

"My Mom the Witch"

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702-812-0400

Nov. 9, 2008

Screen Story #27

FADE IN:

INT - SUBURBAN KITCHEN - PRESENT DAY

We are inside the kitchen of a suburban home. The blinds are tightly shut and the lights are turned off. The kitchen looks ordinary except it is illuminated by dozens of votive candles arranged haphazardly on the countertops, appliances and table. The effect is spooky.

A door to the outside slowly opens inward. As it does, bright sunlight floods into the room.

Two 7-year-old girls, SAMANTHA and LINDY, stick their heads inside the door and look around cautiously.

Samantha speaks in a moderated tone without shouting.

SAMANTHA

Mom?

There is no reply, so the girls step quietly into the kitchen and close the door behind them. The room is again dark, illuminated only by the candles.

LINDY

Wow! There sure are a lot of candles in here!

SAMANTHA

My mom likes candles because she's a witch.

LINDY

Oh. What kind of witch is she? A good witch or an evil witch?

SAMANTHA

(thinking about it)

An evil witch, mostly.

LINDY

Oh.

SAMANTHA

Mom?... We don't want to surprise her, because she might get mad.

Suddenly, a big dark form bounds out of the darkness toward the girls!

It's a dog. He is almost as big as the girls are, but we soon see that he's not a threat at all. He and Samantha are happy to see each other! He races around the girls with great excitement. Samantha pets him and tries to restrain him so she can introduce him to Lindy.

SAMANTHA

This is Henry. He doesn't bite, but he wants you to pet him. My Mom turned him into a frog this morning.

LINDY  
(wide-eyed)

Really?!

Lindy cautiously pets Henry (who is obviously still a dog). After some hesitation, they both respond positively to each other.

SAMANTHA

I have to see where my mom is.

INT - LIVING ROOM

Samantha tiptoes into the living room, followed by Lindy and Henry. There they see HUNDREDS of lit candles arranged randomly around the room. As in the kitchen, the blinds are drawn tightly shut, so the candles provide the only light.

In the center of the room is some kind of makeshift pagan altar. There are all sorts of strange icons and

symbols arranged on and around it. The purpose of this display isn't clear, but we can almost imagine sacrifices of some kind taking place here. It is a scary scene to us, but the girls seem to take it in stride.

LINDY

Your mom must REALLY like candles.

There is no sign of Mom, but we hear strange sounds in the air. It is a chanting voice interspersed with hysterical cackling laughter.

INT - HALLWAY

The girls move to the foyer adjacent to the living room and look up the stairway toward the second floor. The stairs themselves are covered with more votive candles leading all the way up, so you would have to step around them if you were climbing the stairs. At the top of the stairs, barely illuminated in the candlelight, are three closed bedroom doors.

The chanting is louder now and is apparently coming from one of the doors at the top of the stairs. We can't make out the words, but it seems to be a woman speaking dramatically in some dead language.

SAMANTHA'S MOM (v.o.)

Umdelay fortentum ehr dei ominus  
faratum mordenti...

The girls remain at the bottom of the stairs looking up.

SAMANTHA

It's okay. My mom's casting spells  
now, so she won't be down for a  
while.

INT - KITCHEN

The girls and the dog return to the kitchen, and Samantha turns on the overhead light. Apart from the many candles still burning, the kitchen looks like any

other, with a refrigerator, sink, stove, microwave oven and kitchen table.

Samantha pulls a chair over to the refrigerator, climbs up on it and opens the freezer door at the top.

SAMANTHA

Do you like macaroni and cheese?

LINDY

Do you have anything else?

SAMANTHA

No, just mac and cheese.

LINDY

That's fine.

Samantha takes a family-size frozen food box out of the freezer, closes the door and gets off the chair. Then she moves the chair in front of the microwave oven and stands on it again. Very professionally, she opens the package, puts the plastic tray in the microwave and keys in the appropriate time.

SAMANTHA

Five minutes. You can sit down at the table if you want.

Lindy cautiously sits down at the kitchen table, which is covered with about a dozen lit candles.

SAMANTHA

You can move the candles if you want, but don't blow them out. It makes my mom mad.

Samantha goes to an adjoining pantry and gets a scoop of dry dog food, which she puts in Henry's bowl on the floor.

SAMANTHA

Here, Henry!

Then she gets some plates and silverware and sets the table for herself, Lindy and one other person.

LINDY

Do you have a TV?

SAMANTHA

No, we used to have one, but my mom smashed it. She said it had evil spirits.

LINDY

Do you watch Power Puff Girls?

SAMANTHA

No, because we don't have a TV.

LINDY

Oh.

The outside door slowly opens and a man cautiously pokes his head inside.

SAMANTHA

Daddy, daddy!

She runs to him, and he picks her up in his arms. Henry circles around, also very excited.

SAMANTHA'S DAD  
(quietly)

Where's Mom?

SAMANTHA

She's up in her room, incanting.

He visibly relaxes.

SAMANTHA'S DAD

And who is this?

SAMANTHA

This is Lindy from school.

SAMANTHA'S DAD

Hi, Lindy! That's a nice name.  
Where do you live?

LINDY  
(proudly)

141 Mayford Street.

SAMANTHA'S DAD

That's nice. Has Lindy met Mom yet?

SAMANTHA

No, she's been up in her room all  
afternoon.

SAMANTHA'S DAD

Oh... So what's for dinner?

SAMANTHA

Mac and cheese.

SAMANTHA'S DAD

Oh good! My favorite!

Dad sits down at the place set for him. The microwave beeps, and Samantha stands on the chair to retrieve the dinner. Then she serves the mac and cheese to the three of them and they begin eating.

SAMANTHA'S DAD

This is very well done, Sam.

SAMANTHA

Thank you.

SAMANTHA'S DAD

Did anything happen today?

SAMANTHA

Mom turned Henry into a frog.

He laughs and looks down at the dog, who is looking up at him waiting for attention.

SAMANTHA'S DAD  
(with mock seriousness)

That's terrible! Are you a frog, Henry? Well, he still looks like a dog to me.

SAMANTHA

No, but he thinks he's a frog.

SAMANTHA'S DAD

Oh, dear. We'll have to do something about that.

He holds his hand above Henry's head.

SAMANTHA'S DAD

Poof! Now you're a dog again.

There is no change to Henry, but Samantha looks relieved.

SAMANTHA

Henry says thank you.

SAMANTHA'S DAD

Henry is very welcome.

Dad pets Henry.

SAMANTHA'S DAD

Henry needs his shots. The vet sent us a card in the mail.

SAMANTHA  
(excited)

Oh, oh, can I go to the vet with you? (to Lindy) They have puppies at the vet. Daddy, can we get a puppy?

SAMANTHA'S DAD

No.

SAMANTHA  
(pouting theatrically)

Pleeease? Just one little puppy?

SAMANTHA'S DAD

That's what you said about Henry, and you know what happened to him.

SAMANTHA

He grew up.

SAMANTHA'S DAD

That's right, he grew up. (Laughs.) Then Mom turned him into a frog. So Lindy hasn't met Mom, has she?

SAMANTHA

No.

SAMANTHA'S DAD

Lindy, Sam's mom is very... different.

SAMANTHA

She's a Wiccan.

LINDY

Wicked?

SAMANTHA

Wic-CAN!

SAMANTHA'S DAD

Well, that's what some people call it. Do you go to church, Lindy?

LINDY

Yes, St. Paul's Church.

SAMANTHA'S DAD

It's kind of like that, except our mom doesn't go to a church outside. She goes to church right here. That's why she has all these candles.

The candles distributed around the kitchen remain lit, even though the overhead light is on.

SAMANTHA

You can't blow out the candles or Mom gets mad.

SAMANTHA'S DAD

Sam's mom can be kind of scary sometimes, but you shouldn't be afraid. She would never hurt you.

SAMANTHA

She just smashes things.

SAMANTHA'S DAD

Sometimes she gets upset, but Sam and I know that if we just keep quiet, Mom will calm down again.

Just then, the overhead light goes off, and the kitchen is again lit only by candles. The freakish sound of cackling laughter fills the room.

The ghoulish form of SAMANTHA'S MOM appears in the doorway from the living room. She is a middle aged woman dressed in black and wearing hideous make-up. She looks like something between a witch and a vampire. Her eyes are wild and insane. She speaks threateningly in some unknown language.

SAMANTHA'S MOM

Et plernum fit dosa. Mirio magnum  
tos. Heyrum fa!

SAMANTHA'S DAD  
(flatly)

Hello, dear. We're having dinner.  
Would you like to join us?

Mom gets more intense and agitated. She hovers around Dad and points at him accusingly.

SAMANTHA'S

Fortume! Ferin ferin ferin! Norden  
tu norden!

Dad covers his face with his hands, and rubs his eyes. Lindy looks wide-eyed but hasn't decided whether to be afraid yet. Sam continues eating her mac and cheese, as though this is a routine occurrence.

SAMANTHA'S DAD

How was your day, dear?

Mom waves her hands around Dad and seems to be casting a spell on him. Whatever she is saying, it is very dark and sinister.

SAMANTHA'S MOM

Fa! Morantay, monantee! Ferin ad  
norden, ferin! Moxenay fa!

Samantha continues to eat her dinner, but Lindy is beginning to get scared. Dad can see that she is about to cry.

As his wife hovers around him, incanting, Dad reaches for a fork and knife from the table and holds them in the shape of a cross. Then he reaches up to the light switch on the wall behind him and turns on the overhead light.

Mom recoils in the bright light. Dad stands up and flashes the cross at her, and she pulls back toward the darkened doorway. As she does, she hisses at her husband like a wild cat in a corner.

SAMANTHA'S DAD  
(calmly)

Sam, could you get me the rosemary?

Sam gets up from the table and goes to the pantry. She comes back with a big food-service-size bottle of rosemary spice, which she hands to her father.

SAMANTHA'S DAD

Thank you.

Mom is crouching down in the doorway, hissing, as Dad holds her at bay with the cross. The cross is apparently frightening to Mom and she wants to stay at least six feet away from it. Slowly, Dad uses the cross to push Mom out of the kitchen. They both disappear into the darkness.

Only the girls and Henry are in the kitchen now. Lindy looks more relaxed now.

SAMANTHA

My mom gets like that sometimes. We don't like to use the cross on her, but we do it if we have to. Do you want more mac and cheese?

LINDY

No, what I have is enough. Do you have something to drink?

SAMANTHA

Oh, yeah, I forgot.

Sam goes to the refrigerator and opens it.

SAMANTHA

We have milk, orange juice and Dr. Pepper.

LINDY

Dr. Pepper, please.

Sam prepares drinks for Lindy, herself and her dad.

Dad comes back into the room.

SAMANTHA'S DAD  
(in an adult tone)

Okay, Mom is in her room. I poured a line of rosemary outside her door, so she should stay there for a while.

Dad sits down again. He sets the empty rosemary bottle down on the table in front of him. He has obviously been through a battle and looks drained. Sam serves him his drink.

SAMANTHA'S DAD

Why thank you very much! You know just what I like!

Sam sits down, and the girls start eating again. Dad, however, seems distracted and isn't eating. He is staring at the empty spice bottle.

SAMANTHA'S DAD

I used a whole bottle of rosemary.

He laughs, but gradually his laughter turns to tears. Soon, he is openly crying, with tears running down his cheeks.

The girls watch him impassively as they eat their meal, as though they were watching a TV show.

Dad looks back at them and wipes the tears from his face.

SAMANTHA'S DAD

You know, we should take Henry for his shots.

SAMANTHA

Right now?

SAMANTHA'S DAD

Sure. I think the vet is still open.

SAMANTHA

Oh, goodie! Can Lindy come?

SAMANTHA'S DAD

I don't see why not. Does Lindy want to come?

LINDY

Sure!

SAMANTHA'S DAD

We'll stop at her house along the way to make sure it's okay with her parents.

SAMANTHA

Do we have to clear off the table?

SAMANTHA'S DAD

No, we can do that when we get back. Remind me that we have to pick up some more rosemary on the way back.

SAMANTHA

At Sam's Club?

SAMANTHA'S DAD

That's right, at your club.

They all get up from the table and get ready to leave.

SAMANTHA

Henry, we're going for a ride! Do you want to come?

Henry seems excited.

SAMANTHA

(to Lindy)

We don't have to tell Henry about the shots. It would only get him upset.

SAMANTHA'S DAD

That's right, you have to be careful what you tell people so they don't get upset.

SAMANTHA

You don't have to tell your parents that my mom is a witch.

LINDY

Why not?

SAMANTHA

Because then you won't be allowed to come to my house anymore.

LINDY

Oh, okay.

SAMANTHA

My dad isn't a witch. He'll meet  
your mom, and everything will be  
okay.

LINDY

Okay.

SAMANTHA'S DAD

I'm very glad you found another  
friend, Sam. I hope you can be  
friends for a long time.

SAMANTHA

I hope so too.

Dad opens the door, and they all leave the house. As  
he is leaving, Dad turns off the overhead light. The  
door closes, and the kitchen is again illuminated only  
by candles.

FADE TO BLACK