

**Every Night**  
**By Steve Lawrence**

**MUSIC: 'O MAGNUM MYSTERIUM' PLAYS FROM 0'30. THE WAVES AND SEAGULLS COME IN AT ABOUT 0'50 AND THEN FADE DOWN TO 1'10 AS THE FIRST LINE IS SPOKEN.**

**SCENE 1      EXT: SEASIDE                      DAY**

**FX:      LAPPING WAVES / SEAGULLS**

Every night I dream of a different life, a life by the sea in a place whose name I can't remember. It's green and tranquil and I'm at peace. There's music, a song I still feel inside my bones. When I wake up in the morning I try and hum it but it's never quite the same.

I dream of the time before I met the withered old man with his thin white hair and long yellow fingernails.

**FX:      KNOCK AT THE DOOR**

Every night he knocks at my door, a dark presence out of a grim children's fairy tale. I answer even though I know I shouldn't.

**FX:      DOOR OPENING**

**SCENE 2      EXT: CITY STREET                      DAY**

**FX:      POLICE SIRENS / CARS SPEEDING PAST**

I'm not cruel like he was; I've never turned anyone, made them like me. People think they want to live forever but what they don't realise

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is how dull it is. You can't do family, your job options are limited at best and then there's the hunger - the worst symptom of this disease.

**MUSIC:      LOW THUD OF DANCE MUSIC PLAYS FROM INSIDE  
THE CLUB. IT'S MUFFLED BY THE WALLS.**

It gnaws at you, I can't tell you how long I've been like this, hundreds of years maybe. It dominates my thoughts so much that I struggle to form any kind of memory. It's like my whole existence is one long hangover punctuated by flashbacks to a shameful night before.

But in a way it's better to forget. To survive like this you need to harden yourself. The hunger doesn't leave room for feelings.

**FX:      HEAVY DOOR OPENING**

**SCENE 3      INT: SUBTERFUGE      NIGHT**

**MUSIC:      A BURST OF DANCE MUSIC PLAYS AS WE ENTER  
THE CLUB. IT PLAYS LOW IN THE BACKGROUND.**

I spend most of my waking hours in bad nightclubs. Not that any nightclubs are good it's just easier to find the type of person I need, the type others wouldn't notice going missing, in those that are openly dreadful. Tonight I'm at Subterfuge and it definitely fits the bill. It has the usual sticky floor, stripper pole, fingering on the fire escape vibe but what makes it stand out is a man inside the club selling hot dogs from a cart. People find the idea of drinking blood repulsive but have you seen what goes into a hot dog?

**FX:      KETCHUP SQUIRTING**

My choice of feed tonight is also somewhat limited. There are a few options but nothing truly appetising. I consider an older lady - a Sharon maybe - who looks like she's come straight from the office but when I see she's dancing round a pile of bags I presume she has back-up. Also sizing up his options is a goatee wearing man in a lime green shirt - a predator by choice rather than necessity. His type disgust me but they make useful hounds - I follow his gaze to her.

**FX: RECORD SCRATCH (INTERRUPTING BACK-GROUND MUSIC)**

**MUSIC: 'O MAGNUM MYSTERIUM' STARTS AGAIN AT 4'40 AND PLAYS THROUGH UNTIL 4'52 WHERE IT MERGES BACK INTO THE LOW BACKGROUND HUM OF THE CLUB'S MUSIC.**

Dancing alone in the corner. A faded t-shirt with some cartoonish logo showing 'ninja turtles', torn greying jeans, dark red hair set against pale white skin. She dances with a rare self-confidence as if oblivious to her lurid surroundings. I can taste her already.

I ease into a dance walk as I cross the floor. Susan from the office tries to intercept me but I duck a shoulder. I'm about to reach my target when lime green makes his move. He invades her personal space and initiates contact through a series of arm touches she isn't impressed with. She tries to tell him something but he just uses it as an excuse to lean in. My instincts tell me to rip his throat out but I know there are better ways. I walk over and insert my arm into the gradually decreasing gap between the two of them. I push my beer into her hand and point to her and then to myself as if to indicate we're together and I've just been at the bar. Lime shirt rolls his eyes and skulks away. She takes a slug of the drink and mouths thanks.

And then it's just the two of us and for once I don't know what to do or say, there's something about her that makes me dizzy - nauseous even - like I haven't fed for a couple of days. She takes my hand and sends a jolt of electricity through my being. I want her.

She spins herself, she's a spinner. She spins again and again and then spins me and then her and then me again. Suddenly we're face to face and I'm looking into her eyes and I realise what it is that's made me feel like this... I recognise her.

The green eyes just ever so slightly too close together, the oversized forehead that you might uncharitably call a fivehead, those dimples. I look into her eyes and into the past and I hear the song.

**MUSIC: 'O MAGNUM MYSTERIUM' COMES BACK IN AT 2'20. WE HEAR UP TO AROUND 2'49 WITHOUT ANY DIALOGUE BEFORE DIALOGUE CONTINUES ABOVE THE TRACK. IT IS THEN INTERRUPTED BY SHORT BURSTS OF THE CLUB MUSIC (SYMBOLISING HIS MEMORY STILL FALTERING) BEFORE ENDING ABRUPTLY AT AROUND 3'20 AT 'NAMES'.**

**SCENE 4     INT: COTTAGE                     NIGHT**

Recognise is probably the wrong word. I've never met her before but there's a connection between us. Her look transports me to the place from my dream but now it's clear and defined rather than a hazy vision. I am living in a cottage by the sea and a woman who isn't her but who looks like her is sitting at the kitchen table. I remember this woman; playing together as children, young love and then husband and wife and a child of our own to come. How could I have forgotten? Why can't I remember her name... their names?

**FX: ROAR OF FIRE**

We sit by the fire. An arm around her shoulder and a hand resting above the life growing inside.

**FX: KNOCK AT THE DOOR**

She tells me to answer and I know it's him. I want to bolt the door or open it and stick a piece of wood through his black shrivelled heart. Inside I scream 'no' but I go and do what I do every time.

**FX: DOOR CREAKING OPEN**

**SCENE 5 INT: SUBTERFUGE NIGHT**

And then I'm back in the club. I pull her close and taste her sweat as I suffocate her in my arms.

**MUSIC: 'O MAGNUM MYSTERIUM' PLAYS FROM 2'40 TO 2'47 AS HE'S STILL LOST SLIGHTLY IN THE DREAM.**

She pulls back and I can see that she's confused. I offer my hand and spin her again. We dance for hours that feel like seconds, I find myself staring at her face but she either doesn't notice or doesn't care. Being with her anchors me to a better time, a better me. A me that cares for something other than my own needs.

**FX: CLUB LIGHTS COMING ON**

Obnoxiously bright lights signal it's time to leave, the dancefloor is sparsely populated with the sad, lonely and drunk. My lime shirted ri-

val stands alone and stares the type of vacant stare that ends with him falling asleep in the midst of trying to pleasure himself.

We exit past a long line of people waiting for a hot dog.

**SCENE 6      EXT: SUBTERFUGE                      NIGHT**

Outside the club we navigate a drunken brawl, Sharon from the office's nose is bleeding and she's using her bag as a weapon against the bouncers. I don't fancy their chances.

**FX:      PUNCH THROWN**

My dance partner wants to get some food which is ironic since this is the first time in forever that my hunger isn't the only thing on my mind.

**SCENE 7      INT: CHICKEN KINGDOM                      NIGHT**

I study her as she studies the menu in the less than aptly named Chicken Kingdom. In this light her resemblance to the girl of my dreams is a bit less uncanny, her forehead a normal size, her green eyes a kind of turquoise.

We sit at a table in the corner and she picks at garlic bread whilst I pretend it's not giving me a rash, she talks and I listen. It seems like she spends a lot of time watching television boxsets and true crime documentaries. There's an ex-boyfriend but he only contacts her when he's drunk and sad. Its been a long time since I spoke to someone who isn't like me and I find it fascinating how she creates drama and meaning out of such small moments. I want to tell her that none of this really matters and that her loneliness isn't anything special or unique but I'm not sure if that's true.

Our legs brush and she runs her foot down the back of my calf, I take her hand and I start to focus my hypnotic powers. But this isn't the time. Not yet.

**SCENE 8    EXT: ROAD    NIGHT**

We take her chips and leave. She grabs my hand and suddenly there's an urgency to our encounter.

She drags me along the pavement and I try to ask where we're going but she's on a mission.

**SCENE 9    EXT: LOCAL PARK    NIGHT**

We come to a park and she vaults over the gate. She skips and runs to the ladies side of a severely neglected public toilet waving me in after her. My stomach lets out a tiny groan as I follow. I'm suddenly aware that we're alone and my needs are growing stronger.

**SCENE 10    INT: PUBLIC TOILET    NIGHT**

The place stinks and the walls are covered in graffiti - phone numbers promising a good time that surely won't arrive - straight away she's on top of me wrapping her arms around my neck pushing her tongue into my mouth. I kiss her back and try to find room for my own tongue.

She grabs at my trousers and fumbles with the belt buckle. I move down to kiss her neck and my mouth fills with saliva, I'm doing everything I can not to dribble on her. My body is literally trembling, I'm ready to feed, I need to feed but something is telling me no.

She lets out a snort of laughter as she yanks my belt from its loops and my trousers drop to the floor. I take a deep breath and prepare myself. I look her in the eyes and she smiles at me.

**SCENE 11   INT. COTTAGE                      NIGHT**

**FX:      FIRE BLAZING / WOODEN BEAMS COLLAPSING**

I'm there outside the cottage - our house is burning and I'm just standing there watching and waiting for music that isn't going to come. I shield my eyes and mouth and rush toward the door. I think for a moment I can save her.

I go to shout her name but it's stuck in my throat, why can't I remember it? My body trembles, there's a horrid smell, an evil taste in the blackening air. I walk into our bedroom and there she is.

Slumped in the chair, fire dancing around her - her throat ripped open - a pool of blood beneath. I want to look away but can't. I curse the demon but something inside screams 'you did this' and I know it's true.

I kneel down in front of her and take her hand and try and tell her that it's going to be alright even though it won't ever be again. Suddenly it comes to me. Her name is Mary.

**SCENE 12   INT: PUBLIC TOILET                      NIGHT**

I'm back in the grim surroundings of the public toilet and something has changed. I'm flooded with memories, solid now rather than flashes, of Mary and our life together, good and bad and everything between. My hunger joined by a different more immediate pain, a pain in



my gut so strong that I feel like I might pass out, I've been suppressing it so long it takes me a moment to realise what it is - guilt.

I clutch my stomach and back away from her tripping and stumbling over my trousers. She asks if I'm going to be sick and all I can reply is 'I am sick' and point at the dirty mirror failing to show my reflection. She stares at it for a long moment, touches it, checks to see if it's some kind of trick. She rubs her eyes trying to rub away anything in her system that could make her see this or not as the case may be. She begins to speak but can't figure the question. I promise I'm not going to hurt her and I think I mean it. She turns and I can see she's shaking, she takes a step toward the door before turning and looking back at the mirror and then me. She asks what I am... who I am, I can't remember the last time someone asked me this.

I am a vampire. I kill and I feed and now I remember who I used to be I don't want to be this anymore. It all comes spilling out of me. I tell her about who I was and how I became like this, every life sacrificed, every horrifying act committed in order to satisfy myself, everything that being with her tonight has helped me regain.

I reach the end of my story, I'm hyperventilating and tears are forming in my eyes. I expect her to scream or run away or call me a monster but instead she wraps her arms around me. She rubs my back and tells me it's going to be OK. Slowly my breathing steadies as I whisper apologies to her and Mary and a thousand other women.

She takes my hand and I look into her eyes and she isn't Mary anymore, she's her and she's showing me compassion I know I don't deserve. She asks if I really want to stop and I tell her that I do. She looks toward the door and I can see it's starting to get light.

**SCENE 13    EXT: LOCAL PARK                      NIGHT**

**FX:        BIRDS TWEETING**

**MUSIC:            ‘O MAGNUM MYSTERIUM’ COMES BACK IN AGAIN**  
**AT THE 6’00 MARK. IT’S QUIET AT FIRST BUT BUILDS AS WE**  
**MOVE TOWARD THE END.**

The daylight causes me to break into a cold sweat, the pain intense and immediate. I feel like I’m being stung by wasps but from the inside out - this time I might actually be sick. I drop to my knees and look back to the alluring dankness of the toilets. I start to think of ways to save myself; robbing a blood bank or advertising for volunteers. She picks me up and lets me lean against her. She tells me to be brave and I mouth ‘thank you’.

She keeps me upright for a few steps more and for the first time in a long time I set eyes on the sun. I’m not too numb to appreciate the warmth against my skin. I turn to her and try to apologise again but before I do she kisses me.

As her lips touch mine the pain subsides and the fog clears. In this moment I understand that I’ve gotten it all wrong, that it’s better to remember - that we need our guilt and our regrets and even our hungers because that’s what makes us human and it’s when we harden ourselves and deny this that we become monsters. I want to break off the kiss so I can tell her but as I do so I realise her lips aren’t touching mine anymore, nothing of mine is touching anything. She grasps at me as I fade to nothing and I want to tell her it’s fine because someday we’ll all be nothing but I can’t because I’m gone.

**THE END**