

THE BLACK ROOM

Original Screenplay

by

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## **THE BLACK ROOM - CHARACTER BREAKDOWN**

### **RAYMOND BLACK**

Raymond is suffering from writer's block and is on the edge of madness having not slept for days. He is struggling with the period drama genre; with the deadline looming is under extreme pressure. Ultimately, he loses the battle with his own mind and is driven mad by his own thoughts.

### **JENNIFER BLACK**

Raymond's Lawyer wife. She is not very supportive of Raymond's dream of being a writer placing even more pressure on this already crumbling man. Writing to her is a whimsy and she thinks Raymond should get a "proper job". In essence, their relationship is at it's end and her infidelity is symptomatic and a symbol of their marriage's imminent demise.

### **'V' and 'C'**

Two mystery female characters trapped in the Back Room. They are in fact representative of Raymond's state of mind and his struggle with the writing project. Of the two characters 'V' is the more dominant while 'C' the more scared. 'V' takes the lead in the situation to escape. Ultimately, they want to escape the Black Room and find out why they are being held captive.

### **ELIZABETH and SCARLETT**

The two female characters in Raymond's period drama. Austen types Elizabeth is the older of the two and more confident type. Scarlett is shy and quiet, holding the secrets which lead to the drama which unfolds.

### **LEONARDO BLACK**

The male protagonist in the period drama - looks uncannily like Raymond.

### **HANDSOME YOUNGER MAN**

Jennifer's Legal Assistant who she is currently having an affair with.

FADE IN:

INT. THE BLACK ROOM

Pitch black darkness.

LIGHT flickers briefly from a lonely bulb. Once. Twice.  
Then darkness again.

INT. RAYMOND'S STUDY - NIGHT

CLOCK ticks omnipotently.

WALL is peppered with POST-IT NOTES.

Written on these notes are the like: PERIOD DRAMA;  
CHARACTER; MOTIVATION; STORY; ACT; MOTIVATION; CONFLICT;  
WHY? HOW? ACTION; VOICE; SCENE; AUDIENCE; CAUSE/EFFECT  
etc.

RAYMOND BLACK (36), sits behind his desk, death-row stare  
pierces his - currently blank - humming computer screen.  
His face is pale and gluey; hair greasy. Looks like he  
hasn't slept in weeks.

An ashtray is overflowing with butts and ash. Keeping it  
company is an almost-empty bottle of Scotch.

Raymond reaches for his cigarette packet; it's empty.

INT. THE BLACK ROOM

Pitch black.

'V'

(female voice)

Hello. Is anybody there?

Beat.

'V'

(shouting)

Hello. Can you hear. . .

'C'

(also female/distant)

Yes. Hello!

'V'

(shouting)

Where are you?

'C'  
(distant)  
Here!

'V'  
(shouting)  
Talk! I'll come to you.

'C'  
(shouting)  
Talk! About what?

As their conversation continues 'V' and 'C' will get closer and their voices lower to a more natural volume.

'V'  
What's your name?

'C'  
I . . . I don't know. You?

'V'  
I don't remember?

'C'  
How did you get here?

'V'  
I have no idea.

'C'  
Me neither. . . Is that you?  
I can hear you breathing?

They are together now.

'C'  
(relieved)  
I thought I was alone.

RAYMOND (O.C)  
(ghostly)  
Who are you? Who are you?

Raymond's voice is fractured and mixed with the sound of a MOBILE PHONE ringing in the distance.

'V'  
Where are we?

'C'  
I'm scared.

'V'  
This is weird.

'C'  
What are we going to do?

'V'  
Find a way out.

RINGING gets louder.

INT. RAYMOND'S STUDY - NIGHT

Blank screen on the computer.

RAYMOND (O.S)  
It's going really well, Jen.  
Couldn't be better.

INT. OFFICE - NIGHT

Power-dressed JENNIFER BLACK (35) - surrounded by files  
and law books - talks on the phone.

INTERCUT between the two.

JENNIFER  
I thought you'd struggle with  
the period drama thing. I had  
visions of you staring at a  
blank screen swimming in an  
empty-headed alcoholic haze.

Raymond puts the bottle down.

RAYMOND  
Thanks for the vote of confidence.

JENNIFER  
You're tired. You get  
snappy when you're tired.

RAYMOND  
Deadline's tomorrow. I'll sleep  
when it's done.

JENNIFER  
You know what's at stake. I can't  
continue to support this if you. . .

RAYMOND

I know.

JENNIFER

Don't say it like that. You can still write even with a proper job.

RAYMOND

Writing is a proper job.

JENNIFER

If you get paid, Raymond. That's what defines a contract of employment. Exchange of labour. Getting paid.

RAYMOND

Spare me the legal jargon, Jen. Have some faith in me.

JENNIFER

Always the dreamer, Ray. Dreams don't pay the bills.

RAYMOND

You should hear yourself. What have you become?

JENNIFER

A success in my chosen field. That's what I've become.

INT. RAYMOND'S STUDY

Raymond paces up and down muttering to himself - bottle of scotch in hand.

RAYMOND

I put her through law school. I didn't complain. If I get paid. If I get paid? I'll get paid.

He stops and stares at the POST-IT wall. Tries to focus but his eyesight blurs. POST-ITS become a furry vision of yellow. Raymond SLAPS himself in the face.

RAYMOND

Come on, Ray. Show her.

He swigs from the bottle. Moves closer to the POST-ITS. One takes his focus. It says: JUST WRITE!

EXT. LUSH GREEN FIELD - DAY

A splendid sunny day in the countryside. Two young ladies - adorned in Jane Austen style costume - ELIZABETH JOHNSON (24) and SCARLETT HARDY (21) take a stroll.

Elizabeth beams, happy with her lot. Scarlett, is smaller than her friend, quiet and pensive.

ELIZABETH

Quite a beautiful day, Scarlett?

SCARLETT

Yes, Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH

Everything's smiling. Today is a good day.

SCARLETT

Indeed.

ELIZABETH

Something troubles you Scarlett. Prey tell.

SCARLETT

It is nothing, Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH

I think I know.

SCARLETT

You do?

ELIZABETH

After my marriage to Leonardo I shall make it my mission to find you a love as great as mine.

Elizabeth picks a buttercup from the grass and smells it.

ELIZABETH

It is a feeling like no other.

SCARLETT

But there is a love for me. A love like no other. It's you Elizabeth. I love you.

Scarlett tries to kiss Elizabeth. She pushes her off and Scarlett falls to the floor.

ELIZABETH  
Get off me you fucking dyke!

INT. RAYMOND'S STUDY - NIGHT

Raymond smacks the keyboard.

RAYMOND  
No. No. No. What are you doing?  
They're not lesbians. Who are  
they? What do they want?

INT. THE BLACK ROOM

PITCH BLACK.

'V'  
I'm not a dyke.

Beat.

'C'  
Where did that come from?

'V'  
I don't know. . .

'C'  
This is strange.

'V'  
We got here somehow. There must  
be a way out.

'C'  
Listen. What's that noise?

Furious TYPING can be heard in the distance.

'V'  
Sounds like rain. No. Sounds  
like. . .

INT. RAYMOND'S STUDY - NIGHT

Raymond's fingers stab quickly at the keyboard like a  
sewing machine.

INT. WOODS - NIGHT

The night closes in. The WIND swirls. A WOLF howls.

Elizabeth and Scarlett hold each other tightly.

SCARLETT

I'm petrified, Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH

Leonardo will find us. He'll protect us.

SCARLETT

What of the monster. Many of the townsfolk have perished at it's devilish hands. Only to rise day's later in the dead of night.

ELIZABETH

Hearsay, Scarlett. Do not worry. Leonardo is close. I sense him.

SCARLETT

It is almost night.

Elizabeth betrays her hidden fear by clutching the CROSS hanging around her neck.

Scarlett starts crying.

MALE VOICE (O.S)

Ladies. Do not be fearful of the night.

From the darkness LEONARDO BLACK (36) appears. Lightning strikes illuminating his elegant, handsome visage. He looks remarkably like Raymond.

ELIZABETH

Leonardo. I knew you would come.

Elizabeth and Scarlett run to his outstretched arms.

SCARLETT

Thank the lord you are here.

LEONARDO

Night is our friend. Darkness our tomorrow. You are safe.

Leonardo smiles revealing VAMPIRE FANGS.

INT. BLACK ROOM

'C' lets out a scream.

'V'

What? What's the matter?

'C'

Someone just bit my neck.  
It really hurt.

Suddenly the LIGHTBULB begins flickering. We see 'V' and 'C' for the first time. They are two females (both early 20s/with remarkable likeness to Scarlett and Elizabeth).

INT. RAYMOND'S STUDY - NIGHT

Raymond's finger depressing the DELETE button wipes everything he has just written off the screen.

RAYMOND

No! No! No! They don't want  
vampires! They want fluffy  
fucking Austen!

INT. BLACK ROOM

LIGHTBULB oscillates wildly giving a strobe like effect.

'V'

There!

'C'

What?

'V'

I saw a door.

Phone RINGS again.

INT. RAYMOND'S STUDY - NIGHT

Raymond answers.

RAYMOND

Jennifer. . .

INT. OFFICE - NIGHT

Intercut between the two.

JENNIFER

I'm not going to make it home tonight.

RAYMOND

Oh. What's wrong?

JENNIFER

Lisa just called. She's found out Mark's been having an affair.

MALE HANDS place themselves on Jennifer's shoulders and begin a massage - it feels good.

JENNIFER

It's her best friend and she's spitting fire. Talking revenge.

RAYMOND

Revenge eh?

INSERT: LIGHTBULB flickering on-off-on-off.

JENNIFER

I've got to be with her.

RAYMOND

Of course. She's your sister.

JENNIFER

Good luck with the script. Sorry about earlier. I was in work mode.

RAYMOND

I hope Lisa's okay.

JENNIFER

Yes. Good night, Ray.

Jennifer takes the Hands and kisses them. Before standing up to embrace and kiss the HANDSOME SUITED YOUNG MAN (early 20s).

EXT. LUSH GREEN FIELD - DAY

A splendid sunny day AS BEFORE. Elizabeth and Scarlett take the same stroll.

ELIZABETH

Something troubles you Scarlett. Prey tell.

SCARLETT

It is nothing, Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH

I think I know.

SCARLETT

You do?

ELIZABETH

After my marriage to Leonardo I shall make it my mission to find you a love as great as mine.

Elizabeth picks a buttercup from the grass and smells it.

ELIZABETH

It is a feeling like no other.

SCARLETT

(crying)

I can lie no longer Elizabeth. It is Leonardo. . . And I. We are in love. Madly. Deeply.

ELIZABETH

Say it isn't the truth.

SCARLETT

But it is. We were to elope.

ELIZABETH

You bitch. You shall pay for such treachery.

Elizabeth suddenly pulls out a GUN and points it at Scarlett.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Elizabeth pursues Scarlett through the trees firing at her friend. Bullets WHISTLE past Scarlett's head.

Scarlett falls over. Tries to get up but is exhausted. Elizabeth stands over her. Points the gun at her head.

LEONARDO (O.S)

Stop this madness! Stop! Stop!

Elizabeth looks up and sees Leonardo. Her finger tenses the trigger.

INT. RAYMOND'S STUDY - NIGHT

Raymond TYPES. Fevered. Manic.

Suddenly the DOOR HANDLE to his study RATTLES. Someone is trying to get in.

Raymond looks up. Alarmed. But doesn't stop typing. He is typing the word 'STOP' over and over and over.

The door SHAKES. Someone is trying to knock the door. It breaks open and 'V' and 'C' enter out of breath from their exertions. They are dressed in all black.

Raymond looks up and sees them.

RAYMOND

Who? What are you doing in  
my. . .

'V'

You! Why have you kept us  
prisoner?

RAYMOND

No. I have no idea who you  
are!

'C'

Explain yourself!

'V' and 'C' corner Raymond behind the desk.

'V'

Where are we? Who are you?

RAYMOND

I shall call the police.

He goes for his phone. 'V' grabs the booze bottle. Lifts it above her head and SMASHES it on Raymond's head.

INT. BLACK ROOM

Pitch black.

Heavy BREATHING. Raymond wakes up.

RAYMOND

My head!

TWO BRIGHT LIGHTS hurtle towards him.

He's not in the Black Room but rather a lonely highway.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

'V' drives the car. Beside her is 'C'. They exchange determined glances. 'V' puts her foot down.

EXT - HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Raymond is engulfed by harsh beam of the headlights. The car runs into him.

'V' and 'C' drive off into the night.

FADE OUT