

The Hollow Light

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INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

A slow pan through a dilapidated house. Claustrophobic walls lined with tired wallpaper and black mould can be seen by the sunlight which stretches through cracks in the boarded up windows. This is not a place you would want to call home. But two people do.

MARLON (Early 30s, Black) paces through his daily routine, collecting rain water from scattered buckets and cups. While CLAIRE (40s, White) tears strips from book pages and neatly folds them into the soles of threadbare shoes.

She pauses to read. It makes her smile.

Grabbing a pritt stick from the biscuit tin beside her, she rolls it between her palms to warm it up.

With delicate precision she sticks the scrap of paper on the wall.

MARLON heads over to read it.

**IF YOU SEE SOMEONE WITHOUT A SMILE TODAY, GIVE THEM YOURS.**

He shoots a cynical look to CLAIRE who grins broadly.

We pull back to reveal the wall is covered in gaudy inspirational quotes.

CLAIRE  
(playfully)  
You'll break one day.

MARLON  
Yeah?

CLAIRE  
Yep.

She points to a wall quote. **YOU ARE WHAT YOU BELIEVE YOURSELF TO BE.**

MARLON moves with the precision of habit. The noisy generator gets a quick kick, the one-ring stove lights up, two cups, one tea bag between two.

MARLON  
That's supposed to be profound is it?  
It doesn't even make sense. If I  
believe myself to be outside of this  
(MORE)

MARLON (CONT'D)

house, on a beach somewhere drinking a cold brew. A fine woman asking if I can put lotion on her back. Doesn't make it so does it?

CLAIRE

Okay, you've made your point. Say when...

Her finger runs over the horoscopes of an dog-eared newspaper. MARLON'S focus is drawn to something outside.

MARLON

When.

CLAIRE (O.S.)

Oh, Aquarius today. Good sign that. As the Aquarius moon shifts, trust what repeats. The stillness you feel is not stagnation, but preparation. The moon does not speak - it reflects. Hmmm, interesting. Okay pick one for me. Say when...

MARLON stays fixed outside. CLAIRE'S finger glides over the newspaper.

CLAIRE

Say when.

MARLON (O.S.)

When

CLAIRE

Tsk. Aquarius again. I'll just go to Leo/

MARLON

/I thought you lot didn't believe in that stuff.

CLAIRE

Who lot?

MARLON

You know. 'God-y' types.

MARLON returns to where CLAIRE is sat. Opening a Chef's knife roll bag he carefully examines the blades and begins to sharpen one.

Attempting to disarm his sullenness, CLAIRE finds an old can.

CLAIRE

Okay Chef, I asked the supplier for his finest curation of canned goods and he has confirmed in good faith that this is premium à la carte. He did apologise for yesterday and has assured me that we wouldn't be getting dog food 2 days in a row.

MARLON is in no mood for role-play and offers a hand to take the can. CLAIRE refuses and grabs the tin opener.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Nay Nay Chef, allow me.

She opens it, taking a whiff before opening fully.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Oh, I don't believe it.

MARLON looks defeated, not dog food again.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Beans! See I told you our luck would change.

MARLON is not in the mood for CLAIRE'S high jinx.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Well you could look a bit more excited. Oh, smell that.

MARLON

I know what beans smell like.

CLAIRE finds two small bowls.

MARLON (CONT'D)

I'm good.

CLAIRE

You've not had anything since yesterday.

MARLON

I said I'm good, you have them.

Water bubbles on the stove. CLAIRE finishes the tea, handing MARLON a cup. A peace offering?

CLAIRE  
Have I done something to upset you?

MARLON  
Nope.

CLAIRE  
It's just you seem a bit off.

MARLON  
I'm fine.

CLAIRE  
Well now I know that somethings up,  
no-one who says they're fine is  
*actually* fine/

MARLON  
Claire, just leave it yeah. I'm not  
hungry. You need them more than me.

We pan down to reveal CLAIRE'S very large baby bump. MARLON returns to the window. The conversation has ended.

CLAIRE pours 3/4 of the beans in a bowl and begins eating.

CLAIRE  
Always reminds me of John, cold beans.  
We had a gas stove but never used it.  
Probably still here somewhere. He  
always said he preferred them like  
this.

MARLON  
I need to talk to you.

CLAIRE  
I knew something was up.

He sits opposite her, it feels serious.

MARLON  
There's a few things actually. (BEAT)  
We need to talk about John/

CLAIRE  
What do we need to talk about?

MARLON  
We can't keep him upstairs.

CLAIRE

What. Why!?!

MARLON

You're not telling me you can't smell that?

CLAIRE

No, No. It'll be fine, I probably didn't use enough sheets. I'll wrap him again. Just let me take care of it.

She darts out of the room.

MARLON

Claire!