

The Flickering

by
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and
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Condensed and adapted from the original
film "Nan-bok Te"
written by Dyenal Daen Lei
and directed by Hung Yung Sek.

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INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

A man is taking a shower. Suddenly a loud television is heard from below.

The man sticks his head out of the curtain and looks puzzled. He turns off the water, grabs a towel and makes his way cautiously downstairs.

INT. LIVING ROOM- CONTINUOUS

When he opens the living room door he sees a television, its picture breaking up, a mix of static and studio pictures. The sound too is all over the place.

He looks across to the sofa and sees someone sitting very, very still.

It appears to be a woman with long dark hair.

The man is shocked and about to speak but the woman's head is turning round very slowly.

A walking camera shake into the man, stabilized with After Effects technology gives us a steady man and wildly shaking backdrop.

As the woman's head is nearly all the way round some very bright lights flood the scene from outside the window.

The man tries to shield his eyes.

He feels something touch his hand. It looks like a very dirty (mucky) hand.

The floods switch off and the man tries to adjust to the darkness again. Now the TV is switched off and no one is on the sofa.

He goes over and turns the main light on and looks around, finding nothing.

He switches on the TV but the picture and sound are clear. Stephen Morris appears to be on TV telling the world about his "personality reduction diet" ("Eat anything you want, wear what you want, say what you want, soon you'll have the lifestyle of nobody at all!") This too utilizes the mighty After Effects (Pin corners, motion track style).

He turns off the TV and goes up to his bedroom.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE 2 - DAY

A young woman is on the telephone. She is upset.

ROBERT (O.S.)
I just think its the wrong time,
we-

LINDA
This is you telling me what you
think is it? Over the phone?

ROBERT (O.S.)
Linda, you're young, there's time
for you yet, you-

LINDA
Time for me? You condescending
bastard! I thought we were okay
with it, I thought you agreed
with me! When did you lose you're
fucking spine, Robert?

ROBERT (O.S.)
I know you're upset and saying
things you don't mean but-

As Linda builds up to screaming this last part the camera
shakes and is stabilized with the magic of special effects.

LINDA
Upset and saying things I don't
mean? You fucking cunt!

Linda is either unbelievably furious or tearful or a bit of
both. There is a silence.

ROBERT (O.S.)
We can talk about this later,
when you're- when everything's
had time to settle more.

LINDA
Robert, I thought you loved
me...?

ROBERT (O.S.)
...we'll talk about it later,
Linda. I promise.

LINDA
You've made promises before,
remember?

ROBERT
I'm not denying I've made
mistakes but I've never claimed
to be perfect.

LINDA

I never wanted you to be perfect.
I just wanted you to be honest
with me.

ROBERT (O.S)

I always tried to. I always did
my best.

LINDA

Except when it really mattered.

There is another silence.

ROBERT (O.S.)

Linda.....

CUT TO:

INT. ROB HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

We see that Robert is the man from the shower in the scene
previous.

ROBERT

I've got to go... I've got a
meeting....

LINDA (O.S.)

You're meeting her, aren't you?
That bitch.

ROBERT

Linda, you don't know what you're
saying, you're just upset. We'll
talk more later, just..... Just
don't do anything-

LINDA (O.S.)

Anything like killing myself?
Over you? Your ego is rivalled in
history only by Joseph Stalin.

Robert laughs, Linda sighs.

ROBERT

It's a good joke...

LINDA (O.S.)

Yes.

Linda puts down the phone and it clicks off. Robert closes
his mobile phone.

He turns to Christine and shakes his head.

ROBERT
What a fucking mess.

Christine gives a half smile.

CHRISTINE
She's not doing too well?

ROBERT
No... It's.... Difficult for her.
The place in her heart is still
warm but winter is coming.

Christine nods, solemn, as though this previous line made any sense and was not mauled by the translation.

CHRISTINE
And how do you feel about things?

Robert reaches out and touches Christine's hand.

ROBERT
It was time to do it. I'm glad I
did it. I'm glad we can be
together now. I really feel for
Linda though... Since....

CHRISTINE
I know it sounds hard but she'll
get used to being on her own
again- everyone does.

ROBERT
And it's not as if she has to be
alone. She's beautiful and fun to
be with.

Robert looks at Christine and remembers how he's supposed to act.

ROBERT
But she's just not right for me.

He smiles at Christine, who smiles back. They hug or squeeze hands and we:

FADE TO:

INT. LINDA HOUSE - NIGHT

Linda is sitting in front of the television, in the dark. She is wrapped up in a blanket and her eyes are drooping.

They close and she starts to sleep. A bright light flashes on for a split second and then off again.

CUT TO:

INT. ROB HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The phone rings and Robert puts down his fork, mouth half full of food.

He stands up and walks to the telephone. He pulls the light on in the kitchen and as his hand reaches the receiver the light flashes and comes on.

ROBERT

Hello?

We hear dead air through the handset.

ROBERT

Hello...?

He hangs the phone up and picks it up again, trying to force it to give either a dialtone or a voice.

ROBERT

Hello?

He begins to put the phone down and the kitchen light flashes. We hear a slow, echoey exhalation of breath through the telephone.

ROBERT

Hello? Linda, is that you?

The light flashes more and he turns his head to look at it. Turning back to face the phone we can see through the crook of his arm into the kitchen where the woman with dark hair stands, motionless.

There are some more noises down the phoneline, which itself creaks and groans like a pensioner without hot soup.

ROBERT

Linda, why are you trying to scare me? Don't do this... Just....

Christine stands up in the living room and comes to the kitchen door.

The light stops flickering and the woman with dark hair is gone.

CHRISTINE

What's the matter?

ROBERT

Ah, I just think Linda's trying to... I don't know... Scare me or something.

CHRISTINE

That was her?

ROBERT

I don't know.. There was somebody there. (Smiles) I don't get freaky phone calls from many other people.

CHRISTINE

Even with your winning personality?

ROBERT

Yeah, hard to believe, isn't it?

CHRISTINE

Very.

They walk back into the living room, a little more cheerful.

INT. LINDA HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Linda is still sleeping. She turns slightly. The light flickers once or twice. Maybe in Morse code. Wouldn't that be clever?

INT. ROB HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Rob and Christine are finishing off what looks like a delicious Chinese meal. The room is lit by lamps in the corners.

ROBERT

This sweet and sour pork-

CHRISTINE

I know, I know.

ROBERT

Jesus, I'm gonna burst.

CHRISTINE

All over the carpet? I thought you were house trained?

Christine picks up her glass to take a drink.

ROBERT
I am. I only ever wee in plant
pots and wine glasses.

Christine makes a disgusted face.

CHRISTINE
And I thought it was the wine
that smelt a bit funny.

They smile. A wistful look crosses Rob's features. Is that
one in the acting books? Roger Moore does "wistful"?

CHRISTINE
Thinking about Linda?

ROBERT
...Yes.... I'm sorry.

CHRISTINE
You don't have to apologize, it's
natural- you're worried about
her.

ROBERT
Yes. I was just thinking... I can
pinpoint exactly where it went
wrong-

CUT TO:

INT. LINDA HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Linda still sleeps. The light flickers three times. Dot,
dot, dot.

CUT TO:

INT. ROB HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

ROBERT
After... She had to have the
abortion it was like she thought
we were murderers- like we should
be punished.

CHRISTINE
But it wasn't her choice- the
doctor's said it would never have
come to term-

ROBERT
It wasn't her choice.

Robert thinks.

ROBERT
And after that she hated herself
and she hated me. We were to
blame for what had happened.

CHRISTINE
She's really....

ROBERT
It's all such a mess....

Robert shakes his head.

CUT TO:

INT. LINDA HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Linda sleeps and the flickering light livens up.

CUT TO:

INT. ROB HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

ROBERT
I'm sorry, what am I doing
talking about this on Saturday
night? You are good to put up
with me.

CHRISTINE
If you're worried about it I want
to hear about it.

They smile and perhaps exchange a short kiss.

Robert breaks off.

ROBERT
Oop! Desperate for a wee.

CHRISTINE
That's romantic.

ROBERT
Sorry! Sorry! Let me nip to the
loo and I can come back and
romance you properly.

He gets up.

CHRISTINE
Don't be too long.

Robert turns and smiles, exiting.

CUT TO:

INT. LINDA HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

As the flickering gets faster we see a shadow fall over Linda's sleeping body.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Rob flushes, post urination. He leaves the bathroom, pulling the light off as he goes. Over his shoulder, behind the shower curtain we see a figure in the bath.

Rob remembers he hasn't washed his hands, goes back and pulls the light cord on again.

He moves to the sink, turning on the taps and really getting a good lather going.

A fingernail brushes over the shower curtain making a noise.

Rob turns to look. He can't see anything behind the curtain but pauses, staring in. The tap continues to run and the soap remains in his hand.

Finally the light flashes. There is a long pause and Rob puts his hands into the bowl to wash.

He turns back to the sink, something not quite right. He has a handful of dark hair, which seems to be coming from the taps, the plughole and the overflow.

ROBERT

Urrgh!

The light flickers, twice. A noise is heard on the shower curtain. Rob turns to look again and is greeted with a face pressed against the material. The face spins around 360 degrees, as the flickering intensifies.

CUT TO:

INT. ROB HOUSE (DOWNSTAIRS) - MOMENTS LATER

A thud is heard from upstairs. Christine looks up, curious though not worried.

CHRISTINE

Rob....?

She gulps a last mouthful of wine and puts her glass down.

The light flickers. In the coffee table we can see a reflection of something that is just not right in any way.

CUT TO:

INT. LINDA HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

We see Linda asleep.

The woman with dark hair floats above her. Hair dangling down, slowly moving over the sleeping body.

We hear Rob's dialogue from earlier.

ROBERT (V.O.)

After... She had to have the
abortion it was like she thought
we were murderers- like we should
be punished.

The woman hovers in place above Linda's face, lights going for broke.

The woman begins to move down, toward Linda.

As Linda opens her sleepy eyes instead of being scared she looks sadly happy.

LINDA

Come here. Come here.

The woman floats down, head and black hair streaming across Linda's chest.

Linda strokes the hair and cries.

The flickering slows down and eventually flicks to black.

ROLL CREDITS. END.

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