

Burnt On
By
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INT. BATHROOM - TIMELESS

We open on a bathroom sink. The water is running. Blood is spat into it and swirls down the drain.

CREDITS ROLL

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

We see a CAST IRON SKILLET, remnants of meat burnt and stuck to it.

TOM (OS)
How could you be so stupid?

TOM, a slender man of about 35, sits at the kitchen table, mulling over a plate of burnt steak. His wife, SUZI, stands sheepishly, looking down, not wanting to meet his gaze. Their son, MARTIN, 10, sits in the middle, using his fork to shuffle the food on his plate.

SUZI
I didn't...

TOM
I mean, it's bad enough that you didn't get to the grocery store. But, you burn the shit that we do have? Explain that to me, you dumb cow.

Suzi shuffles her feet. She looks to Martin

SUZI
Clean your plate and go outside, Marty.

TOM
No. You stay right there.

Tom stares at her.

TOM
This concerns him too.

SUZI
Please...

TOM
Oh, shut up.

Tom shifts in his seat, composing himself. Suzi cradles her arms still looking down.

(CONTINUED)

TOM

Look at me.

Suzi's eyes stay on the ground.

TOM

I SAID LOOK AT ME!

Suzi lifts her head.

TOM

You may be dumb, but I know that you are aware of how bad it smells when you burn something in an iron skillet. You know that food doesn't taste good when it's burnt. I shouldn't have to eat this shit. Marty shouldn't have to eat this shit.

Tom looks to his son.

TOM

Should you, Marty?

Martin looks away.

MARTIN

I guess not.

TOM

See?

Tom holds his arms out to his sides in a "there you go" gesture.

TOM

We don't expect you to be fucking Paula Dean, although a little more spice wouldn't hurt. We just want edible food and a house that doesn't smell like a goddamn foundry.

SUZI

(quiet)

Please don't be mad.

TOM

Don't be mad? How should I feel?...Jesus, you really take the cake. I'll tell you what, stop burning my food, and I'll stop being mad.

(CONTINUED)

Tom shakes his head and chuckles.

TOM
I really think that you should
leave, because the more I look at
you, the more I want to spit on
you.

SUZI
Tom...

TOM
I mean it. Go away.

We follow Suzi as she retreats from the kitchen to the
bedroom, defeated.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Suzi walks to the corner of the bed. She sits, her arms
still cradled, and waits.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

It's now dark outside, and Suzi sits on the corner of the
bed, watching a small television that sits on the chest of
drawers.

Tom opens the door and enters. He heads to the small
BATHROOM off the bedroom.

TOM
Marty's in bed.

He doesn't look at Suzi when he speaks. She flinches
slightly when he crosses in front of her.

Suzi stands, quickly snapping off the TV. She looks in on
Tom, trying to get her courage up to speak. Tom notices she
is watching him strip off his shirt.

TOM
Something on your mind?

Suzi shuffles.

SUZI
I just wish you wouldn't speak to
me that way in front of Marty. I
don't think it's good for him.

(CONTINUED)

Tom stares at her. He bends and drops his jeans, now wearing only boxers and socks. He stands straight-backed and shakes his head.

TOM

Did I miss something?

His tone causes Suzi to move. She's heard it before.

SUZI

No, I just...

TOM

Because I didn't think I was speaking out of turn.

Suzi retreats a step, Tom advances two.

SUZI

Tom...

TOM

You just don't get it, do you? I try my best to be calm around you, but you just have to keep hitting my buttons. When you fuck up, I'm going to tell you about it, and I don't want to hear any whining afterwards. Just listen to what I tell you. That's all.

SUZI

But...

Tom rushes out of the bathroom, he gets to her and reaches around her head, grabbing a handful of hair. He pushes his face against hers.

TOM

No buts. Just keep pushing, baby. Eventually you'll get what you want.

Tom lifts his other hand and gives her a brisk smack in the face. He lets go, and heads back to the bathroom.

Suzi walks around the bed, and sits on the other side, holding back tears.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Tom strips off his socks.

TOM
I need some new socks when you go
out tomorrow.

Tom begins to rub shaving cream on his face. He chuckles,
when he sees his shaving cream beard.

TOM
Don't I look like Santa Claus?

He turns and looks at Suzi, he can only see her back.

TOM
HEY. Look at the spirit of
Christmas, Suzi.

Suzi turns, she has been unable keep her tears at bay. Tom
huffs, and turns back.

TOM
Jesus. I really don't think I can
take this much longer.

He begins to shave.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Suzi sobs harder.

SUZI
I'm sorry...I just don't know why
you are so mean to me. I didn't do
anything.

Tom looks at her, still shaving.

TOM
Would you let it go? Just shut up
about it. Why do you always have
to do this?

When he has finished shaving he calmly walks out of the
bathroom, and stands next to Suzi. She shies away from him.

TOM
You want to know why I'm so mean to
you? Because you're stupid, and
you piss me off. It's as simple as
that.

(CONTINUED)

Tom smacks her in the back of the head, very matter of fact.

TOM

When a dog messes on the carpet you smack the shit out of it...I don't want to take that route with you, but you clearly don't get the message.

Tom smacks her twice more in the back of the head. She begins to ball up. He's getting more agitated.

SUZI

Please stop...

Tom grabs her by the hair and lifts her off the bed. He shoves her back down, she rolls over to the other side and off onto the floor.

Tom stalks around to that side. Suzi has curled up, covering the back of her head.

TOM

Jesus, you're pathetic.

Tom kicks her under the right arm, and follows with two harder kicks that go lower, hitting her liver. He hunkers down and leans in close to her.

TOM

You wait right there.

Tom exits. Suzi slumps onto her belly.

SUZI'S POV. Suzi can only see the bottom of the doorway from under the bed. She sees two sets of feet approaching, Tom's and Martin's.

Tom leads Martin, looking groggy and tired, around to Suzi. Martin's eyes widen.

TOM

You see this? What does this look like to you?

MARTIN

It looks like mom.

Tom shakes his head, and kneels next to Martin.

TOM

No, this is what a dog does when it's afraid. It tucks and

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

TOM (cont'd)
covers. It says 'I won't fight
back'. But, you know what? It
hasn't learned anything. It'll
just keep doing the same thing.

Suzi begins to sob.

SUZI
(whispering)
no, no, no...

TOM
Hush up, you.

He pops her on the back of the head. She clenches her
mouth shut, tears flowing freely. Tom stays kneeling next
to Martin.

Martin begins to sob.

TOM
No, son. It's time you learned the
difference between dogs and
people. Don't cry for her, she
can't help it. Only weak things
cry.

Tom presses his forehead against his son's.

TOM
It's our job to teach the
dog. It's our job to make the dog
do right...to make it understand
that it's being hurt for a
reason. Do you understand?

MARTIN
I think so.

Tom rises, and rubs his son's head.

TOM
Good. C'mon, let's get you to bed,
champ.

Tom walks away, his arm around Martin's shoulder. Suzi
squeezes her eyes shut.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Suzi lays in bed awake, Tom next to her. Tom moves close and whispers into her ear.

TOM
I only do this because I love you,
and I want you to do better.

Tom kisses the back of her neck, and pushes himself closer to her.

TOM
I really do love you.

He rolls her over onto her belly, and forces himself on top of her.

FADE TO BLACK

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Suzi readies herself for another day. She moves sluggishly, her midsection causing her to flinch.

Tom has left her a note on the table. It says...

I'LL BE BACK LATE TONIGHT, GOING GOLFING AFTER WORK. DON'T FORGET MY SOCKS. LOVE, TOM

She stares at the note.

SUZI
(yelling to Martin)
Marty? C'mon, you don't want to be late.

Martin comes into the kitchen, dressed and ready to go.

SUZI
What do you want for breakfast?

Martin cannot look his mother in the eye.

SUZI
Huh? What do you want?

MARTIN
Let's just go. I'm not hungry.

Suzi looks at her son. He doesn't look back.

INT. CAR - DAY

The drive to Martin's school is uncomfortably silent. Suzi breaks that silence.

SUZI
Last night...

MARTIN
I don't want to talk about it.

Suzi peeks at her son. He finally looks back.

MARTIN
What? Why do you keep looking at me?

Suzi looks back at the road.

SUZI
I just worry about you is all.

Small tears escape her eyes. She quickly wipes them, but not before Martin sees.

MARTIN
Why are you always crying?

SUZI
What? I'm not crying, I just got something in my eye...

More tears well up in her eyes.

SUZI
It's the weather...It, uh...

Martin's face clenches angrily.

INT. CAR - LATER

Suzi sits in her car, watching Martin make his way to the school's entrance. She starts to pull out, when halfway there she sees Martin run into a PACK OF FOUR GIRLS, one of them seems to be sweet on him. Suzi stops, she leans forward.

Martin and the girl are talking, we cannot hear what they are saying. Suddenly, Martin recoils. The girl turns back to her friends, giggling at Martin. He responds to this by grabbing the girl by the back of the hair, and spitting in her face. Suzi is stunned, and quickly exits the car.

EXT. SCHOOL ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Suzi Storms towards Martin, her hair flowing briskly.

SUZI
(furious)
MARTIN!

Martin spins, seeing his mother. At first he seems caught off guard, but quickly regains his composure, coming face to face with her.

SUZI
Marty, what the hell do you think
you're doing?

Suzi grabs his shoulder, he instantly fights back, pushing her.

MARTIN
Get off of me.

Martin swings a kick to Suzi's shin, knocking her off balance. He then plants both hands in her chest and shoves her. Suzi falls onto her backside.

MARTIN
Leave me alone, you stupid bitches!

Martin turns and runs into the school doors. Suzi remains seated, looking around. Only a handful of STUDENTS gawk, no adults in sight. The pack of girls stands dumbfounded. She stands up and dusts herself off.

INT. SUZI'S CAR (SHOPPING CENTER PARKING LOT) - DAY

Suzi sits behind the wheel of her car, looking down at a SHOPPING LIST. Her eyes red with tears, her face pale and worn. When new tears arrive, she quickly wipes them away with the heel of her hand.

INT. SHOPPING CENTER - DAY

The shopping center is sprawling, with one half being a consumer goods store; clothing, toys, electronics. The other half is a well-stocked grocery store.

Suzi makes her way through the aisles with an empty cart. She looks haggard, slow. Her first stop is the clothing section. She turns down an aisle filled with bags of underwear and socks.

(CONTINUED)

She picks up a multi-pack of WHITE SOCKS. She studies them, turning the bag over in her hands.

SUZI
(calmly)
No.

She sets the bag back down, and moves further down the line, until she finds a SINGLE PAIR OF TUBE SOCKS.

INT. SHOPPING CENTER, SPORTING GOODS - DAY

Suzi peaks here and there. She settles in the golf section, putting a small box of GOLF BALLS in her cart.

INT. GROCERY SECTION - CONTINUOUS

Suzi moves her carts past piles of fresh vegetables. She finds herself studying a pile of twisted red CHILI PEPPERS. A MAN comes up from behind her.

MAN
Don't do it, honey.

Suzi is startled.

SUZI
Oh...What?

The man chuckles.

MAN
Those peppers, don't get
any. They'll put the hurt on you.

SUZI
Oh, I know that...My husband,
though. He loves spicy food.

The man gives a fake curtsy. Suzi doesn't smile.

MAN
Then, by all means, give the man a
treat.

EXT. GROC. STORE, PAY PHONE - LATER

Suzi is speaking on a pay phone.

SUZI

Sherry?...This is Suzi. I need you to do me a huge favor...Can you pick up Marty after school, and keep him for the night...I know it's short...Oh, thank you...No, nothing's wrong, Tom and I just want a night alone is all...Thanks, love you sis.

Suzi hangs up the phone.

INT. KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

Suzi comes home and begins to unload her store bags. She sets a bag of three chili peppers on the table, does a little more unloading, and then sets a packet of SOMINEX sleep aid on the table. We stay on this.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Keys are heard through the door, and Tom enters the house, holding a small bag from a sporting goods store.

TOM

Marty? Suz?

Tom shuts the door, when he turns back around he sees Suzi, wearing only underwear and a large t-shirt, her hands behind her back.

TOM

What in the hell? Where's Marty...you aren't walking around here dressed like that with Marty...

SUZI

Marty's at my sisters.

Tom kicks his shoes off, and heads into the living room, he throws the bag onto the sofa. It is marked R & D SPORTING GOODS.

TOM

Well, go get him. I got him a present today.

(CONTINUED)

SUZI

That can wait. I think you and I
have something we need to do
tonight.

Tom cocks an eyebrow, curious.

TOM

Pardon?

Suzi brings her hands from around her back, she is holding a
GLASS FULL OF SOME CONCOCTION.

SUZI

I thought about what you said last
night...I think I'd like to do
something special, to...make it up
to you. I mean, how long has it
been since you and I had a nice
time?

Suzi steps in close, and puts the glass in Tom's hand. She
drapes her arms around his neck, kissing his lips
softly. He grins.

TOM

Well, I guess Marty's present can
wait.

Tom loops the glass up to his lips and drinks.

TOM

Ooh, that's good.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Tom flutters his eyes. He wakes, now in the kitchen, roped
to the chair at his usual dinner position.

TOM

What the...

Suzi is standing by the kitchen sink, wearing an APRON, and
pulling on a pair of yellow RUBBER DISH GLOVES.

TOM

Suzi, what the hell is going on
here?

SUZI

Hmm? Oh, it's our special night
tonight.

(CONTINUED)

She turns and walks towards him, holding a roll of DUCT TAPE. She smiles.

TOM
C'mon. What the fuck are you
doing? Untie me.

SUZI
Not yet.

Suzi turns back to the sink.

TOM
Suzi. This isn't funny.

SUZI
No, it isn't.

She turns back, holding a chili pepper.

SUZI
But this is. Open up.

TOM
What? No.

Suzi tries to force the pepper in his mouth. He holds it shut. Suzi backs away, shaking her head as if Tom were a difficult baby.

SUZI
Tom. Don't you remember when Marty
was a baby, and he wouldn't eat? I
have my ways. Open up.

TOM
Suzi. You are going...

Suzi tries to force the pepper in while he's talking. He buttons up quick. Suzi backs away and puts the pepper on the table.

SUZI
OK. Have it you're way.

Suzi turns and opens a kitchen drawer. She rummages.

SUZI
Here we go.

She turns back to Tom, holding a large pair of BLACK-HANDLED SCISSORS.

SUZI

Now, I never did anything like this with Marty. I was always gentle. The boy had to eat, and now you do too.

TOM

Suzi, I swear to god...

Suzi moves quickly, flashing the scissors. She slices off Tom's right earlobe. It falls onto his shoulder. He howls. Suzi takes this opportunity to cram the pepper in his mouth, and she snaps off a length of duct tape and fastens it over the pepper.

SUZI

There we go.

Tom's face turns red, and he begins to gag.

SUZI

Chew and swallow, Tom. That's the best way to get something out of your mouth when you can't spit.

Tom's face is now red as a beet, snot runs out of his nose. He tries to rock the chair, but is unable to.

SUZI

Chew and swallow.

Tom calms. He jaw begins to move, he coughs through the duct tape. He gulps.

SUZI

There it is. I knew you'd figure it out.

Suzi quickly rips the duct tape off his mouth. Tom coughs, and Suzy whacks him on the back like a baby.

TOM

(strained)

You know this isn't going to end the way you want it. You know this is only gonna come back to hurt you ten times worse.

Suzi reaches to the SALT SHAKER sitting in the middle of the table. She sprinkles a handful of it into her gloved hand.

(CONTINUED)

TOM
Oh, I'm gonna hurt you so bad,
baby.

SUZI
(calm)
Don't worry about that just yet.

She slaps the handful of salt onto Tom's mangled ear. He howls again.

TOM
YOU CUNT.

Tom tries to rock his chair again, having a little more success this time. The chair CREAKS Suzi turns her back on him. She turns around, holding another pepper.

SUZI
We're not done eating yet.

Fear finally begins to creep into Tom's eyes.

TOM
Suzi. Come on. If you just stop
now...

SUZI
Am I going to have to snip
something else off?

Tom glares at her. He opens his mouth, clenching his eyes shut.

SUZI
Good boy.

Suzi puts the pepper in his mouth, and duct tapes it shut again. Tom struggles, but seems to be doing better. Instead of looking at Suzi, he looks dead ahead.

As Suzi watches him, a curious look comes across her face, her color dropping. She comes close to vomiting, but is able to stifle it. She leans close to his ear, trying to sound composed...

SUZI
I'm going to get you another
surprise.

She hiccups slightly, Tom doesn't seem to notice. She turns and heads to the bathroom.

Once she is gone, Tom starts to struggle one of his hands free. His right hand turning an alarming shade of white as he stretches it through the knotted rope. It pops free.

INT. BATHROOM - LATER

Suzi leans over the bathroom sink, tears seeping through her eyes. A fresh pile of vomit in the sink. Her gloves lying next to the sink. She is trying to regain her composure. She looks up into the mirror.

SUZI
(to herself)
It's almost done now, girl.

Tom now stands in the doorway, red-faced, and holding a wood handled BUCK KNIFE, in an overhand position. He brings the knife up. Suzi notices the movement out of the corner of her eye, and moves as the knife comes down. It catches her upper right arm, cutting from shoulder to elbow. Blood flows immediately.

TOM
Now we're gonna have fun.

Suzi falls backwards, and scurries away from him hitting a wall next to the toilet.

TOM
You think Marty's gonna like his present?

Tom brandishes the knife. He steps forward.

TOM
It's a shame he isn't going to use it before me.

Suzi kicks furiously at Tom's legs, connecting on the knee-cap. Tom stumbles backwards. Suzi uses the opportunity to stand. She reaches into the pocket of her apron.

TOM
I think I like this better when you fight back. More of a challenge.

Suzi stands, pulling a tube sock knotted at one end, with an obvious bulk at the other, out of the apron's pocket.

(CONTINUED)

TOM

What have you got...

Suzi swings. The golf balls make a sound like TWIGS SNAPPING when they connect with Tom's forehead. A cut instantly opens over his left eye. Blood cascades down, covering his eye.

Suzi swings again, hitting Tom in the side of the neck. He stumbles backwards out into the..

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

She swings a third time, hitting him in the cheek. Tom stumbles into the chest of drawers, in the process accidentally stabbing the knife through his left bicep. He howls; the blade has penetrated completely through.

Suzi bolts, trying to squeeze past. Tom swings a wild punch that connects with Suzi's thigh. Her leg goes dead, she falls.

Tom pulls the knife from his arm, blood spurting. He growls and attempts to pin Suzi's leg to the ground with it, but only gashes her calf. She screams, and kicks at him, smashing his nose. She limps away.

Tom rises and gives chase, following her into the...

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Tom catches up with Suzi, grabbing a handful of her hair. He slices at her, cutting her cheek. She struggles, he throws her hard against the counter that separates the living room from the kitchen. He goes for a killing blow, bringing the knife down in an overhand motion. She ducks out of the way, the knife sinks into the counter.

Suzi tries to head into the kitchen. Tom catches her by the hair again, and slings her that way. He reaches for the knife, now embedded into the counter, he rocks it back and forth, until it comes free.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Suzi has crashed into the sink. She rises, coming face to face with the Iron skillet, still soaking in the sink. She folds her hands around its handle.

(CONTINUED)

Tom advances on her, wearing a blood mask. His bloodshot eyes cut through the red. He grins a painful tiger's smile. He twists the buck knife, his right arm active like a snake. His left hangs limp.

TOM

You're gonna get cut, little puppy. It's gonna hurt.

Tom steps forward, ready to sink the knife into Suzi.

Suzi turns, holding the skillet like a tennis racket. She swings, intercepting the arcing knife. The skillet mangles Tom's hand, causing a SICKENING CRUNCH, sending the knife flying across the room. Tom howls, his hand badly broken. He looks unbelievably at Suzi.

Suzi steels herself, tightening her grip on the skillet. She swings backhand, connecting flush with Tom's face. The sound is like a GONG.

Tom flirts with unconsciousness, his face now considerably flatter. He drops to his knees and slumps.

TOM

(groggy, wheezing.)
You can't do this. It doesn't happen this way.

Suzi slings the skillet across the room.

SUZI

Sometimes dogs bite, you bastard.

Suzi heads to the door, taking off her apron, and throwing it at Tom. Tom's eyes follow her, he is unable to move.

She stops at the door and turns.

SUZI

If you try to come after me I'll fucking kill you.

Suzi exits, slamming the door. Tom slumps forward, moaning.

EXT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Suzy walks to her car, getting in the driver's side. Her face is like stone.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Her bags sit in the back seat. She starts the car, and backs out, and heads away from the house. She smiles, and begins to laugh loud, tears streaming down her face. Her laughs slow, and turn into a simple smile as she drives.

FADE TO BLACK

THE END