

"12"

by
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1 INT. PARKER KITCHEN - MORNING

1

CHRISTINE and GEORGE PARKER, a young married couple, are arguing in their kitchen. He has zipped up his spring jacket and is ready to leave the house. She is still in her pajamas and nursing a cup of coffee.

CHRISTINE

You *can't* go downtown today.

GEORGE

Says who?

(with sudden
realization)

It's in my *horoscope*, isn't it?

Christine looks shyly down at the floor.

GEORGE

How many times do I have to tell
you that I don't -

CHRISTINE

See for yourself.

She hands him the newspaper, open to the horoscopes, and points at his.

GEORGE

(mumbles)

So it says I should stay home
today. So what?

CHRISTINE

So what?

GEORGE

I can't believe how much stock you
put into this stuff! If you
checked ten different newspapers,
you'd find ten *different*
horoscopes for me. One of them
would probably say that it's a
great day to run errands downtown.

(beat)

Why do you always believe the
horoscopes in the *Telegraph*?

CHRISTINE

They're very reliable.

(beat)

Mother always said they were the
best.

(CONTINUED)

GEORGE

I remember how much your mother believed in astrology. She didn't want us to get *married* until such and such was in the something house and somebody or other was ascending.

CHRISTINE

Are you saying that we *aren't* happily married?

GEORGE

No, but who's to say that we *wouldn't* be happily married if we had chosen any old date without consulting the stars?

CHRISTINE

Mother.

GEORGE

(sighs)
I'm just saying that people shouldn't let something so unproven as astrology run their lives.

CHRISTINE

(adamantly)
Horoscopes are *true*.

GEORGE

Uh huh.
(beat)
What does *yours* say today?

He looks down at the paper.

GEORGE

(reading)
"Today will be a good day for you. Make certain to get to bed early, as tomorrow promises to be more difficult."

CHRISTINE

Sound advice.

GEORGE

You're going to bed early tonight?

(CONTINUED)

CHRISTINE
(slightly
defensively)
I probably will.

He puts the newspaper back down on the table.

CHRISTINE
How about you and *your*
superstitions? What makes *them*
valid while *my* horoscopes are
trash?

GEORGE
I'm not superstitious.

CHRISTINE
(chuckles)
What have you carried around with
you for years?

George fishes into his jacket pocket and removes a white
rabbit's foot.

GEORGE
It was a gift from my mother.

CHRISTINE
So you carry it solely for
sentimental reasons?

GEORGE
(exasperated)
Truce!

Christine wraps her arms around George's neck.

CHRISTINE
Can you *please* stay home?

GEORGE
This is my only day off this week.
If I don't run these errands
today, they won't get done.
(beat)
You can't do them, can you?

CHRISTINE
No. I've got *tons* of computer work
to do for Harrison and Brecht.

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED: (3)

1

GEORGE

See?

(teasing)

If I don't get to the dry cleaners
today, you *won't* have that dress
to wear to Margie's party.

CHRISTINE

I know, but -

GEORGE

I *promise* to be careful.

CHRISTINE

(anxiously)

When will you be home?

GEORGE

Probably around 2:00.

He kisses her head gently.

GEORGE

Don't worry.

(beat)

I'll be fine.

FADE TO:

2 EXT. CITY STREET - LATER

2

A busy city street: People are walking along the
sidewalks. Cars are driving by, occasionally beeping
their horns.

Waiting at the street corner for the light to change to
"WALK," George checks his watch. 10:50 a.m.

Suddenly, he feels someone tugging at his jacket. He
turns quickly to see BARONA, a stoop-shouldered old man
with wild white hair, clutching at him. He is coughing
and wheezing. George tries to push him away, but the old
man's grip is strong.

BARONA

(with slurred speech)

12. You're gonna *die*. . . at 12.

Barona swoons and starts to fall. George manages to catch
him before he hits the ground. He looks about anxiously
and sees a police officer not far up the street.

(CONTINUED)

GEORGE
(calling)
Officer! Officer!

A curious crowd starts to gather. OFFICER CRAWFORD arrives shortly, pushes his way through the crowd, and approaches George. George is still holding onto Barona, but he's losing his grip.

CRAWFORD
What's going on here?

GEORGE
I don't know. . . I. . . I caught
him before he -

CRAWFORD
Let's lay him down.

The two men carefully lay Barona down on the sidewalk.

CRAWFORD
(sniffs)
You can smell the hootch from
here!

Crawford grabs Barona's wrist. Shortly, he gets a worried look on his face.

GEORGE
(anxiously)
What?

CRAWFORD
He's dead.

The crowd reacts in shocked surprise. Crawford carefully lets go of Barona's wrist and turns to George.

CRAWFORD
What happened here, Mr. . . .

GEORGE
Parker. George Parker.
(beat)
I'm. . . I'm not sure.
(beat)
I was waiting to cross the street
when he grabbed my jacket from
behind.

CRAWFORD
You don't know him?

(CONTINUED)

GEORGE

Never seen him before.

CRAWFORD

Any idea why he picked you?

GEORGE

I don't know.

(beat)

I didn't do anything to *provoke* him, if that's what you mean.

CRAWFORD

Then what happened?

GEORGE

He collapsed. I managed to catch him; then I called for you.

CRAWFORD

Did he say anything? Anything at all?

GEORGE

(quickly)

No. Not. . . Not a word.

Crawford pats down the body.

CRAWFORD

Just as I feared: No I.D.

(calling to the crowd)

Did anyone know this man?

HELGA steps forward. Short and squat, she is wearing thick glasses and a flowered sundress. She speaks in a thick Russian accent.

HELGA

I knew him.

CRAWFORD

Who are you?

HELGA

(proudly)

I am Madame Helga, and *that*. . .

She proudly gestures behind her at a shop with a large eye painted on the window.

(CONTINUED)

HELGA

. . . is my tea room.

She speaks louder, so the crowd can hear.

HELGA

Fortunes told. Readings for
everyone. All accurate. All true.
Only the *finest* seers.

CRAWFORD

Enough with the commercial.

He gestures at the body.

CRAWFORD

Who was he?

HELGA

I knew him as Barona.

CRAWFORD

What was his *real* name?

HELGA

I do not know. He came to me
looking for work, and I gave him a
job.

CRAWFORD

(surprised)

Without even knowing his name?

HELGA

One does not let a rare gift such
as Barona's wither because of
trivialities.

CRAWFORD

"Gift?"

HELGA

Barona was an *incredibly* gifted
seer. He did some readings for me
that were *frightening* in their
accuracy.

CRAWFORD

When did he start working for you?

HELGA

In January.

(CONTINUED)

CRAWFORD

Where did he live?

HELGA

He had no home.

(beat)

I fed him sometimes and let him sleep in a small room in the back of my establishment.

CRAWFORD

Do you know of any relatives? Anyone who could come and claim the body?

HELGA

I am aware of none. He never spoke of his past.

CRAWFORD

Mr. Parker, would you be willing to sign a statement saying what you've told me?

GEORGE

Sure.

CRAWFORD

Let me call someone to collect the body. Then we can be on our way.

GEORGE

(nervously)

N-Now?

CRAWFORD

Is something wrong with now?

George sees the clock in the church steeple over the officer's shoulder. 11:05 a.m.

CRAWFORD

It won't take long.

Helga is speaking to an old woman in the crowd.

HELGA

We have done *hundreds* of readings for people. We can do one for you today.

(beat)

The stars are great harbingers, you know.

(CONTINUED)

CRAWFORD
(prompting George)
Mr. Parker?

GEORGE
(uneasily)
I'll. . . I'll wait here.

CRAWFORD
Thank you.
(beat)
I won't be long.

He walks off.

GEORGE
(sotto voce)
I *hope* not.

FADE TO:

A busy place: Officers are milling about; the phones are ringing.

George is seated by Crawford's desk. The officer is typing on his computer. George lowers his arm and sneaks a peek at his watch. 11:25 a.m.

The report complete, Crawford hits the print button on the keyboard. The pages come out of the printer beside him. He collects them and hands them to George.

CRAWFORD
There you are, Mr. Parker. If
you'd just -

George grabs a pen from the officer's desk and quickly signs his name to the last page. He puts the pen back down on the desk and pushes the papers at Crawford.

CRAWFORD
You didn't read it.

GEORGE
I trust you.

CRAWFORD
(chuckles briefly)
Very well.
(beat)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CRAWFORD (CONT'D)

The police department thanks you
for your time, sir.

Crawford collects the sheets of paper and staples them
together. George makes no move to rise.

Crawford looks quizzically at George.

CRAWFORD

Is something wrong?

GEORGE

(sotto voce; with
sudden realization)

I'm *safe* here.

CRAWFORD

What was that?

GEORGE

(quickly)

Nothing.

Crawford pushes out his chair and stands. He holds out
his hand to George, forcing him to stand as well.

They shake.

CRAWFORD

Thank you for your help, Mr.
Parker.

FADE TO:

A busy street, as before. George hurriedly crosses to
Madame Helga's tea room. Finding the door locked, he
starts pounding on it.

Alarmed, Helga comes out of the back room. She walks to
the door and opens it, but only as much as the inside
chain lock will allow. The door creaks as she does this.

HELGA

I am *closed*.

GEORGE

The hell you are!

(beat)

I need to talk to you *now*.

(CONTINUED)

HELGA

That is not possible.

GEORGE

What are you trying to pull?

HELGA

(beat)

I do not understand.

GEORGE

All that business a little while ago with Barona.

(beat)

Trying to drum up a little trade?

HELGA

How could I have known he was going to die?

(longish beat)

Young man, you need some help.

GEORGE

Right, and you're going to help me.

HELGA

I refuse.

She quickly closes the door and locks it. She calls through the glass.

HELGA

Go away or I will call the *police*.

She briskly walks away. George pounds again on the door.

GEORGE

No!

(beat)

Come back! *Come back!*

She is gone.

FADE TO:

George has ducked into a building entrance and is on his cell phone. When Christine answers, we see them both in a split screen.

(CONTINUED)

CHRISTINE

Hello?

GEORGE

(a little shaky)

Hi, honey.

(beat)

How's. . . How's the work coming along?

CHRISTINE

Slowly but surely.

(beat)

How are the errands going?

GEORGE

F-Fine. Nearly done.

CHRISTINE

Good.

GEORGE

I miss you.

CHRISTINE

I miss you too.

GEORGE

(with a growing lump
in his throat)

I love you, Christine.

CHRISTINE

And I love you.

(beat; concerned)

Are you *sure* you're OK? You sound
. . . funny.

GEORGE

I'm OK.

CHRISTINE

(a bit unsure)

Hurry home.

GEORGE

I will.

CHRISTINE

Bye bye.

She hangs up. The split screen vanishes.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED: (2)

5

George puts his phone away and looks at his watch. 11:48. He glances up. . . and sees the *church*. He smiles and starts running towards it, nudging into some people (who give him odd looks) along the way.

FADE TO:

6 INT. ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH - MOMENTS LATER

6

George nervously enters the bright church and sits in one of the pews. He kneels and puts his hand to his forehead. He is shaking.

FATHER DOYLE, an older, balding priest wearing a long black robe and a large crucifix about his neck, slowly approaches him.

DOYLE

May I help you?

George is startled.

GEORGE

(nervously)

Who. . . Who are. . .

DOYLE

I'm Father Doyle.

GEORGE

You work here?

DOYLE

(chuckles)

I never really thought of it in quite that way, but yes.

GEORGE

I'm sorry, Father.

(beat)

M-M-My name's George Parker.

DOYLE

How may I help you?

GEORGE

I need. . . need you to perform the Last Rites.

Doyle clutches his crucifix.

(CONTINUED)

DOYLE

Dear me! Someone is dying?

GEORGE

(beat)

Yes, someone is dying.

DOYLE

If you'll give me just a few minutes to gather my things. . .

GEORGE

Please hurry.

Doyle starts walking away, but then stops and turns.

DOYLE

Where is the individual who is to receive the sacrament?

GEORGE

You're looking at him.

Confused, Doyle slowly walks back to George.

DOYLE

You want to receive the Last Rites?

GEORGE

I do.

DOYLE

(beat)

Is this a joke?

GEORGE

It's no joke.

(beat)

I'll be dead shortly.

DOYLE

How do you *know* that?

GEORGE

He told me.

(beat)

A man - an old man. He said that I was going to die. . . at 12:00. Now, will you *please* -

Doyle glances at his watch.

(CONTINUED)

DOYLE

Why, it's 12:00 now.

The church bells start to loudly chime the hour.

GEORGE

(screaming)

Nooooooooo!

George screams and falls to his side on the floor, his hands jammed over his ears.

DOYLE

(urgently)

Mr. Parker?

(beat)

Mr. Parker?

After a dozen chimes, the bells stop. George, confused, looks up at the priest.

GEORGE

(anxiously)

What. . . What time is it?

Doyle looks at his watch.

DOYLE

12:02.

The priest puts out a hand and helps George to his feet.

GEORGE

You're *certain* about that?

DOYLE

Absolutely.

Doyle rolls up his sleeve and shows George his watch.
12:02.

George grabs Doyle's right hand and shakes it vigorously.

GEORGE

(relieved)

Thank you, Father! You don't know
how much you've helped me today.

DOYLE

(confused)

You're welcome.

(beat)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

DOYLE (CONT'D)

Perhaps some day you'll explain to
me what just happened?

George smiles and walks out of the church.

FADE TO:

EXT. CITY STREET - LATER

George whistles a happy tune as he walks to his car,
which is parked along the busy street. He is holding the
dry cleaning over one shoulder by the hook of the
hangars.

There is a sudden screech of a truck's brakes. George is
hit and sent flying for several feet. He lands in a heap
on the concrete, lying on top of the dry cleaning. A
woman screams. A crowd starts to gather.

The TRUCK DRIVER, a short, bald man, leaps from his truck
and runs to George's crumpled form.

TRUCK DRIVER

Holy cow!
(beat; urgently)
Mister?

A WOMAN approaches from the crowd.

WOMAN

He doesn't look like he's
breathing!

TRUCK DRIVER

(urgently)
It wasn't my fault. He came out of
nowhere.
(beat)
I. . . I couldn't stop in time!

The driver takes out his cell phone and calls 9-1-1.

TRUCK DRIVER

(urgently)
Hello, I need an ambulance right
away. . . Summer Street. . .
What? . . . No, I don't know the
number. . . I realize that it's a
main drag. I drive on it almost
every day.
(beat)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TRUCK DRIVER (CONT'D)

Well, I don't want to take the
time to. . . Alright. Hold on.

(calling to the
crowd)

Does anybody know what *number*
Summer Street this is?

A creaky door is opened in the distance. Helga slowly
steps through the crowd.

HELGA

Twelve.

(beat)

This is 12 Summer Street.

We focus on George. Lying *just* out of his reach is his
rabbit's foot. From his open, outstretched hand near the
charm, he was obviously trying to retrieve it.

FADE TO BLACK.