

Your Landlady

By

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DARKNESS

The sound of the gravelly scratch of an answering machine plays the voice of a old, but still rather demanding woman.

MAVIS (V.O.)
Hello? This is Mavis Jenkle, your
landlady....

Opening credits roll.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

WOMAN 1(V.O.)
Masks.

Two women stand in a living room. They are dressed from head to foot in dark clothing and are both pulling dark ski type masks over their face.

WOMAN 2
Check.

WOMAN 1
Basket.

Woman 2 places a large laundry basket on a table.

WOMAN 2
Check -- Oh, wait a minute I think
I forgot something.

WOMAN 1
Melissa! I thought you said you had
everything.

The motion freezes for a moment on Woman 2 while a title card spells out her name: M'Lyzzah. Yes, that's right. It's pronounced Melissa, but spelled that way.

M'LYZZAH
Just a minute.

She dashes out of the room. We hear a large thump quickly followed by an exclamation of "Ouch".

WOMAN 1
(Calling out)
Are you alright?

(CONTINUED)

M'LYZZAH (V.O.)
Yeah. Honesty, do I have to
really wear this. I can't see in
this thing.

Motion freezes on Woman 1 while a title card spells out her
name: Aunistee.

AUNISTEE
We gotta wear em! Otherwise she
might see us.

M'Lyzzah returns into the room holding a few items of
delicate looking clothing. She places them in the basket on
the table.

M'LYZZAH
I know. Alright. Check.

AUNISTEE
You sure?

M'LYZZAH
Yes.

AUNISTEE
Cause, we aren't getting second
shot at this.

M'Lyzzah nods her head impatient and annoyed. She places
items in the basket as Woman 1 calls them out.

AUNISTEE
Detergent.

M'LYZZAH
Check.

AUNISTEE
Flashlight.

M'LYZZAH
Check.

AUNISTEE
Key.

Aunistee places a key on an elastic loop around her wrist.

AUNISTEE
Check. OK--this is it.

EXT. OUTSIDE DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Spy music plays while the women, using a flash light, sneak along the side of their building. They approach a large picture window. Inside the room sits a very old woman. She is transfixed on the T.V. and eating something out of a bowl. A little poodle sits nervously next to her. The poodle suddenly turns his head toward the window. M'Lyzzah and Aunistee duck quickly. They wait a few moments holding their breath. A few moments pass. Aunistee nods while M'Lyzzah motions wiping her forehead in relief.

They crawl under the window and approach an iron gate. They open it and walk through into a very small gated Courtyard. On one side is the door to the house. On the other side is a small out building. M'Lyzzah and Aunistee stand and look at the building for a moment. A heavenly choir sings while radiant light glows on the washer and the dryer you can see through the window. The two smile excitedly. Aunistee carefully closes the gate, but the lever gives the quietest of squeaks and it's high pitched tweet echos in the yard.

INT. MAVIS' LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Inside the house the squeak reaches the ears of Peppy, the poodle sitting next to the old woman. His head snaps toward the sound and he launches into a series of loud and continuous barks, jumping off the sofa and running over to the door.

EXT. YARD - CONTINUOUS

M'Lyzzah and Aunistee panic and run and hide behind some bushes, pressing themselves on the side of the house. The light of the door to the house turns on and the door opens.

The Old Woman, MAVIS JENKLE stands there while the little poodle comes running out. He immediately comes over to M'Lyzzah and Aunistee who try to wave him away. He only stands there looking at them, giving a sharp little bark every now and then.

The gig is up. M'Lyzzah is the first to accept defeat. She pulls off her masks and steps into the light, trying to act nonchalant.

M'LYZZAH

Oh, hi Mavis. We just thought we'd do little laundry.

Action freezes on Mavis while a title card spells her name: Mavis and then on the Poodle: Peppy.

(CONTINUED)

MAVIS

I've told you girls. You can't do laundry after dark.

Aunistee leaves the shadows and joins M'Lyzzah and takes off her mask. Mavis is slightly started by her appearance.

AUNISTEE

But Mavis, it's the middle of winter. It's dark before we get home from work.

MAVIS

Can't you do it on the weekend?

AUNISTEE

Yeah, but sometimes we can't do it all and we run out of underwear.

MAVIS

I don't know what you are going to do, but you just can't do laundry after dark.

M'LYZZAH

But why Mavis?

MAVIS

The light from the washing machine will attract all kinds of vagrants. I don't want them breaking in there and stealing my things.

M'LYZZAH

I'm sorry, but Mavis what vagrants are you talking about?

MAVIS

The ones across the parking lot over there.

She motions toward a very large and very tall chain link fence with razor wire on the top. It is covered with ivy. One can only assume there really is a parking lot on the other side.

AUNISTEE

So let me get this strait. You are afraid the vagrants on the other side of the parking lot will see the light from the washing machine, cross the 100 yards, climb over the

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

AUNISTEE (cont'd)
razor wire fence, break into the
laundry room and steal your soda?

MAVIS
Yes.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Aunistee returns defeated to their living room.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

M'Lyzzah enters the kitchen and opens a cabinet in the wall. It is crammed full of jars of chex mix. M'Lyzzah takes two of the jars down and opens one.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

M'Lyzzah enters with the Chex Mix. As she walks by Aunistree she gives her a jar. Aunistee paces the floor while M'Lyzza falls in a heap into a chair and begins to munch on the chex mix.

AUNISTEE
Oil. We need to oil the gate. We
can do it during the day. She'll
never guess why even if she does
notice--

M'LYZZAH
Oh, forget it! It's never going to
work. We just need to move.

AUNISTEE
But this is a great place. It's
huge. And the rent is amazing for
this neighborhood.

M'LYZZAH
So it seems as if my choice is a
great place to live, or clean
underwear. I'll have to mull that
one over.

M'Lyzzah gets up and walks out of the room.

AUNISTEE
What are you doing.

(CONTINUED)

M'LYZZAH (V.O.)

I'm going to wash my panties out in the sink.

DARKNESS

MAVIS (V.O.)

Are you there? This is Mavis Jenkel, your landlady. The garage door is open again.

INT. MAVIS' LIVING ROOM - THE NEXT DAY

It is a room filled with old fashioned furniture including doilies on the arms. An urn is featured prominently on one of the tables.

MAVIS

Just a minute, I need to finish a call with my son.

Mavis leaves the room. There is a large floral print couch with an open box of mint chocolates resting on the cushions. M'Lyzzah looks around at all the pictures on the wall, keeping a wide berth around the the urn. Photographs show several versions of a much younger Mavis. As a child with parents. A wedding picture. Mavis and her husband with a young baby in their arms. School pictures of a young boy progressively getting older. Then M'Lyzzah comes to a strange homage.

It is a collage picture frame filled with nothing but pictures of Peppy. The pictures appeared to all be taken within a few moments of each other and in every one of them Peppy is doing the same thing. Looking fearfully over his back as he tries to escape the camera. In the background Mavis speaks with her son for a few moments.

MAVIS

I'm not a child, you don't have to remind me to eat. (Pause) I just had lunch. (Pause) I made myself a sandwich.

M'Lyzzah looks at the kitchen. It is spotless, not a crumb in sight. She opens the trash can with her foot and peeks inside. It's empty.

MAVIS

(To her son) Are you coming up this weekend? See you then.

(CONTINUED)

M'Lyzzah quickly leaves the kitchen area. Mavis hangs up and rejoins M'Lyzzah holding a jar of chex mix.

M'LYZZAH

Oh, more chex mix. (Jokingly) You know, this is wrecking our diets.

MAVIS

Oh, Aunistee doesn't need to diet.

M'LYZZAH

Uhh, yeah. Hey, Mavis, the garbage disposal still isn't working. I think you need to get a repair man out here or something.

Mavis is totally befuddled by this.

MAVIS

Oh, well, ummm. Oh. I...

M'LYZZAH

Do you have a repair man you use?

MAVIS

Did you put celery in the disposal.

M'LYZZAH

I'm sorry? What?

MAVIS

Celery will break the garbage disposal.

M'LYZZAH

Celery?

MAVIS

Un-huh.

M'LYZZAH

Um...I don't think so. No.

MAVIS

Oh, well maybe my son can take a look at it this weekend.

M'LYZZAH

OK. Well, gotta go. Thanks.

MAVIS

You're welcome.

M'Lyzzah walks slowly to the doorway with Mavis shuffling behind.

M'LYZZAH
You'll send you son over?

M'Lyzzah has left and is walking toward the gate, but Mavis calls after her.

MAVIS
You sure you didn't put any
celery in the disposal?

DARKNESS

MAVIS (V.O.)
Are you there? This is Mavis
Jenkle, your landlady. Girls you
can't put your jeans in the washing
machine. They will break it.

INT. LIVING ROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

M'Lyzzah is folding laundry while Aunistee eats a bowl of cereal, watching T.V. Suddenly Aunistee turns off the T.V. and holds completely still, listening. There is the soft "Wigawigawiga" sound of an older model car. M'Lyzza and Aunistree look at each other - recognition and then panic in their eyes.

AUNISTEE
Oh my gosh she backing out -- she's
gonna hit our cars!

They both suddenly jump up and dash out of the house.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER THAT DAY

M'lyzzah is in the kitchen sitting at the table looking at a magazine eating chex mix. Suddenly Aunistee rushes in with her laundry basket. She throws the basket on the floor and goes over to the cabinet of chex mix jars and begins frantically throwing them away.

M'LYZZAH
Um...what are you doing?

Aunistee stops and looks at M'Lyzzah, a wild look in her eyes. She launches towards her and knocks the chex mix out of her hand, grabs the bowl and throws the mix in the garbage.

(CONTINUED)

M'LYZZAH
Have you lost your mind?! What is
the matter with you?

AUNISTEE
The chex mix is....

INT. MAVIS' LIVING ROOM - A FEW MOMENTS BEFORE

Mavis is sitting in a big comfy chair. On the floor is a large bowl with chex mix makings that she is mixing it with a big spoon. Aunistee knocks at the door and Mavis gets up and shuffles over to let her in.

AUNISTEE
Hi Mavis. I've got your mail.

MAVIS
Thank you, dear. I was just --

Suddenly Aunistees eyes go wide with horror. She holds her shaking hand up, pointing to something. Mavis turns to see. There, ear deep in the bowl of chex mix, is Peppy chomping away with zeal. He lifts his head and bits of chex mix sticks to his face for a moment before some of it falls back in the bowl.

AUNISTEE
The dog....

MAVIS
(Turning to see)
Oh, he's so hungry.

Aunistee looks at Mavis in disbelief and then a slow realization dawns on her face.

MAVIS
Look at that. Peppy just loves
chex mix.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Both M'Lyzzah and Aunistee groaning, bending over and holding their mouths.

AUNISTEE
He was just rooting in that stuff
like he knew what was -- and he
liked it!

INT. LIVING ROOM - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

Aunistee and M'Lyzzah are stretched out on the couch and chair recovering from the memories of chex mix and dog saliva. The phone rings. M'Lyzzah and Aunistee look at each other for a second.

M'LYZZAH AND AUNISTEE

Not me.

M'LYZZAH

Tie.

AUNISTEE

Just let the machine get it.

The machine turns on and Mavis' voice comes through the speaker.

MAVIS (V.O.)

Hello? Girls? This is Mavis Jenkle, your landlady. The gate was left open and it's a wonder Peppy wasn't clear down the street! Now this gate can not be left open. That is all.

AUNISTEE

That is a wonder because if I were Peppy I know I'd be out of here.

M'LYZZAH

Poor Peppy.

AUNISTEE

I think that chex mix is all he's eating.

M'LYZZAH

You know what? I think that's all she's eating.

AUNISTEE

Yeah.

M'LYZZAH

No, I'm serious. Think about. When was the last time we saw her eating anything other than chex mix, or those mint chocolates.

They both contemplate for a moment.

(CONTINUED)

AUNISTEE

I've heard that sometimes older people forget to eat.

M'LYZZAH

How can you forget to eat?

AUNISTEE

I don't know. It's just too much trouble or something.

M'LYZZAH

She probably just doesn't want to eat alone.

The both are quiet for a moment before they look at each other, the same idea coming to them at the same time.

INT. KITCHEN -- THE NEXT DAY.

AUNISTEE (V.O)

Plates.

M'Lyzzah stands at the table. Aunistee is handing her the setting pieces as she places them on the table.

M'LYZZAH

Check.

AUNISTEE

Forks and knives.

M'LYZZAH

Check.

AUNISTEE

Glasses.

M'LYZZAH

Check.

There is a knock at the door.

AUNISTEE

Our Landlady.

M'LYZZAH

Check.

Aunistee answers the door for Mavis, who seems delighted to be invited. She walks in with Peppy at the end of a leash.

(CONTINUED)

MAVIS

Oh goodness, it smells so good!

AUNISTEE

M'Lyzzah makes a mean lasagna. Hi Peppy. Don't worry, we didn't forget you.

She places a bowl of dog food on the floor. Peppy immediately starts to devour it. Aunistee bends down to pet him.

AUNISTEE

(Quietly to Peppy)

Don't worry, there's going to be a lot more of that from now on.

Music starts to play as the the three gather round and then sit at the table. After a quick blessing they pass the food around. Peppy looks up from his food bowl and sees them all laughing and chatting with each other. Mavis takes a big bite of lasagna and closes her eyes in appreciation. Peppy wags his tail enthusiastically before diving back in his own bowl. Aunistee and M'Lyzzah smile slyly at each other as they watch Mavis eat. Enjoying the food and the company they all continue to eat with relish.

Roll Credits

INT. KITCHEN - 30 MINUTES LATER

The trio is putting the last bites of desert into their mouths. They are quiet and wipe their lips with a napkins.

MAVIS

Girls, that was wonderful. Thank you so much. (After a moment of thought.) You know, it's too bad there isn't some way we can turn off that light in the washing machine.

Aunistee and M'Lyzzah suddenly turn their heads to look at Mavis, and then to look at each other, the dawn just coming to their eyes.