

MIRTH MONSTER

Written by

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EXT. PARKSTEAD AND HOLMES MEMORIAL HOSPITAL PARKING LOT - DAY

An excited crowd of ADULTS, some in nurses uniforms, some in scrubs, others in civilian clothing, stand at the entrance of the Parkstead And Holmes Memorial Hospital.

Leaning out of every window from the second floor on are CHILDREN. They are all waving and fraught with anticipation.

A festively decorated clown car begins to pull up to the entrance. The two doors of the clown car open and CLOWNS begin to stream out of the clown car. Perky calliope music mingles with the cheers and applause filling the air.

One, two, three, they keep coming out of the clown car waving and clowning around. The people who were waiting greet the clowns enthusiastically.

The clowns continue to pour out of the clown car. Balloons are everywhere. The festivities reach a frenzy as clowns continue to alight from the clown car in a seemingly endless line.

Clowns begin to join the Children in the windows. Everyone is waving and cheering. This is the most excitement the world has ever seen.

The last of the clowns exits the clown car and joins a group of clowns milling around with the adults standing outside the hospital. The adults are waving to the children, the children and clowns are waving.

The outdoor clowns pull out aerosol cans and begin spraying the adults. At first everyone is enjoying the frivolity but one by one they notice that they are stuck to each other and the ground. The clowns all step back to inspect their handiwork as the adults struggle.

Suddenly all of the children are pulled out of the windows and they all shut at once. The outside clowns walk past the struggling adults as they enter the hospital.

One CLOWN honks a horn and closes the hospital doors. He waves at the adults and disappears into the hospital. The adults struggle but all become completely still when blood slams into the glass covering it totally.

They begin to struggle harder as they see blood begin to fill every window in the building. Screams ring out from each floor as the adults struggle and struggle. Clowns begin to exit the hospital.

FADE TO:

EXT. WOODED AREA - NIGHT

FRANK, ERIC, BOB, DAWN and JOANNE are sitting in the woods around a fire.

BOB

Clowns began to come out of the hospital and the first ones who did chopped up the people who were stuck in front. Their lifeless bodies falling to the ground in grotesque poses.

Everyone is listening to Bob with rapt attention as he looks over the crowd.

BOB (CONT'D)

When the police got there they were shocked, to say the least, but also baffled. A clown car playing calliope music was their only clue.

(pause)

It wasn't until they checked the security footage that they saw the clowns. Hundreds and hundreds of clowns butchering children and adults and then seemingly just vanished.

(pause)

To this day not one clown has been found. The only thing they can figure is they all vanished into the nearby woods.

FRANK

Aww, that's bullshit.

ERIC

Yeah, no way that could happen.

BOB

I don't know. My cousin on the police force says people call all the time saying they can hear calliope music in the woods.

DAWN

Even I have trouble believing this one.

JOANNE

Yeah, and she believes unicorns are real.

DAWN

They're mentioned in the bible
eight times.

BOB

Oh sure, you question my story but
believe everything in that book.
All I'm saying is I'd keep an open
mind.

FRANK

Bullshit. Hundreds of clowns,
killer or not, couldn't fit in that
little clown car.

BOB

I'm just saying, I heard it from my
cousin who was on the police force.
But if you didn't like that one,
who has another.

The Group grumbles a bit while they collectively try to come
up with another scary tale. Suddenly their attention is
snapped towards the woods.

Faintly in the distance they hear the unmistakable sound of
calliope music. They exchange looks trying not to take their
eyes off the woods.

The music grows louder. They begin to panic. Suddenly, just
as quickly as it began, the calliope music stops. That does
nothing to assuage their growing fear.

Mere moments later the calliope music blares throughout the
woods as a machete wielding clown comes running out. The
group struggles to get to their feet to race out of the
woods.

Except for Bob who is sitting there laughing. The Group
begins to calm down and take a clear look at the clown. It's
someone in a rubber clown mask wearing normal clothes. The
Clown reaches up and struggles to pull the mask off revealing
RICK.

FRANK

You bastard!

DAWN

You scared the shit out of me.

ERIC

Turns that shit off. It's freaking
me out.

Rick takes a few steps into the woods and pulls out the boom box and shuts it off. He walks toward the fire and sits next to Bob. They exchange high fives. They're pleased with their stunt.

BOB
Now you believe in killer forest
clowns, don't you?

The Group silently sits back around the fire as Bob and Rick continue to bask in their brilliance.

BOB (CONT'D)
Anyone top that?

The Group goes back to pondering but before they can come up with anything Rick chimes in.

RICK
I have one.

JOANNE
I think you've done enough damage
for one day.

RICK
Come on! It was all in good fun.

FRANK
If fun includes taking years from a
young man's life.

RICK
Seems funny to me.
(pause)
Come on.

DAWN
Nothing with clowns.

Rick picks up the clown mask and tosses it into the woods.

RICK
Deal.

They're still not sure if they should let Rick tell a story but with no one else having one their options are limited. Bob shoves Rick to signal him to begin.

RICK (CONT'D)
One day in a comedy club this old
man was sitting there and all the
comics noticed that he hadn't
laughed once all night.

INT. COMEDY CLUB - NIGHT

OLD MAN sitting then he begins to stand up and exit.

RICK (V.O.)
As the last comic was saying good
night the old man stood up to
leave.

As he's walking out of the club he passes a COMIC. The Comic watches the Old Man and his curiosity gets the best of him so he stops the Old Man and they begin a conversation.

The Comic and Old Man's lips follow the dialog but it's Rick's voice.

COMIC (RICK V/O)
Did you have a good time tonight?

OLD MAN (RICK V/O)
I had a very nice time, thanks for
asking.

The Old Man turns to leave but the Comic stops him.

COMIC (RICK V/O)
But you didn't laugh once.

The Old Man puts his hand on the Comics arm and leads him out of the club.

EXT. COMEDY CLUB PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

The Old Man and Comic are standing in the parking lot conversing. They do not follow Rick's words.

RICK (V.O.)
The old man tells the comic that
there was a time when he would
laugh. He was often the life of the
party but those days are over.
(pause)
The comic asks what happened. He
figures his wife and kids must have
been murdered by clowns.

EXT. WOODED AREA - CONTINUOUS

Frank, Eric, Dawn, Joanne and even Bob throw sticks at Rick who dodges and ducks to defend himself.

FRANK
We said no clowns!

RICK
Sorry, sorry. Couldn't help myself.

The Group settles down and Rick gets back to his story.

RICK (CONT'D)
The old man tells the comic that one night he was watching a TV show and he was laughing so hard he said he almost fell over.

FRANK
So he stopped laughing because he had a heart attack.

RICK
Nope. It's much scarier than that.

Rick pauses for Frank to simmer down.

RICK (CONT'D)
He told the comic that, later that night, while he was taking the garbage out an old man came up to him and asked if he liked the show he'd been watching. A little startled but the old man seemed harmless so he told him he did, very much. That's when the old man reached out, touched the guys shoulder and, just because he laughed so freely, he was turned into the mirth monster.

EXT. COMEDY CLUB PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The Old Man is standing up while the Comic is doubled over laughing with the Old Man's hand on his back. Suddenly the Comic stands up and he's now looking at a YOUNG MAN.

RICK (V.O.)
The comic laughed and laughed. He had to grab onto a wall to keep him from falling.
(pause)
The comic looked up and is shocked to see the old man is gone and he's replaced by a much younger man.

The Comic is confused and struggles to figure out what's going on. Suddenly he catches a glimpse of himself in the window and is shocked by what he sees.

RICK (V.O.)
The comic catches a glimpse of
himself in a window and sees that
he's aged maybe hundreds of years.

The Comic turns and looks at the Young Man for an explanation. The Young Man's lips follow the dialog but it's Rick's voice.

YOUNG MAN (RICK V/O)
You're the mirth monster now.

EXT. WOODED AREA - NIGHT

Frank, Eric, Dawn, Joanne and Bob are listening to Rick's story with various degrees of skepticism on their faces.

RICK
The young man explained to the
comic that he had to write a bit
that would make someone laugh so
hard he could take his soul and
turn him into the mirth monster.

Rick looks at the Group.

RICK (CONT'D)
And that comic is roaming the world
writing and acting in TV and
movies, touring non-stop just to
find that one person who laughs so
hard the mirth monster can take his
soul.

Rick sits back satisfied that he's told a pretty good story.

JOANNE
Wasn't that scary.

RICK
I don't know. I've seen you laugh
pretty hard. Maybe one day you'll
laugh too hard and BAM haggard old
mirth monster.

Rick looks around the Group.

JOANNE

Haggard? I'd be a beautiful mirth monster.

Dawn picks up her phone.

DAWN

I'll look it up.

RICK

It could be any of us. We do laugh at a ton of stupid shit. Who knows if the mirth monster is behind it.

FRANK

Bullshit.

ERIC

Yeah, nice story, Rick. Real believable.

RICK

Question it if you will. Sounds plausible to me.

DAWN

It's mentioned on a web site. It says the first known mirth monster was a court jester who turned a king into the mirth monster. It's been one hundred years since the last sighting when Ezra Duprez is said to have turned a soon to be famous TV writer into the mirth monster.

BOB

That story said a TV writer was the mirth monster.

The Group looks to each other. Talking this over is making it seem truly believable to them. Frank seems more agitated than anyone else. Frank begins to stand up.

FRANK

Like I said, bullshit. I'm outta here.

Frank exits as the others watch and call to him.

BOB

Don't let the mirth monster get you, Frank.

RICK
Make sure not to laugh at anything.

ERIC
Hey, Frank! Have you heard the one
about the vampire with
chiroptophobia?

BOB
Oh yeah, tell that one. That one's
good.

JOANNE
Hey, stop it, guys. I think that
one rattled him. Hey, Frank? Do you
want me to drive you home?

RICK
Trying to save him from the mirth
monster? Isn't that nice.

BOB
Or would you use him as bait and
tickle him so he laugh and you'd be
safe?

ERIC
Hey Frank? Come on back? We're just
busting your balls.

EXT. STREET - LATER

Frank is running down the street. He turns into a walkway and
enters his house.

INT. HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Frank enters the house where his MOTHER, FATHER, sister
HILARY and brother DAVY are watching TV.

MOTHER
Hi honey. Your favorite show is on,
Want to watch it.

Frank looks at the TV for a moment before racing out of the
room.

FRANK
No.

Frank's Mother watches him for a second. Without turning his
head his Father speaks.

FATHER

He's getting weirder and weirder.
Pass the dip.

Hilary passes her Father the dip.

INT. FRANK'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Frank enters his bedroom and locks the door behind him. He looks around the room and all he sees is comedy DVDs, CDs, books, and comics. He pulls a tote from under his bed, dumps the contents on the floor, puts the tote on his bed and begins putting anything with a funny tint to it in the tote.

INT. FRANK'S BEDROOM - LATER

Most of Frank's shelves are pretty empty. The tote on the bed is full. He looks around the room satisfied. The mirth monster isn't going to get him. He gives himself a break with a little computer time. He sits at his desk and fires up his computer.

Frank clicks on his laptop a few times when a video pops up and he jumps back as if he's seen a ghost. It's a video of cute kittens falling asleep in incredibly humorous ways. Frank averts his eyes and closes the laptop.

Frank decides he's had enough so heads over to his bed. He grabs the tote and struggles but finds he can't lift it off his bed. Resigned, he pulls out as much blanket as he can and slides in next to the tote.

INT. HALLWAY - MORNING

Frank and Davy are struggling to carry the tote down the hallway.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Frank and Davy enter the kitchen and almost drop the tote on a counter. His Mother is at the sink, Father and Hilary at the table.

MOTHER

What's that?

FRANK

Just some stuff I want to donate.

Davy opens the tote and pulls out a movie.

DAVY
Can I have this?

Davy holds up a comedy movie.

MOTHER
Isn't that your favorite?

FRANK
Yeah, you can have it. Take
whatever you want.

Frank's Mother steps toward Frank as Davy dives into the tote.

DAVY
Thanks.

MOTHER
Is there something wrong, Frank?

FRANK
Can't a guy just grow up?

DAVY
You're even giving away your Bill
Cosby CD, A Pocketful Of 'Ludes?

Frank's Father and Mother exchange looks.

FATHER
Did you join a cult?

Frank's Father looks at Hilary.

FATHER (CONT'D)
Did he join a cult?

Hilary shrugs her shoulders.

FATHER (CONT'D)
If you join a cult I'm going to...

FRANK
. . .I didn't join a cult.

Frank starts exiting the kitchen.

FRANK (CONT'D)
There's just more to life than
laughter.

Frank exits. His Family looks at the door for a beat (except for Davy who is still rummaging through the tote.

MOTHER
I'm a little worried.

FATHER
Ah, it's probably just a stage.

HILARY
But if he joined a cult can I have
his room?

FATHER
No. He joined a cult we're moving
out of state 'cause I don't want
any nut job son finding us.

Frank's Family slowly goes back to their morning routine.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - LATER

Frank is walking down the hallway avoiding all of the
laughing and frivolous activity going on around him. The
PRINCIPAL broadcasts an announcement.

PRINCIPAL (V.O.)
All students please report to the
auditorium for a special assembly.

Frank stops, changes direction and keeps walking and
ignoring.

BOY 1 (V.O.)
I bet he's going to put everyone on
detention until he finds out who
painted that wall of him with his
hands down Mickey Mouses pants.

BOY 2 (V.O.)
I heard that wasn't a painting.
Someone printed a picture taken of
him and blew it up.

BOY 1 (V.O.)
Someone should blow you up, idiot.

The Boys laugh as Frank puts his hands over his ears and
hurries along.

INT. AUDITORIUM - MOMENTS LATER

Frank is seated in the first seat in the back row away from
Eric, Bob and Rick who are waving to get his attention. He's
ignoring them.

PRINCIPAL (O.C.)
Good morning, can I get your
attention.

Frank sits up.

INT. AUDITORIUM STAGE - CONTINUOUS

The PRINCIPAL is standing in the middle of the stage.

PRINCIPAL
I know when I call these things
it's due to some disciplinary
issue.

BOY 1 (V.O.)
Grabbing Mickey!

The crowd roars with laughter as Frank puts his hands over
his ears and slumps even further into his seat.

PRINCIPAL
Very funny. But I have to say,
pretty good likeness of Mickey.
(pause)
But no, today we have something
special for you due to the amazing
scores you received in the
statewide testing.
(pause)
Without any further delay let me
bring to the stage a amazing act,
Toby Allen, the comedy juggler.

TOBY ALLEN begins to enter the stage as the Principal exits.
They shake hands as they pass and come to a stop as Frank
stands up and runs out of the auditorium screaming.

EXT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Frank shoves the doors wide open and races away. We can see
the Principal and Toby on the stage still standing there.
After a beat, Toby speaks.

TOBY
Must have seen my act before.

The auditorium erupts in laughter as a TEACHER comes to the
door and closes them.

EXT. DESERTED STREET - DAY

Frank is running down a street and keeps going until he finds an opening and enters the woods.

EXT. WOODED AREA - MOMENTS LATER

Frank, out of breath, comes to a stop in a clearing. He leans against a tree struggling to catch his breath. When he finally does he leans against the tree and slumps downward. He reaches the ground and sits there. He says nothing but his expression tells of someone bothered by something bigger than himself. He's struggling with his thoughts. After a short while Frank passes out from exhaustion.

FADE TO:

EXT. WOODED AREA - NIGHT

It's the same shot as before but it's hard to see anything due to the darkness.

SND FX CELLPHONE RINGING

We see Frank's figure move about in the shadows. You can't make him out, it's all shadows and shafts of light.

FRANK

Who the hell is calling me?

Frank struggles to get up and by the time he's standing the phone has stopped ringing. He stands up and turns toward the path to the street.

Frank turns on his phone and the light fills the area as the camera moves in to the phone and we see that it's 10:37PM.

FRANK (CONT'D)

That was a long nap.

Frank shuts off his phone and the area falls to slivers of light that only cast shadows. Frank slowly makes his way to the street.

EXT. DESERTED STREET - LATER

Frank enters the street but it too is dark. We see Frank as only a shape as he struggles to walk down the street. Frank looks down both sides of the street and all he can see is darkness. It's going to be a long walk.

After a while, in the distance, headlights appear. Against his better judgement Frank starts to wave to flag down the driver. The headlights shine on Frank as the car pulls into the side of the road. Frank walks slowly toward the car. He leans in to the passenger side window. We see the DRIVER reach out and touch Frank.

DRIVER
Are you okay, sir?

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

The DRIVER has a look of concern on his face. He's about fifty years old.

FRANK
Sir?

Frank pulls his head out of the car and looks at himself in the side mirror. It's the first time we see Frank as an old man. He's horrified. He's touching his face. He can't believe what he's seeing.

FRANK (CONT'D)
But I didn't laugh once. I didn't
laugh all day.

The Driver lets out a maniacal laugh. Frank leans back into the car window.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

The Driver is smiling at Frank.

DRIVER
They always get that part wrong.

The Driver, now about 20 years old, puts his attention toward the road and starts to slowly pull away. Frank lanes back and loses his balance slightly.

DRIVER (V.O.)
The mirth monster gets you by
taking your laughter away.

The car pulls off the side of the road and speeds away into the night as Frank slumps to his knees as the sound of the Drivers maniacal laughter fades with his taillights.

FADE TO BLACK.