

MABEL

by

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OVER BLACK:

RADIO (V.O.)
Let's go down by the grapevine,
drink my Daddy's wine, get happy...

INT. APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

A hand comes out from under the covers. Moves over to a clock radio, trying to find the button.

RADIO (V.O.)
Oh, sweet blindness--

The hand slaps it, stopping the music.

JOHNNY, late 20s, hollowed cheeks, and distant eyes, stares up at the ceiling for a moment before turning to a picture of an attractive woman with a bald head in a hospital bed.

MABEL (O.S.)
How were your dreams?

He turns to MABEL, the same woman from the photo, her long, brown hair cascading over the pillow.

JOHNNY
You weren't in them again.

She gathers the sheet around herself as she stands. Looks back, her sorrowful eyes taunting.

MABEL
No peeking.

JOHNNY
(closes his eyes)
Don't you think that's weird, that
we're together all the time and
you're never in my dreams?

MABEL
I think you... think too much.

She gives him a quick kiss. Walks away, her long hair whipping just below his nose. He inhales the sweet scent.

JOHNNY
(to himself)
Passion fruit guava...
(opens his eyes)
Mabel?

The door closes in the distance, leaving him alone.

Water comes on from behind the bathroom door. His attention goes over to the window. He cracks the blinds. Darkness.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)
 What time is it? How long were we
 asleep?

No answer. He massages his temples.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)
 I'm making coffee, you want some?
 (to himself)
 I could use some coffee.

KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Johnny starts the coffee pot as he eyes several greeting cards gathering dust on the cheery, yellow countertop.

He opens the refrigerator. Empty.

The fluorescent light dims above him, before coming back on. He stares up at it, curiously.

A thump comes from the other room.

JOHNNY
 Mabel?

He rushes through the...

LIVING ROOM

As the lights twitch above him. He pounds on the bathroom door.

JOHNNY
 Are you in there? Open the door.

Johnny tries the knob. Locked. The doorbell rings behind him. He turns, dread washing over him.

He slowly makes his way to the front door. Pauses.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)
 Who's there?

MABEL (O.S.)
 (haunting)
 Johnny.

He hesitantly opens it. No one there. He looks down the hallway. Empty. He slowly closes the door.

He makes his way back to the bathroom, where he finds the door ajar and the water running, but no Mabel.

He enters into the...

BATHROOM

He slowly approaches the empty shower. Turns the knob until the water stops.

A gurgling comes from behind him.

He spins around to find Mabel standing, her naked body glistening in the shadows, vomit dribbling down her chin.

MABEL

I'm sorry.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Johnny walks the lonely, sterile hallways. Looks in the faces of the meek, desperate patients. A nurse nods at him coldly.

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Johnny exits. Pulls out his last cigarette. Broken. He struggles to fix it. Finally gets it. Goes to light it.

MABEL (O.S.)

I hate when you smoke.

JOHNNY

I know you do.

He stubs the dormant cigarette out. Looks up at the grey sky sorrowfully.

Her hand finds his. They entangle as the rain begins to fall. Tighter, as the moment takes them hostage.

INT. CAR - LATER

Johnny rides in silence beside Mabel. He looks out at the dark rain through the window.

JOHNNY

It seems the sun never really comes out anymore.

MABEL

I hear there are places in the world that stay dark for months. Absolutely no sunlight.

Johnny grimaces. Pulls into himself, his brows furrowing.

JOHNNY

You hungry? We should eat.

EXT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

They park in front of a sign that reads, "The Cessation Café. Open 24 Hours."

Johnny gets out. Comes around to Mabel's side. Opens the door as the sky churns menacingly above them.

JOHNNY

Did I ever tell you that you're the most beautiful woman I've ever seen?

MABEL

(smiles weakly)
Maybe once or twice.

INT. RESTAURANT

The air is tense when Johnny and Mabel enter.

MABEL

Be right back.

Johnny nods. Watches her disappear around the corner under a sign that says, "Women's Room".

WAITRESS (O.S.)

Just you?

He looks over at a middle-aged WAITRESS with the same skin you would expect to see on a baseball glove that had been greased and molded but had cracked in the process.

WAITRESS (CONT'D)

Follow me.

INT. RESTAURANT - LATER

Johnny pushes his half-empty plate aside. Closes his eyes as rain continues to pelt the glass.

The waitress brings a to-go box and drops it down, startling him.

WAITRESS
Anything else?

He shakes his head. She gives him a concerned look before taking off. He stands.

Fluorescent lights dim above him as he walks through the long hallway to the bathroom. He hesitates before knocking on the restroom door.

An agitated OLD LADY with wiry hair, her shirt sloppily falling off her chest, comes out.

JOHNNY
Excuse me.

OLD LADY
Yeah, what do you want?

JOHNNY
Would you mind seeing if my
girlfriend is alright in there?

She stares at him for an awkward moment.

OLD LADY
There's no one in there.

She pushes past him as he eyes the door for a moment. He turns, not knowing what to do. Suddenly breaks out in a run.

EXT. RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

Johnny bursts out the door. The rain is coming down in sheets now. He runs to the spot where they parked. Empty.

JOHNNY
Mabel?
(scans the parking lot)
Where are you?

He spins around in a panic. Rips open the door to the restaurant.

INT. RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

Customers turn to stare as he hurdles through.

JOHNNY
Where is she?

Silence as he looks around.

A young, GOOFY MAN picks at a scab on his face. An OVERGROWN TRUCKER with a neck tattoo snarls at him. Laughs.

He stops the waitress carrying an arm-load of dishes. Tries to take the desperation out of his voice.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)
My car...

WAITRESS
You park in the parking lot?

JOHNNY
(confused)
Yes, of course... where else would
I--

WAITRESS
They tow if it hasn't moved in a
couple of days.

JOHNNY
No. No, we just...

She starts to walk away. He grabs her.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)
The girl I came in here with, where
is she?

WAITRESS
I need you to calm down.

JOHNNY
No. No, I'm not going to calm down
until you tell me where the fuck
she is!

The waitress glances over at a wide-eyed LINE COOK with a hairline built like an unhappy rainbow on top of his shiny head, looking for an answer. He nods.

WAITRESS
You better sit down.

JOHNNY
 (backs away)
 Wha... What's going on?

The waitress tries to stop him, but he pushes past her.
 Bursts out the door.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)
 Mabel!

He steps on something. Looks down to find his cell phone
 crushed beneath his foot.

A formal disconnect recording bellows, "The number you have
 reached is no longer in service.. "

He rushes through the rain, frantic.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)
 Mabel!

The rain plasters his hair against this forehead, blinding
 him. He trips and falls to the ground.

MABEL (O.S.)
 I'm right here.

His face is wet as he looks up, his tears intermingling with
 dirt and rain. He bows his head. Stares at the wet, dark
 ground as it becomes him.

JOHNNY
 I can't keep doing this.

She coughs. Bright, red blood spurts out from her hands as
 she covers her mouth.

He goes to her. Pulls a napkin out of his back pocket.
 Gently wipes the crimson river from her mouth.

MABEL
 You've always taken such good care
 of me.

Johnny pulls out a prescription bottle and hands her a pill.
 He caresses her head as she swallows it. A handful of her
 hair comes out.

She looks up at him.

MABEL (CONT'D)
 I'm ready to go now.

He stares into the distance.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Johnny sits in the waiting room of the stark, bright hospital, Mabel's head on his shoulder. He inhales the scent from her hair. Smiles.

JOHNNY
Passion fruit guava...

His eyes close as the fluorescent light dims above him.

INT. HOSPITAL - LATER

When he awakens, hospital staff is murmuring around him and Mabel's gone.

JOHNNY
Where is she, where's my Mabel?

A middle-aged nurse with the same skin you would expect to see on a baseball glove that had been greased and molded but had cracked in the process, looks at him, dreading what comes next.

NURSE
Johnny...

Hands come from behind him, wrapping themselves around his eyes.

NURSE (CONT'D)	MABEL (O.S.)
Johnny.	(haunting)
	Johnny.

MABEL
No peeking.

He smiles with relief as he pulls Mabel around. Looks into her tired eyes.

JOHNNY
You're here. Here with the doctors.
You're going to be okay.

MABEL
Let's go for a walk.

He allows himself to be led down the hallway.

An agitated old lady with wiry hair, her body covered by a sloppy hospital gown, stares vacantly at them as they move past.

Past a young, goofy patient who is muttering a song to himself as he picks at a scab on his face.

GOOFY PATIENT

"Oh, sweet blindness... "

An overgrown trucker-type with a neck tattoo snarls at them as two orderlies try to restrain him. Laughs as Johnny barely takes him in.

Mabel pulls his hand, diverting his attention.

MABEL

It's almost time.

JOHNNY

Did I ever tell you that you're the most beautiful woman I've ever seen?

MABEL

(clutches his hand tighter)

Once or twice.

Over to the nurse who stares, concerned.

NURSE

Should I go get him?

She turns to the wide-eyed doctor with a hairline built like an unhappy rainbow on top of his shiny head.

DOCTOR

Give him five more minutes.

The nurse turns her attention back to Johnny, who is alone, talking lovingly to the air as other psych patients join him under the flickering fluorescent lights.

THE END