The Conversation

By

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SCENE 1

 FADE IN

INT. A DIMLY LIT COMMON ROOM IN A REMOTE STOPOVER, NESTLED IN THE FOOTHILLS OF THE WELSH MOUNTAINSIDE. – NIGHT

There are six men sat around two plastic-topped tables that have been pushed together. Outside it is snowing heavily. Each man is using their mobile phones to video TODD who sits at the head of the table. The atmosphere is heavy, tense. With the exception of TODD, the other men look tired, strained and angry.

 PHIL

 (WEARILY)

 Start at the beginning.

 TODD

 Is there any point now? You seem to have decided.

 PAUL

 (VENOMOUSLY)

 Fuck you. I don’t know why were even listening—

 LES

 Let him speak. I want to hear it.

 PAUL

 (TO LES)

 It’s bullshit. All of it.

MARK gets up and moves to the window, looking out into the snow.

 MARK

 Can’t get a signal. It’s really coming down. Cars are covered.

If we’re going, it has to be now.

 PHIL

 (STUDYING TODD CLOSELY)

 None of us are going anywhere. Are we?

 TODD

 (SIGHING)

 No. This is your chance. It is mine too. I can

 explain things to you. Make you understand.

 I’m trying to make this as easy as possible.

 Believe me. He wants this, too.

DAN

 (HOPEFUL)

 Then he’s still alive. Even now?

 TODD

 (PAUSE)

 Truthfully. No. But everything he was *is*

 here. Try to understand. We have very little

 time and I am reaching out to you to make this …

 easier. It doesn’t have to end in violence. Really.

 It doesn’t.

 PAUL slaps the table hard and jerks back. His gaze flashing between the others.

 PAUL

 See! See, now? I fucking said it from the start!

 Gone. Fucking dead. And you.  *You’re wearing his fucking*

 *skin.*

 MARK

 Cool down.

 PAUL

 (TO TODD)

 Perhaps I want fucking violence!

 DAN

 (TO TODD)

 What are you? A parasite. A leech.

 TODD

 (GUARDEDLY)

 I know this will be hard for you all to grasp. I have

 done this, started the communication when I could simply

 have put something in all of your drinks. I understand friendship,

 loyalty and what you all mean to each other. In my long, long

 life I have seldom come across such a thing.

TODD leans back, watching the group and then seems to come to a decision.

 TODD (CON’T)

 This is the only place. The *only* place that has resisted.

 It is as though you have a profound ignorance of your place

 in the web of reality. I have lived for eons, literally billions of

 years, and I come with the greatest gift. At last, I have found a

 world that can truly appreciate it! It’s amazing.

PHIL leans in close. The mobile he was using to film the exchange forgotten. He stares at TODD with almost pure hatred, then after a long moment seems to get himself under control.

 PHIL

 (ICILY)

 I *appreciated* my friend. I appreciated the soul in

 there that you’ve stolen. He had a life, kids. A future,

Dan’s wrong, you’re not a leech or a parasite. You’re a killer.

But I wanna hear the rest. I want to know why he, why we, have to let

 this happen. Cos, right now. I’m agreeing with Paul.

 Violence seems about right. Keep talking. While you

 can.

He clenches his fists and leans in close. Eyes burning into TODD’S, eager for vengeance.

 LES

 (TO HIMSELF)

 For all we know, you already put something in our food.

 In our drinks.

MARK, who is taking a long pull on a can of lager, spits it out

MARK

 Thanks a fucking lot.

LES shrugs. MARK returns to looking out the window.

 MARK (CON’T)

 We have to go now. Path is gone. We need to get

 the hell out of here.

 TODD

 There really is nowhere to go. I am everywhere.

The option I am giving you is simple. Accept the communion and

 be eternal or face oblivion.

 There are still small pockets of you in remote areas,

 but nowhere I cannot eventually reach. Let’s talk

 while we can. Perhaps I can convince you, as your friend,

 that resisting will hurt only you. You know how persuasive

 I can be.

 PAUL

 Never. You’ll never get me. Fuck off.

 TODD

 (RESIGNED TO PAUL)

 Yeah. I knew out of everyone you would be the hardest

 to convince. It’s why Les is right. And that at the start of this trip that

I put a part of me in your drink. I am already working within

you Paul, and for you at least, it is only a matter of time.

 FADE TO BLACK

SCENE 2

 FADE IN

INT. COMMON ROOM. -NIGHT

Some of the men pace the room. MARK stays near the window. PAUL is wildly pacing, muttering obscenities. LES is unsuccessfully trying to calm him from lunging at TODD. DAN and PHIL are listening to TODD.

 TODD

 A little history for you. It will help you reconsider your

 position. I want to show you how important you are.

 For eons I have sought out life. Nowhere else have I found what

 lives here on this lonely, cut-off world. For the first time

 in countless millennia, I have finally encountered beings that

 can conceive the universe as I do.

 You are profoundly special. Unlike any other species I have

 encountered, *you* have the capacity to study and comprehend

 the chasm of the infinite universe.

 My first meeting with your kind ended in disaster. If I knew now what

 I know now. Many were lost. I … I realised your importance

 too late and was forced to defend myself from your aggression

 and lack of understanding. Nobody’s perfect, right?

 It was only after a forced communion that I understood, but by

 then the damage had been done.

They hunted me and I was unable to reach out to them and

convince them of my intent.

 PHIL

 To take us over. To infect us with your filth.

 TODD.

 No. Never that. Everything … *everything* I have encountered

 on a million worlds is simple biomass. Cellular structures, bacterium

 or multi-cellular organisms without the capacity for true thought.

 They react to the universe, to their environment, but cannot contemplate

 their place in it. Now, I have finally found another organism that *can.*

 DAN

 What do you mean? What exactly are you?

 TODD

 A traveller. An explorer. Your species is what I have sought

 since I first looked upon this reality. Another, like me. At first, I

 thought you were simple biomass, like the others I had encountered.

 Dull, simplistic, aggressive lifeforms with only the capacity for violence

and survival. After the first communion, I realised the error but

 I … I had made too many mistakes. How could I have known?

 DAN

 We’re nothing … nothing like you.

 PAUL

 Just how fucked am I?

 TODD

 (IGNORING PAUL)

 We strive for knowledge. We have the same goals, wants and desires.

 But, you’re right. And that is why the communion is essential.

 MARK

 You said that word earlier. What is that? What communion? Seems to

 me, Paul’s fucking right. You’re just wearing Todd’s skin. You look like

 him. Sound like him, but you’re *not* him.

 PHIL

 And how is it *right?*

 TODD

 Think on this. When you die, everything that you are is gone.

 No matter how famous, how *infamous*, how well-loved or admired

 you were, all that is lost. Forever. When I first found your species I

 was ecstatic. For the first time in endless eons, I had found someone

 to share this glorious universe with. Someone to marvel as I did at its

 wonders. Then I learned the horrible truth.

 LES

 What truth?

 TODD

 (QUIETLY)

 That you wither and die. And then there is nothing. In a mere few decades

 only a scant few will remember you. In a century, hardly anyone will.

 Then, in a shockingly short comparative time, no one will know that you

ever existed at all.

 LES

 Records. Stuff is written down, Todd. Videos, songs, books.

Things passed down through the centuries.

 TODD

You don’t understand. The personalities are gone. Erased forever.

Memories fade. Time whitewashes everything. Everything except me.

 MARK

So? What you’re offering, doesn’t sound much better.

 PAUL

 (DISGUSTED)

It’s not an offer. I feel like I’ve been raped.

 PHIL

You’re saying if we agree to this … communion, that we’re

preserved somehow? But gone just the same, right?

 TODD

No. Never gone. Through me, your essence will live forever.

As Todd, even now I am making new memories, experiencing things

exactly as he would have. The horrifying truth I discovered, that

still terrifies me, is that the only other species I have encountered

that is like me, lives such a fleeting existence!

He rubs a hand over his face in almost despair, desperate to get his point across.

TODD (CON’T)

 In no time at all that existence is gone. Destroyed forever and for

 all time. Wiped clean by an uncaring universe in the near blink of

 an eye. But I can change that. Through me, in a way, you’ll all

 live forever.

 LES

 (QUIETLY)

 I’ll be back. I need something from the car.

He exits through the main door and there is a howl of wind and snow as he departs.

 PHIL

 Short lives. But *our* lives. What about the years we

 have left? The memories *we* would experience.

 You’re stealing those.

 DAN

 I’m not going to make it easy.

 MARK

 Yeah. Thanks, Todd, but no thanks.

 PAUL

 I’m still me? Right? Guys?

TODD sighs again and tries one last time.

 TODD

 (IN EARNEST)

 Look. I control all that there is already.

 True, there are tiny pockets, remote areas like

 this one that I have only just touched on. Todd

 when I came upon him earlier was more accommodating.

 He understood. All that he was can be recalled in perfect

 clarity. Everything about him is *here.* Just as he always was.

 With communion there is no pain, just a simply process.

 Don’t force me to make this more difficult.

 Do you really want to see what else I can be?

 TODD (CON’T)

 Trust me. There are horrors from different suns to this one

 that I could show you that will make your last moments

 Hell.

LES reappears. He comes in from outside. He has two battered CONTAINERS and he places them on the table.

 LES

 (SMILING)

 Imitation. That’s all you are in the end. And, my image is copyrighted.

 TODD

 NO!

LES opens the CONTAINER and quickly dumps the petrol over TODD. The scene switches to an EXT view.

 CUT TO

SCENE 3

EXT. A LONELY STOPOVER NESTLED AT THE FOOT OF A WELSH MOUNTAIN.

Through one window we can see shadows moving and the lick of flames and smoke. Shouts and screams rend the air, and an alien howling that echoes then eventually dies.

 LES (O.S)

 What the fuck was that thing?

 PHIL (O.S)

 Tentacled beast, from around another sun. Like he said.

 PAUL (O.S)

 You gotta be fucking kidding. What … what now?

 LES (O.S)

 Now? Now we do you.

 CUT TO BLACK