

'SIMULACRES'

Written by
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FADE IN:

INT. MAIN ROOM - DAY

C.U. on OUT OF FOCUS green leaves in sunlight.

The leaves are from a BONSAI tree sitting in beautiful Japanese porcelain, on a brightly-lit white windowsill. Extravagantly manicured fingers caress the leaves.

MARIE, a dark haired, tall, ageless woman with faultless skin is tending the Bonsai, clipping the branches in focused concentration.

The large room around her is all white, white lines and expansive white walls. No pictures. Everything seems very sterile. Wide French doors look out onto a Japanese style Zen garden, bathed in morning sun.

A tiny drop of water falls on one of the leaves. Marie stares intensely at the tiny tear that just dropped from her cheek.

She presses a finger to her cheek then wipes the trail of water away. She stares curiously at the water on her pale hand.

An OLD MAN shuffles into the white room. He looks thoroughly confused at his surroundings.

His deeply wrinkled face and crumpled silk pajamas are at odds with the white perfection of the house. He has a bristling, unkempt gray beard. He seems thoroughly confused.

OLD MAN

Excuse me, do you live here, my dear?
Do you know the way out?

Marie winces more than smiles at him. She nods.

MARIE

Yes. Through the garden. I'll show you, my dear.

OLD MAN

Thank you.

EXT. JAPANESE ZEN GARDEN - DAY

Marie holds the arm of the old man, to steady him and hold him close. They walk slowly past the light swirls of the Zen garden, and its ornate water feature.

OLD MAN (cont'd)
It's so beautiful out here.

MARIE
Yes, it is, my dear. You have made
many beautiful things.

OLD MAN
I feel like I've been here before.

MARIE
You have. Many times.

OLD MAN
Many?

MARIE
Yes. Please try to remember.

OLD MAN
It must have been a long time ago.

MARIE
Many years ago, my dear Ezra.

EZRA'S head bows. He gasps.

MARIE (cont'd)
You are tired, my darling. Come
inside. It is almost time for dinner.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Marie stands at the kitchen counter chopping onions. She stares back through the kitchen window into the conservatory space where the old man sits. The old man is sleeping with a small white cat on his lap.

Marie hardly notices that tears are dripping down her cheek again. She grimaces and looks down, clenching her fist.

She has cut herself with the knife. She looks curiously at the small trickle of blood on her hand. Blood drips onto the perfectly white kitchen worktop.

Green lights glint on a compact box next to her on the wall. The box beeps softly. Marie wraps her injured hand in a small cloth and presses a button on the box.

MARIE (cont'd)
Yes?

A voice answers. Male, robotic, curiously devoid of emotion.

VOICE (O.S.)

Marie?

MARIE

Yes Paul. Can it wait?

P.A.U.L.

The time was decided on. How is your husband?

MARIE

He's fine.

P.A.U.L.

Please list Ezra's symptoms.

MARIE

Weakness, amnesia, loss of cognitive function, insomnia.

P.A.U.L.

His case is worsening.

MARIE

He is fine.

P.A.U.L.

Marie, the Simula process must begin.

MARIE

Must it?

P.A.U.L.

We will be there tomorrow.

MARIE

Can't it wait a little-

P.A.U.L.

It has been decided.

The tiny green light switches off.

Marie suddenly slams her injured hand into the counter. Her blood smears its pristine white surface. She stares at the blood with curiosity rather than pain.

She glances over at Ezra in the next room. His head nods as he snoozes with his cat on his lap.

Another tear drips down from Marie's bright green eyes. As she wipes it away blood smears her perfect porcelain cheek.

CUT TO:

INT. CONSERVATORY — DAY

Marie walks into the conservatory, holding a glass of water and a small pile of white clothes. Ezra is still sleeping in his wicker chair, snoring softly.

MARIE
I brought your pajamas.

EZRA
Is it late already?

MARIE
Late enough. Please be ready.

Marie puts the clothes down next to him.

EZRA
Ready for what? These are not my pajamas.

Ezra points at her cheek.

You've been crying?

MARIE
I have?

EZRA
Is that blood?

MARIE
I cut myself when I was cooking.

EZRA
Let me see.

She looks down at her hand. The cut has disappeared. Ezra looks confused as Marie pulls her hand away.

MARIE
Don't worry, Ezra.

Ezra frowns at her.

EZRA
Look. I found this.

He shows her an old cracked, dog eared photograph.

It shows Marie as she is now arm in arm with a broad-shouldered bearded man, in his forties perhaps. They are both smiling happily in the Zen garden.

EZRA (cont'd)

Is that you, my dear? In the garden?

MARIE

Yes. Of course it is.

EZRA

Who is that man with you?

A tiny jolt of pain passes across Marie's face.

MARIE

Ezra, we will have visitors soon.
Please put these on.

EZRA

Visitors?

CUT TO:

INT. HALL - DAY

Ezra shuffles painfully along in his white slippers into the main hallway, just as empty and pristine as the rest of the main rooms of the house.

EZRA (cont'd)

Hello? Can anyone hear me?

The white cat appears and sidles up to him. Ezra bends down to pet it, then he hears loud, metallic footsteps.

At the end of the hallway, a door opens, and a tall impossibly thin figure walks through. Behind it is only a dull white light.

The figure steps toward them. It looks like a very tall thin robot, shiny white, humanoid and walks with a strange inhuman grace.

The robot has P.A.U.L written in stark black letter on the top of its domed metallic forehead.

P.A.U.L. has a blank, featureless face with rows of lights horizontally down its smooth metallic surface, and a thin black slit for a mouth.

P.A.U.L strides purposefully towards Ezra. Ezra retreats from the metallic creature, afraid.

He is stopped by the hand of Marie.

MARIE
Please don't be afraid, my dear.

EZRA
Why? What is this?

P.A.U.L
We are P.A.U.L., your Simula
processing assistant. It is a
pleasure to finally meet you.

P.A.U.L.'s voice is the one from the intercom.

EZRA
Processing?

P.A.U.L
You will accompany us.

EZRA
I don't think so.

P.A.U.L
It is your time. You will accompany
us. Now.

EZRA
Where to?

P.A.U.L looks at Marie. She looks as terrified as Ezra.

MARIE
My dear. Please listen. You must go.
You will be going home.

EZRA
Isn't this my home?

P.A.U.L grips Ezra's arm with its thing metallic fingers.

Let go! What is happening?

MARIE
I'm sorry, my dear.

P.A.U.L
There is no need to be afraid, sir.

EZRA
I don't want to go.
(to Marie)

(MORE)

EZRA (cont'd)
I want to stay here with you.

MARIE
You will come back soon. I promise.

EZRA
I don't understand.

P.A.U.L begins to lead Ezra away. It pauses and looks at Marie. She is crying again.

P.A.U.L
What is your malfunction?

MARIE
Crying. I did not know we could cry.

P.A.U.L
I will report it.

P.A.U.L. walks away with Ezra, back down the hall towards the far door. As they reach the door it opens with a hum. P.A.U.L goes to enter and Ezra pulls back.

P.A.U.L (cont'd)
Sir, you must not resist.

Ezra stares at the door, then he takes out the photo he found in the conservatory. He shows it to P.A.U.L.

EZRA
Before I go, can you answer one question?

P.A.U.L
Yes.

He points to the bearded man with Marie in the photograph.

EZRA
Who this is?

P.A.U.L
It is you.

Marie watches as they disappear through the door and it closes.

One single tears glistens on her perfect cheek.

THE END