ring.
I don't wanna be that guy.
I'm not gonna get her a piece of shit.
Okay, okay. I thought
maybe you were one of those people
who doesn't believe in marriage.
Your parents were married, right?
Three times each.
Now we're getting someplace.
So sorry.
When you stare at us while you're talking,
then we know you're talking about us.
Women have amazing powers.
Can I get you a non-alcoholic beer?
No, we have to go back to the office.

We have to finish up some work.

- Work?

- Yeah.

Yeah, you guys are going to Chippendales,
where some oily guy's gonna
give her a lap dance.

I don't have a lap.

Bye.

May I?

May you what? What are you... God!

Oh, my God, my back!

It's all these things

I never thought about before.

Like, I don't have a little brother,

I don't have a little sister,

I never even babysat,

and now I worry about everything, like,
what if I drop him on his head?

No, I'm being serious.

They come with skulls.

My mother's a disaster.

I mean, what if that's genetic?

What if I inherit

all her maternal incompetence?

I don't think there's a gene for that, Penny.

Penny?

- Penny?

- Oh, my God.

Oh, my God.

- Yeah.

- Oh, my God!

- Yes.

- Oh, my God!

Michael. God damn it,

why don't you answer the phone?

Listen, if you're still with Alex,
tell him we are at the hospital.

We can't hold of him and Penny is in labor.
Call me when you get this.

Okay.

- It's gonna be okay.

- Okay.

I missed it.

It happened really fast.

I can't believe I missed it.
Come in, come on, here.
Hey.
Okay.
Thanks.
Hey.
So tell me everything.
Honestly, I don't even remember.
It's like I blacked everything out.
He's so cute.
You're so cute.
Okay. This is your dad.
Hey.
That's your dad, huh?
Boy, we can just
about handle anything now, huh?
This side is up.
Hey, I know you're working,
but I talked to the realtor in Stanton.
I told him if he cut his fee in half,
we could close the deal right now.
He must be sick of my haggling
because he went for it.
I just think we have to do it.
It's such a steal.
We'd be crazy to pass this up.
And I really believe
I can turn it into something spectacular.
Anyway, I'll grab something from Carmines
on the way home.
We can start hammering it out.
I just wanna make sure
you're okay with this.
If you're having any doubts at all,
just let me know. Okay?
I love you so much.
Well, it looks a little dreary
in the late months.
But you know, in the spring with plants,
trees, I mean, it's gonna...
We could just paint it, paint the brick.
It's from Michael.
"May this beautiful tree
represent your growing love

"and blooming hopes, and blah, blah, blah."

- Does it really say, "Blah, blah, blah"?

- Yeah.

Tanner.

Hi, buddy.

You just hangin' out?

Oh, yeah.

Inspired yet?

There's something I don't mind
being left behind.

Yeah, just something else
we couldn't have in the city.

How would you like your rib-eye cooked?

I'm sorry. You okay?

I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

Get rid of that thing.

Well, now everything we cook's
gonna taste like baby.

That's not funny.

That's in the kitchen.

Out back. And this one goes upstairs.

Hey, hold on! Hold on!

I'll... I'll help you with that.

Here, I'll get the door.

You've gotta be kidding me.

This was... This was supposed to be gone.

Can your guys get this shit outta here?

No, no, no.

You gotta arrange for a junk man.

I cannot put my piano
in there with this stuff.

So what, just leave it here on the ground?

What is all this crap?

Sorry.

How's little T?

He's good. He's napping.

Can I give you a hand with anything?

No, but maybe later

you could help me with the monitor?

Okay.

Poor girl.

Probably wondering
what she did to deserve this.

A lot of crap in here.

Shit!

No!

God damn it! God damn it!

Are you on channel A or channel B?

Channel B.

Got it.

Should I put it back on the shelf?

You don't have to yell.

I can hear you through the monitor.

Okay.

Yeah, put it back on the shelf.

I think you have it pointing at the ceiling.

You need to point it down to the crib.

All right, that's it.

Just move it a little bit to the left.

What's wrong?

Oh, God.

Where are you taking my mom?

I'm sorry, babe.

I love your mother, but the effect with the camera was a little creepy.

- Well, what about the monitor?

- It's good.

Move it two inches to the right.

What's goin' on with him?

I don't know, but I cannot go back in there.

That counts as a turn.

Oh, God.

What the hell is that?

Oh, my God.

- What's going on?

- Oh, my God.

I don't know.

- Let's go see.

- Yeah.

I don't understand.

I'll check it out.

Why don't you take him inside?

I'm gonna throw up.

How could we not know?

We saw it on a Sunday.

We moved in on a Sunday.

We can't live like this.

With Tanner not sleeping?

It was his first night like that.
We'll... We'll get rest.
You need quiet.
I'll manage.
I mean, that was the whole point.
Nah, we'll be fine.
I mean, how long can this last?
A few weeks?
Bitch!
Alex?
Son of a bitch!
These dumbasses didn't
hook up the dryer exhaust.
I could hear you all the way
upstairs in the bathroom.
I didn't know I was that loud.
No, it must be the pipes.
Just another charming
idiosyncrasy of this house.
I got it.
You know, I don't like you
leaving the baby alone up there like that.
No, I... I've got the Internet hooked up.
He's just watching porn.
Okay.
What are you doing?
What are you doing?
What are you... What are you doing?
Come on.
Play something.
Hey.
I need help with the baby.
Look, I just need you to bathe him for me.
I have to go lie down.
Okay.
Make sure you clean the sink
before you put him in, okay?
Wait. I don't put the baby
in the sink full of dirty dishes?
Shut up.
I'm gonna put you right here.
Right there.
Look at that.
You ready for your bath?

I found Tanner's blankie.
It was in the guest room.
Hey, buddy.
Look what I found in the guest room.
I found your blankie.
Yeah.
Yeah, do you like that?
God, what is the matter with you?
God!
Did you not think to check the water?
I did check it, when I was filling it up.
Oh, my God.
If I hadn't come in here...
I can't even leave
the baby alone with you for one minute.
I can't do everything myself.
No, just go. I've got it. Don't even.
What are you doing on the floor?
Hey.
You're getting heavy.
It's their lunch break.
Let's see if we can get
some sleep for an hour.
Penny?
Penny?
Hey.
What happened?
Here. Let me take him.
Come on.
Come on. Come on. You're freakin' me out.
- No.
- Penny.
- I'm fine.
- Hey, hey.
- I'm okay. I'm okay.
- Talk to me.
What just happened in there?
Don't yell at me, all right?
I'm tired and I'm... I'm scared.
What are you scared of?
I saw...
What?
Somebody in the house.
It was through the mirror.

She ran by and then she was gone.
I don't know. Maybe I was asleep.
I can't even see straight anymore.
I'm losing it, too.
They say people start to hallucinate.
It's a fact.
I googled it.
I don't know if I can
stand much more of this.
I need to sleep.
I mean, how long has it been?
Five days?
Something like that.
I've lost track.
It'll get better.
I promise.
Get out!
Penny?
Penny.
Penny.
Wake up.
God! What?
What's going on?
You okay?
Yeah.
I just had a really weird dream.
At least you're sleeping.
Can you turn out the light?
Oh, God.
I can handle it.
I can handle it.
I know we haven't known each other,
just maybe a few months now,
but normally I'm not a train wreck.
You know, I'm actually really fun.
Like, not like party girl fun, but fun.
Damn it!
Pretend you didn't see that.
If daddy sells one of his demos...
He'll pay for therapy.
For both of us.
Hey, Alex. It's Michael. Friday.
I left a message
for you the other day.

How's the house?
All that peace and quiet
driving you crazy yet?
Johanna and I would love to come down
and check the place out.
I'm sure you're ready to get drunk
and admit that you screwed up.
Because you know
you screwed up, right?
Big time. What were you thinking?
This is your life now.
Your whole entire life
is nothing but that house.
You haven't written a demo,
not one verse, not one note
of music the whole time
you've been here.
You just stagger around like a zombie,
having nightmares about a woman,
because she told you
she saw a woman in the house.
She put it in your head
and now look at you.
Is that what you wanted?
What the hell are you doing?
Did you not see
Tanner sitting here right in front of you?
Why did you leave him
at the top of the stairs?
I didn't put him there!
You're telling me that you didn't
put him in the wagon and
set him right there?
Yes, I put him in the wagon,
but I had him in the nursery.
You just said you didn't put him in there.
Did you or did you not...
I didn't put him
at the top of the stairs, Alex!
Okay. You have got to
manage this situation better, all right?
I did not put him at
the top of the stairs, Alex!
You just said you put him in the wagon!

I didn't.
You're walking around in a complete stupor!
- Okay, I gotta get outta here.
- It was probably you!
I'm gonna go to the store.
Sweetie, put some shoes on.
What's wrong?
Nothing. I...
Are you sure you're okay to drive?
I just drifted off for a second.
You forgot the list.
I talked to Dr. Gordon.
He said try gripe water.
He may be having gas at night.
Gripe water.
All right.
Are you sure you're okay to leave?
I'm fine.
I'm fine.
Okay.
Don't be gone long.
Thank you.
Whoa!
For a second there,
I thought you were the Grim Reaper.
I'm too young to die!
So I would normally
never ask a customer this,
but are you okay?
Yeah.
I'm hangin' in there, I suppose.
New baby?
Five months old.
Doesn't sleep?
Not when he's supposed to.
He's got it all upside-down.
They got a term for it.
It's called daylnight confusion.
That'd be a really good name for a band.
What?
You like babies?
I wouldn't choose to, like,
hang out with one,
but I know sometimes it can't be helped.

Are you asking me if I'll babysit for you?

Yeah.

Yeah. Yes.

- Does your TV work?

- You'll do it?

You didn't answer

my question about the TV.

Okay, all right, look,

our cable doesn't work.

But our DVD player works great.

Okay, okay. Take it easy.

Okay, so you'll do it?

I mean, we just need someone to...

Who will stay the night with the baby.

That, I mean, that's it.

- Okay.

- I can trust you?

You can totally trust me.

Like, I'm not

gonna touch your liquor cabinet.

I had one too many wine coolers once

when I was 14,

so I don't touch the stuff.

Smart girl.

Yeah.

So, I normally would ask 10 an hour,

but since I'm gonna be

doing this overnight...

Whatever you want. I mean... Here.

Okay.

Yeah, you just gave me a hundred, so...

Hi.

So I have a baby brother and a baby sister.

And my older sister has a baby.

And my older brother has a baby.

You wanna hear about my cousins?

No, that's... No, that's good.

Nice place.

So, if he sleeps,

then you can bring him upstairs to his crib.

But what's been happening

since we moved in here

is he wakes up every 15 minutes.

If that's the case, I would

just keep him down here.
You know you don't
put him to sleep on his belly, right?
Yeah, of course.
And if he...
If he's sleepin' and you get tired, you know,
you can just crash out on the couch.
Or we have Coke in the fridge.
Or coffee. We have a coffee maker.
No, I don't do caffeine.
Really?
She doesn't drink either.
And no red meat.
If that matters.
Well, that's actually kind of cool.
But really, I don't want
you to worry about me.
Or the baby, of course.
I slept all day.
So this is not gonna be a problem for me
to make it through the night.
But you know what I can't do?
I can't carry both of you guys upstairs.
So, y'all might want to be
thinking about bed, huh?
Yeah. Yeah.
You guys need one of those, like,
electric chairs
that carries you up and down the stairs.
What?
Nothing.
Never mind.
Electric chair.
I think she was making a joke.
Thank you for this.
You were right.
I love hearing you say I'm right.
Get some sleep.
You don't think there's something
wrong with this place, do you?
I think one good night's sleep
and all this shit's gonna go away.
Okay?
Yeah.

Hal?

We're doing good down here.

I think he's gonna stay down for a while.

Do you wanna put him in his crib?

Or should I do it?

Do you want me to...

You know what? I'm gonna get him for you.

It was too good to last.

Need more sleep.

Like 24 hours more.

How about 12 more hours? Deal?

12 more, honey.

Sunday.

They have to take the day off.

Sunday.

It's the Lord's day.

Hallelujah.

Come on. Let's go see Tanner and pay her
and see if she can come back.

What kind of person would
you let in this house?

Penny.

Some teenager you met at the grocery store!

Penny, calm down.

No references!

I mean, we don't even know her last name!

Do you even know her first name?

I mean, what is going on with this house
that someone

would leave in the middle of the night?

You're... You're taking it too far.

No, I'm not!

Penny, please!

- Stop, okay?

- Stop what?

Look. I know it's wrong.

I take full responsibility.

But she's gone, for whatever reason.

The baby was in the crib.

And we were a few feet away

in our room, sleeping.

We didn't even have our monitor on!

Something could have happened!

People did not have

baby monitors throughout
the entirety of human history
until a couple of years ago!
And babies died every night their cribs!
Penny, please.

Hey.

Hey, hey, hey, hey, hey!

You guys get in your trucks!

And you get the hell out of here!

Look, look, friend, what you...

What the hell is the matter with you?

You're not making any sense.

Don't you assholes have any children?

- Don't be stupid.

- What you're doing is illegal!

I'm gonna shut this operation down!

There's nothing illegal

about what we're doin'!

You cannot do construction on Sunday!

Okay, it's okay, man.

We've all been in your shoes. You know?

It's happened to me,

trust me, more than once.

You tied one on Saturday night,

induced yourself into a junior coma,

and you lost an entire day.

Welcome to Monday.

If you got a sick day, I think I'd call in.

It looks like you could use

a little more shut eye.

Why don't you go crawl back in bed.

I'll make sure we keep it down.

You have to get out right now.

Do you hear me?

There's a ghost in the house.

- I've seen it.

- Get in the fuckin' car and start driving.

Why won't you believe me?

I haven't done anything wrong.

God damn it, why won't you believe me?

You think this isn't hard for me?

Wake up! Why are you lying to me?

I'm sorry.

I didn't picture our life quite like this.

You must hate it.
The rain is nice.
They'll probably have to stop.
Isn't the rain nice?
I can't remember your name.
I'm sorry.
You see her, too.
I'm not crazy.
Please!
Please! Please! Please!
Please! Please!
The baby's asleep.
I don't know if you've realized,
but it's actually quiet right now.
This is the first time since
we moved in this place
that I can actually get some work done.
So if you have any love
left in your heart for me,
could you please, please stop
pounding on the window?
I'm sorry our whole nightmarish ordeal
is undermining your ability to play piano.
You have got to let me get some work done.
All you can think about is work
when we're in the fifth level of hell?
I know how difficult this is for you.
Difficult? What is wrong with you, Alex?
There's something wrong with this house!
There's something horrible here.
Penny, whatever you think
is going on, okay,
whatever you think you see...
It's not real.
I've got something.
I want you to take these.
- Look...
- No.
I know you're scared. I'm scared, too.
We are falling apart.
We cannot function like this.
I can help you.
Please don't do this.
- I could take care of Tanner.

- No...

No, I'll take care of him and then you sleep.

I have to be here to protect him.

Don't you understand?

Then something's gonna happen.

It's the only way we're

gonna get through this.

God, I want to go home.

I want to go home.

You just need to get some sleep.

Here.

Take these.

No.

What are you doing?

Stay away from me.

Stay away from you?

All I've ever done

is taken care of you and the baby.

The baby?

You wanted this baby just as much

as you wanted to move into this house.

That's not true.

You think I'm an idiot?

You think I'm stupid, huh?

You can't do this to me!

You can't treat me like this!

I said stay away from me.

I would never hurt you.

I would never hurt you!

All I've ever done

is given you everything you wanted!

Take the fucking pills!

No.

How are you feeling?

Are you feeling anything?

That smells good.

Can I have some?

All right. Sorry.

Switch.

Did you think I forgot about you?

I didn't forget about you, noodle.

I'd never forget about you.

I know you're sitting right there.

Oh, my God.

Tanner.
Tanner? Tanner?
Alex!
Alex! Alex, wake up!
Wake up! Alex! Wake up!
Come on, wake up! Alex!
Wake up!
I did something terrible.
I can't find Tanner. You gotta help me.
Please wake up. Please wake up.
Please, please, wake up.
The national weather service has issued
a flash flood warning for Harold County
until 10.;30 p.m.,
Central Standard Time.
At 6.;55 Central Standard Time
the public reported
water flowing
over the following roads...
1- 45 between Carlos Road
and James Street, 1-40...
Honey, you've gotta wake up!
Alex! Alex! Wake up!
You've gotta wake up.
We have to go get Tanner.
Alex, wake up, we have to get Tanner.
Alex!
There's something here.
There's something here that's gonna get us.
I'm not going crazy.
I'm not crazy.
Did you hear that? Did you hear that?
Do you believe me? Do you believe?
Did you hear that? Can you hear?
Go away!
Go away!
No! No!
No! No!
I just want my baby.
Tanner?
Go to hell.
You're not real.
Oh, God!
Michael!

Good god. What's happened to you?
What are you doing here?
Why are you here?
Hey. Calm down.
No, no, no, you don't understand.
I have to go find Tanner.
Take it easy. I've got you.
I'm gonna get help. Okay?
- No, please, Michael, let go of me.
- I've got you.
I'm gonna go and get some help.
Everything's gonna be okay.
Just relax. Just relax.
What the hell? What's going on here?
She's not real.
She's not real.
Help me.
She's not real.
She's not real.
She's not real.
She's not real. She's not real.
She's not real. She's not real.
She's not real.
- Penny...
- She's not real.
She's not real. She's not real.
She's not real. She's not real.
Penny. Penny, you've gotta
tell me what's going on here.
She's not real. She's not real.
She's not real. She's real.
She's real. She's real.
Real, real, real, real, real, real.
Oh, God.
Oh, God. Okay.
Okay.
Stay away...
From my family!
Help me.
Oh, God.
Remember, we will not be undersold.
It's been more than 6 weeks
since a local woman
wandered away from her hospital room

in Stanton only to disappear.
The woman was being treated for shock
following the death of
her 8-month-old daughter
who perished when a fire broke out
at their home in Butler County.
Rescue efforts tapered off
after multiple searches
in the neighborhood turned up nothing.
But the case is getting a second look
after the disappearance of
another woman in the same town.
19-Year-old Nancy Leggero
was reported missing this week
after failing to show up
at the supermarket where she worked.
Police in Butler County
are now wondering
if there may be a connection
in the disappearance of the two women.