

HE

By Michael Cornetto

FADE IN:

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

ANGELA (42) enters carrying a package. She drops her keys on a small table near the door.

Excitedly, she tears at the package's wrapping exposing a box. Out of the box she pulls a lovely blue and white delft plate.

Joy lights her face.

DINING ROOM

One wall is nearly covered with mounted delft plates. Angela hangs her most recent acquisition as the third plate from the left on the top row.

With a satisfied smile she admires her work.

A jangling noise, her head snaps toward the source.

Her keys lie on the dining room table.

She seems confused, then fearful. She snatches her keys off the table.

ENTRY WAY

She tries opening the front door but it is locked.

She looks at the nearby small table. In disbelief, she rubs her fingers along the table's surface.

She scan the room but nothing is out of place.

INT. OFFICE

PETER (24), who is expensively dressed, flirts quietly with a gorgeous SECRETARY (20), who is dressed tartly, at her desk.

PETER
Not tonight babe. Not that I
don't want to --

SECRETARY
Who is she?

PETER
She? It's an old buddy of mine.

SECRETARY
Then HE won't care if you
reschedule.

She pouts.

Peter presents her with the bouquet.

PETER
For you.

Angela smiles.

ANGELA
Oh, they're lovely. I'll go find
a vase.

Angela heads inside. Peter follows.

INT. APARTMENT

Peter closes the door behind him.

PETER
Sorry I'm late. But Stanton, um,
needed some, um, important --

ANGELA (O.S.)
I'm just relieved you're here.
And you must be starved. I've
already put out the salad. Help
yourself.

Peter nods as he struts further inside.

KITCHEN

Angela smells the flowers as she enters.

Plump -- plump -- plump.

The sound of steam escaping through the join of a lid and a
pot, catches her attention.

She puts the flowers on the counter and hurries to the pot.
She lowers the heat, lifts the lid and stirs.

She turns back toward the flowers. Her eyes open wide, her
hand shoot to her gaping mouth where a small squeak of a
scream emerges.

Petals are strewn about everywhere, the flowers have been
thoroughly plucked.

DINING ROOM

Peter sits at the romantically set table, finishing up the
bowl of salad in front of him, a linen napkin across his
lap.

He holds the front of his expensive white shirt firmly
against his chest while he eats. His designer jacket is
hanging from the back of a nearby empty chair.

Angela enters from the kitchen. She looks a bit shaken.
In each of her trembling hands is a plate of spaghetti
marinara.

Peter looks up, he wipes his lips with the linen napkin.

ANGELA
Uh, the spaghetti was ready.

Peter pushes his salad bowl away.

PETER
Perfect timing.

Angela nods, attempts to smile and places one of the plates before Peter.

PETER
Looks good.

She places the other plate directly opposite him and settles in front of it.

Using both a spoon and a fork, Peter carefully winds then eats his first bite of spaghetti.

Angela's head snaps quickly to the side. She listens tensely.

PETER
Ange?!

ANGELA
(starts)
Sorry. I thought I heard something in the kitchen.

PETER
You want to go take a look?

ANGELA
(shudders)
No.
(forces a smile)
It was nothing.

PETER
Ok.

Peter shrugs and winds another spoonful. Then he lays his utensils down.

PETER
I mean, if something were bothering you then you'd tell me right?

ANGELA
Yes.

PETER
Like you aren't having second thoughts about me moving in?

ANGELA
Of course not. I'm looking forward to it.

Peter smiles.

PETER
I'm looking forward to it too.

His attention returns to his food.

Angela looks at her spaghetti then grimaces. She glances over at the plate filled wall. Then she smiles.

ANGELA
I bought another plate today.

Peter looks at the plate filled wall.

PETER
Which one?

ANGELA
Top row. Third from the left.
It's very old, rare and it was quite expensive.

PETER
Nice. How much --

A plate of spaghetti flies across the table and hits Peter's chest. He turns toward Angela, confused.

PETER
What the hell?!

He stands and the plate falls to the ground. Spaghetti strands stick to the tomato sauce stain on his white shirt. He furiously wipes at them with his napkin.

Angela looks guilty, nervous, teary.

ANGELA
I didn't do it. It was --

PETER
-- an accident?! You know how much this shirt cost! Shit!

ANGELA
I'll pay for the shirt.

PETER
Damn right you will. I can't believe --

ANGELA
Peter, I --

PETER
I knew something was bothering you! I knew it!

ANGELA
It wasn't --

PETER
You know what? I think you're
still angry about Thursday night.

ANGELA
No, I --

PETER
I told you I had to work late! I
even apologized for not calling,
didn't I? You didn't have to
throw your goddamn dinner at me!

ANGELA
I didn't throw my dinner at you!

PETER
If you can't be honest enough to
admit that you threw your
spaghetti at me then I don't
think we have much of a
relationship. I don't think we
should live --

ANGELA
Don't say that. I didn't --

PETER
Who threw it then?!

ANGELA
He did.

Peter slams his hands down on the table, losing control.

PETER
HE? I'm the HE! Are you saying I
did THIS to myself?

ANGELA
Of course not.

PETER
Then WHO did it, Ange? WHO?
There's NO ONE else here!

ANGELA
Stop yelling. Please. Wait.
Please. I'll tell you. He's.
He's, uh, oh god, oh. He's
invisible.

Peter stares at her, his mouth ajar, calmer now.

PETER
I see.

ANGELA
I wanted to tell you but I was
afraid...

PETER
How long?

ANGELA
I don't know, a week. Maybe. It started with little things, a pen out of place, my keys in a strange location. But it's been getting worse.

She cries. Peter looks away.

ANGELA
He keeps me awake at night, whispering.

PETER
Whispering? About what?

ANGELA
I'm not sure. He mumbles. Poetry maybe? Or sometimes he sings. I don't want to know. I try not to listen. But it's been so stressful. I've been afraid to tell anyone.

PETER
You should have told me sooner, Ange.

ANGELA
It's such a relief to talk about it.

PETER
And you should talk about it.

Peter pulls out his wallet and searches through it.

PETER
I met this guy at work. He can help.

Angela looks hopeful.

PETER
Here it is.

He hands her a business card. Angela stares at it.

PETER
He was a lunchtime speaker...

ANGELA
A psychologist?!

PETER
Yeah, he specializes in anger management but he does a lot of trade in stress related illnesses.

ANGELA
I'm not crazy!

PETER
No! No! Of course not. You're
just stressed.

Peter chuckles.

ANGELA
He's real!

Peter grabs his jacket and slips it on.

PETER
Yeah, right. Well listen. Dinner
was interesting but I have to get
going. Have to, um, soak this
stain.

Angela jumps up and hurries over to Peter.

ANGELA
No wait Peter. Don't go!

She grabs at him, frantic, wanting reassurance, wanting
comfort.

ANGELA
He'll come back. Stay. You'll
see. He's real! He's real!

Peter resists her efforts. He tries to pull away but
Angela's grabbing hands suffocate him. His disgust and ire
rise.

PETER
Get away you crazy old bitch!

He pushes her away.

She bangs into the plate filled wall and her head hits the
third plate from the left on the top row. The precious
antique plate tumbles to the floor and shatters into tiny
pieces.

She stares at the random mess of ceramic pieces and dust
the broken plate has left on the floor and tears spill from
her eyes.

She looks up at Peter. The tiniest hint of regret appears
on his face but he immediately steels himself. He turns and
rushes from the room.

She trembles as she kneels. She caresses the tiny pieces of
plate as her tears mix with the dust. Her face crinkles
with hurt.

HE
(whispered)
It's not as bad as it looks.

She looks up expectantly and wipes her eyes. She scans the
room, realization then anger.

ANGELA
Go away!

More tears. She lowers her gaze to the broken plate.

She gasps. Its pieces are rearranged into the shape of a heart.

FADE OUT.