

"The Change"

by  
Mike Murphy

112 Lovering Street  
Medway, MA 02053-2326  
508-533-8310  
mikeandzachary@gmail.com  
WGAE Registered

1 INT. BAKER BATHROOM - MORNING

1

A bright morning.

Muscular SIMON BAKER, 34, wearing only his boxers, is sitting on the toilet of his cramped upstairs bathroom. The vanity mirror is close by - within reach. Simon notices something yellow in the glass and leaps to his feet.

SIMON

Goddamn bee!

He goes to swat the pest and catches his own reflection in the mirror. Befuddled, he stares for a minute, eventually leaning in to see better.

He rubs his eyes and then touches his hair.

SIMON

What the. . .

It is blond. Even the stubble on his face is blond. His arms, his chest, his legs. . . everywhere. . . blond.

Frightened, he hikes up his boxers and runs down the hall to his and his wife's bedroom. LORETTA is still in bed.

SIMON

(calling)

Honey!

His wife pulls the comforter over her head.

LORETTA

Let me sleep! I told you I don't have to be at work until ten this morning.

SIMON

But, sweetheart. . .

LORETTA

Go take your shower, Simon. I'm not ready to face the world yet.

SIMON

(pleading)

But it's important!

Loretta unhappily pokes her head out from under the comforter. With one hand, she pushes away some brown strands of hair that are hanging over her eyes. She is not amused.

(CONTINUED)

LORETTA

What?

SIMON

(incredulously)

Is that all you have to say?

LORETTA

(beat)

What, *honey*?

Simon gestures at his body.

SIMON

Look at me!

Loretta comes out from under the covers and does so.

LORETTA

Yeah?

SIMON

Don't you see?

Loretta yawns.

LORETTA

Lover, I'm in no mood for games.

SIMON

I'm a blond!

Loretta grins.

LORETTA

You *just* noticed this?

SIMON

Huh?

LORETTA

You've *always* had blond hair.

(beat)

Now let me sleep.

She crawls back under the covers.

SIMON

Loretta, please!

LORETTA

You're talking to the dead.

(beat)

You'd better get ready for work.

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED: (2)

1

SIMON

But -

Loretta pokes one hand from under the covers, the index finger straight out like The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come.

Simon shambles away. In the corridor, he passes a series of pictures, including ones from their wedding.

In all of them, he has blond hair.

FADE TO:

2 INT. DR. MANDERSON'S OFFICE - LATER

2

MANDERSON, an older general practitioner with thick glasses, is holding a file in his hand. Simon is seated on the examining table before him.

He opens the file so Simon can see the papers.

MANDERSON

Look here.

He points to a particular line on the first sheet of paper.

MANDERSON

(reading)

Hair: Blond.

Simon squirms on the table.

SIMON

Are you saying I don't know what color my own hair is?

MANDERSON

Are you saying my records have been wrong all these years?

Simon throws up his hands and sighs.

SIMON

I don't know.

MANDERSON

You've been a patient of mine for more than ten years. Don't you think I would have noticed a simple mistake in your file like that long ago?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MANDERSON (CONT'D)

(beat)  
It's Doctoring 101.

SIMON

(longish beat)  
Can we assume for a moment that  
I'm right?

MANDERSON

On a medical point?

SIMON

Please?

MANDERSON

OK, but *just* to play devil's  
advocate.

Simon points at his blond hair.

SIMON

What could cause something like  
this to happen?

MANDERSON

Nothing I'm aware of.

SIMON

(hopefully)  
How about that alo. . . Oh, what's  
it called? A guy in the office had  
it.

MANDERSON

(guessing)  
Alopecia?

SIMON

That's it!

MANDERSON

Alopecia makes your hair *fall out*,  
not change color.

FADE TO:

Another bright morning.

Simon, in his boxers, looks incredulously in the mirror.

(CONTINUED)

SIMON

Not again!

He stomps down the hall to the bedroom. Loretta is busy putting her earrings on in front of their dresser mirror. She looks at him and realizes he is angry.

LORETTA

What is it this morning, honey?

SIMON

My eyes.

LORETTA

Did you sprout another one in the back of your head?

SIMON

Not funny.

(beat)

What color are they?

Loretta sighs big.

LORETTA

They're blue.

Finished with her earrings, she takes a few steps toward her husband and wraps her arms around his neck.

LORETTA

Blond hair and blue eyes.

She gives him a peck on the cheek.

LORETTA

What girl *wouldn't* have fallen for you?

SIMON

Have they -

LORETTA

Yes, they have *always* been blue.

(beat)

If you're worried something's wrong, go see the doctor.

SIMON

I saw Manderson yesterday.

LORETTA

Not him.

(CONTINUED)

SIMON  
(with sudden  
realization)  
You mean Segal?

LORETTA  
He could help.

SIMON  
(adamantly)  
There's nothing wrong with me  
*upstairs.*

LORETTA  
If you say so.

SIMON  
And I *refuse* to visit a  
psychiatrist.

FADE TO:

Loretta has left for work. Simon breaks out recent  
picture albums.

Blue eyes.

He finds ones from before he met Loretta.

Blue eyes.

He reaches into his back pocket, takes out his wallet,  
and removes his driver's license. He holds it before his  
face.

SIMON  
Damn!

Over his shoulder, we see "Eyes: Blue."

He sits at the kitchen table and starts thinking out  
loud.

SIMON  
These things *must* be happening  
when I sleep.  
(longish beat)  
I'll just stay awake!

FADE TO:

5 INT. BAKER BATHROOM - NEXT MORNING

5

A cloudy day.

A bleary-eyed Simon is in his boxers. He's holding a retractable tape measure. Finished with it, he releases the lock and angrily lets the tape retract.

He sits down on the closed toilet.

SIMON

Son of a bitch! I'm three inches  
taller.

FADE TO:

6 INT. BAKER BEDROOM - LATER

6

Simon takes some of his pants out of their shared closet and places them, still on hangers, atop the bed.

He tries them on. They all fit! He rips off the last pair he was trying on and throws it on the bed with the others.

SIMON

How the hell can they fit?

He looks at the tag on a hanging pair of sweatpants. He is surprised.

SIMON

I never bought pants this size in  
my life!

FADE TO:

7 EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - LATER

7

A busy place, with lots of pedestrian traffic.

At first, Simon doesn't notice the grizzled, homeless old guy (HAROLD DIXON) in the tattered clothing leaning against the outside wall of the pharmacy.

But Dixon certainly sees him.

DIXON

(amazed; loudly)  
It's like looking in a mirror!

Simon stops walking and approaches him carefully.

(CONTINUED)

Noticing this, Dixon chuckles.

DIXON  
I'm not gonna bite ya.

Simon is now right in front of Dixon.

SIMON  
What did you say?  
(beat)  
Something about a mirror.

DIXON  
I looked like you once.

Simon eyes him.

SIMON  
*Many years ago.*

DIXON  
Not as many as you might think.

Dixon looks Simon over.

DIXON  
Blond hair, blue eyes.  
(longish beat)  
She made you taller though.

SIMON  
She?

DIXON  
Loretta.

SIMON  
(shocked)  
How can you -

DIXON  
That *is* her name.

Simon takes a step closer.

SIMON  
(angrily)  
Who are you?

Dixon holds out a dirty hand, but Simon won't shake it.

DIXON  
Harold Dixon - Loretta's previous  
husband.

(CONTINUED)

Simon laughs out loud and briefly places his hands on his knees. Dixon withdraws his offered handshake.

DIXON

Did I say something funny?

SIMON

That's a good trick!

DIXON

Trick?

SIMON

To get money out of me.

Dixon shakes his head no.

DIXON

I don't want your money.

SIMON

And that bit about being her first husband. . .

DIXON

I didn't say *first*. I said I was her previous husband.

SIMON

(amused)

How many husbands has she had?

DIXON

I'm at least number four, that I can prove. There may have been one or two more around the time of the American Revolution, but I couldn't nail down those facts for certain in the library records.

SIMON

You are nuts!

DIXON

I was married to your wife.

SIMON

Look at you. You're more than twice my age.

DIXON

I'm 37.

(CONTINUED)

SIMON  
(sarcastically)  
And I'm 18.

DIXON  
Does she still have that heart-  
shaped birthmark on her left  
shoulder?

Simon is shocked, momentarily at a loss for words.

DIXON  
She did this to me. I displeased  
her, and she did this. I swear.

SIMON  
Loretta's never been married  
before.

Dixon grins.

DIXON  
She told you that too, huh? She  
never admitted it to me either,  
but, once I started doing some  
research, I learned the truth.

SIMON  
(prompting him)  
Which is?

DIXON  
*That* will cost you a cup of  
coffee.

Simon throws up his hands.

SIMON  
I knew it! You are trying to get  
money from me.

DIXON  
Not money. *Coffee*.

SIMON  
Which costs money.

Simon starts to walk away, dismissing everything Dixon  
has told him.

DIXON  
(calling)  
Aren't you the least bit curious?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Simon stops and turns to face him.

SIMON

About?

DIXON

How I knew your wife's name, for one. How did I guess "Loretta?" It's not like she's named Mary.

Simon takes a few steps back towards him.

SIMON

OK, you got me there.

DIXON

And the birthmark?

SIMON

(reluctantly)  
That too.

DIXON

There are some other things you ought to know. . . things that could save your life.

He motions at the doughnut shop across the street.

DIXON

Coffee?

FADE TO:

INT. DOUGHNUT SHOP - MINUTES LATER

A busy, brightly colored place, with most of the tables occupied. Dixon sits alone at one. Simon returns carrying two large, black coffees.

He puts one down in front of the old man and then sits.

SIMON

Go ahead.

They both remove the lids from their coffees.

DIXON

I asked you here for some privacy too. I didn't want to tell you what I need to out in the open.

Simon sips his drink.

(CONTINUED)

SIMON

Very considerate.

Dixon takes a big swig of coffee, as though to steel himself before uttering the news.

DIXON

Your wife, Loretta's. . . a succubus.

SIMON

(amused)  
Is she?

DIXON

A demon who thrives on the strength and souls of young men.

SIMON

Uh huh.

Dixon senses Simon doesn't believe him.

DIXON

(bluntly)  
Is the sex good?

Simon practically does a spit take, but manages to stop himself.

SIMON

(incredulously)  
What?

DIXON

Is the sex good?

SIMON

That's none of your goddamn business.

Dixon's eyes take on a faraway look as he remembers.

DIXON

Yeah, it was good for us too.

SIMON

Mr. Dixon -

DIXON

Some of the best I ever had.

(beat)  
A strong woman. Insatiable.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DIXON (CONT'D)

Every time we finished, I felt  
like I had been hit by a truck!  
That's how she first gets to you -  
saps your energy. . . and your  
soul.

Simon starts to rise. He's had enough of this.

DIXON

She's everything you ever wanted  
in a woman, isn't she?

Simon takes his seat again.

SIMON

She is.

DIXON

Like God Himself made her for you?

SIMON

Damn right.

DIXON

And now, she's re-making you for  
herself - making you into what *she*  
wants, her ideal man: Blond hair,  
blue eyes, tall. Every morning,  
it's something different, isn't  
it?

(beat)

I call it The Change.

SIMON

You're *quite* a storyteller.

DIXON

That's when she's best able to  
take your life force. . . when  
you're asleep. You're the most  
vulnerable then.

Dixon reaches across the table and briefly touches one of  
Simon's shoulders.

DIXON

Think about it, man! These changes  
you've been going through, what's  
the common element?

Simon shrugs.

SIMON

You've lost me.

(CONTINUED)

DIXON

You're not changing yourself,  
right? You're not dying your hair?

SIMON

Hell no!

DIXON

(prompting him)  
Then all that's left is. . .

SIMON

(longish pause)  
Loretta.

Dixon takes a big drink.

DIXON

She can assume any shape she wants  
- whatever her victim finds  
attractive. She's using you and,  
eventually, she'll drain you dry.

SIMON

Then how are you - a previous  
husband - still around?

DIXON

I recognized what she was doing. I  
ran, but not fast enough. She was  
able to take some of me  
permanently.

He touches his chest.

DIXON

What you see here. . . this is all  
that remains.

SIMON

Why would she have stopped?

DIXON

I don't know. Maybe she figured  
she might need me again. Maybe she  
had you in the on-deck circle and  
saw no reason to kill me. Why  
waste energy, right?

SIMON

Or maybe you're full of shit.

(CONTINUED)

DIXON

You can think that if you like. I  
felt an obligation to tell you,  
and I've done that.

He drains his cup dry and stands.

DIXON

If you wake up tomorrow a. . . a  
"changed man," don't say I didn't  
warn you.

Simon looks up at Dixon.

SIMON

If what you're saying has the  
slightest bit of truth to it, and  
that's a *big* if, what would you  
have me do?

Dixon slams his palm down on the table so hard that  
Simon's cup shakes. Some of their fellow customers turn  
to see what's going on.

DIXON

Run! Run fast and far. Forget how  
good the sex is and *run*. . . or  
you'll end up old before your time  
- like me.

Dixon hurriedly walks out of the doughnut shop. Simon  
looks at the faces of some of the people staring at him.  
He takes a big swig, trying to lose himself in the  
blackness of his coffee.

FADE TO:

Simon is on his laptop in the house's wood-paneled study.  
We see what he is doing over his shoulder.

He Googles "succubus" and chooses the Wikipedia entry  
from the many results. Before he can finish reading, he  
hears Loretta's car in the driveway. He quickly closes  
the computer and goes to the door to meet her.

FADE TO:

10

INT. BAKER KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

10

A cozy, rustic room. Loretta and Simon stand facing each other.

LORETTA

So, what did you do today?

SIMON

Nothing much. Just some errands:  
The drugstore, stuff like that.

Loretta seductively approaches her husband and wraps her arms about his neck.

LORETTA

(softly)

Your nurse is right here, lover. I  
even have the uniform. Remember?

She starts planting small kisses on his chest. He gently backs away.

SIMON

N-Not now.

She is hurt.

LORETTA

I thought you liked my nurse's  
uniform.

SIMON

Oh, I do, I do.

He chuckles uneasily.

SIMON

There are a lot of good memories  
in that outfit!

LORETTA

Then *what*?

SIMON

I'm. . . just not feeling well.

LORETTA

What is it? What's wrong?

SIMON

A cold coming on, I think.

He fake sniffles for good measure.

(CONTINUED)

SIMON

Feeling. . . *blah*.

LORETTA

Anything I can do?

SIMON

Thanks, but I don't think so. I'm gonna take a couple of aspirin and call it a night.

FADE TO:

Simon awakens with a start from the early-morning sun beaming in his face. He quickly looks around the room. Nothing seems out of the ordinary.

The blankets-covered sleeping form of Loretta is beside him. He smiles and spoons into her, but something is wrong - *different*. He tries again, but it's still no good. Finally, he whisks the blankets away.

He screams louder than he ever has.

What he had been spooning to are the very dead remains of Harold Dixon.

All the "air" has been let out of him. He looks like a "Happy Birthday" balloon several days after the event. His deflated face is contorted in the agony he must have felt at the moment of his death.

Afraid, Simon kicks it from the bed with his bare feet. It lands with a *squish* on the hardwood floor.

Loretta walks calmly into the bedroom. She appraises the situation and looks pleased.

LORETTA

You *really* should delete your browser history.

Simon sits up nervously, glancing alternately at Dixon's corpse and his wife.

SIMON

(stammering)

You mean it's. . . it's. . .

Loretta finishes his question for him.

(CONTINUED)

LORETTA

True?

(beat; proudly)

Yes.

She sits on a corner of the mattress and reaches out for Simon. He retreats, pressing himself hard against the headboard.

LORETTA

Are you afraid of me?

SIMON

N-No.

She grins widely.

LORETTA

You should be.

He looks down at Dixon's remains.

SIMON

Why did you. . .

LORETTA

Covering my tracks. When I saw what you were Googling, I knew you must have run into Harold. He was my only living ex-husband.

SIMON

But you let him live.

LORETTA

Only because I had found you. You could do what I needed - and more - better than him.

(beat)

I'm not happy with what you did, sweetheart.

Her words frighten Simon. He pushes even further back on the headboard, which hits the wall behind it.

LORETTA

But I'll forgive you. . . *this* time.

Simon sighs in relief, though he is still visibly frightened.

(CONTINUED)

SIMON

Where. . . Where do we go from here?

LORETTA

Just a few *minor* tweaks should be enough: If I say "Jump," I want you to ask "How high?"

SIMON

(quickly)  
Of course.

LORETTA

If I have some womanly needs to be satisfied, I'll expect you to be there.

SIMON

You got it.

LORETTA

If you're not good to me, lover, you're gone. I won't be as lenient with you as I was with Harold.

SIMON

Not to worry.

LORETTA

I prefer to change you overnight, but I can do it while you're awake. It would hurt you that way though.

(beat)

I've made you handsomer. I can also make you uglier - *much* uglier.

SIMON

I'm. . . uhm. . . I'm sure you can.

LORETTA

How would you like to be the size of a garden gnome, to be covered in warts, to be a hunchback?

Simon quickly shakes his head in the negative.

She moves to him and cups his blond stubbly chin in one hand.

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED: (3)

11

LORETTA

You're so pretty now. Don't make  
me angry.

She stands quickly.

LORETTA

Now clean this place up.

She points down at Dixon's deflated remains.

LORETTA

But not Harold. I have plans for  
him.

FADE TO:

12 INT. BAKER BEDROOM - ANOTHER DAY

12

Simon brings clean laundry into the bedroom. His hair  
seems blonder, his eyes bluer. He may even be a bit  
taller.

He puts one of his shirts on a hanger and slowly -  
reluctantly - opens the closet door to put it away.

He pinches his nose shut with one hand and tries not to  
look at the zipped garment bag containing Dixon's molding  
remains - his face visible through the clear plastic -  
which are hanging among his clothes as a reminder from  
Loretta.

FADE TO BLACK.