

INHERITED ILLUSIONS III

BY

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INHERITED ILLUSIONS

SCENE I

The following takes place in the office of the Principal of Johnny's school. He is in year 5, aged 10.

Johnny walks into the Principal's office.

PRINCIPAL

"Come in John. I see your parents are not with you again. How do you get on with them? Why haven't they come?"

JOHNNY

"I don't think they like me. Perhaps they don't like kids. Maybe that's why I'm an only."

PRINCIPAL

"John,.....do you like you?"

JOHNNY

"I don't know. People blame me for things"

PRINCIPAL

"Like what, John?"

JOHNNY

"Killing stuff. Mum thinks I killed the cat."

PRINCIPAL

"Did you? It seems a very serious thing to think of you."

JOHNNY

"No..... I got annoyed at it, that's all."

PRINCIPAL

"John, what I wanted to see you for.... what about Bill Lawrence's art work? It was found torn up and someone said they'd see you with it. I'm not accusing you..... I'm just more troubled, John."

JOHNNY

"I don't know anything about it, sir. My art was better anyway. He shouldn't have come top of the class. It should have been me. Mum and Dad didn't think so, but they never stand up for me. I can't wait to grow up and show them."

PRINCIPAL

"You are very angry at them, then."

JOHNNY

"They better look out. That's all."

PRINCIPAL

"Ok, John. We'll leave it at that. We'll talk again soon."

(Principal opens the door..... Johnny leaves.... he shuts it, pensively thinking "There's a little psychopath in the making.")

SCENE II

Johnny is seen knocking on the door of Aunt Hermione's large house. (suggest filming as though through Johnny's eyes, to avoid needing a young actor who looks like the older Johnny). An elderly, refined lady answers the door.

HERMIONE

"Oh, John; it's good to see you"

JOHNNY

"Hello, Aunt Hermione. I thought I'd pop in and see you, to see that you're alright."

HERMIONE

"Thank you John. You're such a thoughtful boy. Come and sit with me. We'll have a cup of tea.

"Tell me, John, how are you going with your studies?"

JOHNNY

"I passed the School Certificate, Auntie. Without your encouragement, I don't think I could have done it."

HERMIONE

"Oh, thank you John. What would you like as a reward? Effort needs to be rewarded, you know. I have a watch I've been saving for you. I hope it's not too old-looking for you."

Aunt Hermione gets up to fetch the watch.

HERMIONE

"Here you are, dear. You're my heir, you know. So you might as well have some nice things while I'm still alive."

(Johnny looking at the watch)

JOHNNY

"It's beautiful, Aunt Hermione; I loooooove Rolex. I'll think of you every time I wear it."

(Extra about the Uncle; in conversation between Johnny and Aunt Hermione)

HERMIONE

"John, not everything about what I have to leave you is quite as nice. My brother - you will find records about him - was not a pleasant man. There are things I can't tell you, or even acknowledge to myself... things between him and me, when I was young, and he was older, that I think I've got over, but everything he touched had a contagion about it. He damaged everything he touched and he didn't seem to care.

People like that eventually fall and he did.... you'll read about that in what I've left you.

I don't want to hide anything from you, but just beware.

I love you John, but I also know you; perhaps better than you know yourself and I know how evil can open doors more easily in those whose door is already a little open to it. Your response to you great uncle is ultimately in your hand, John, and I'll have to leave things at that."

JOHNNY

"Ummmmmmmm, anyway, thanks for the watch."

HERMIONE

"John, I shouldn't keep you. You young people have so much to do now-a-days. I'll see you to the door."

JOHNNY

"Thank you again, Aunt Hermione. I'll be thinking about you and your health."

SCENE III

SAID BY NARRATOR, WHILE WE SEE JOHNNY WALKING TO THE SOLICITOR'S OFFICE

Johnny had been waiting so long for his inheritance,.... so very long. He'd been an admirer, or, let's say, a pseudo admirer, and a confidante for Great Aunt Hermione, sufficient to beat off all competition to inherit her house, furniture, and the junk in the attic.

She was a maiden Great Aunt; always the best because they're old and don't live too long and they don't have anyone to leave their money to automatically, like a son or a grandson.

She'd left everything to little Johnny, but he couldn't collect until his 21st birthday, and the day had come, at long last.

Aunt Hermione was no fool; she knew why Johnny stayed in touch. But, who else was there? No blood certainly, no one certainly to continue the family line; the family secrets, as well. She was an educated woman who had read that she would be just one of the 105 billion people who have lived since the birth of mankind.

(Back to an image of Aunt Hermione sitting, thinking.)

HERMIONE

"All gone; but I wonder, if, in some way or form, they're still around."

Johnny was off to the lawyer to hear the details and receive the reward for sycophantic service for so many years.

Johnny strongly felt that his prospects of working were very much limited by a bad back after a fight with a mate over a girl.....So he hadn't worked to the time of his inheritance.....besides, carrying a strong sense of entitlement is work sufficient of itself.

THE SOLICITOR'S OFFICE

SOLICITOR

"Hello, John, how are you? Thank you for coming."

JOHNNY

"Good day, Mr Abercrombe. I'm well and how are you?"

SOLICITOR

"I'm fine, thank you. Please have a seat; may I offer you a coffee or tea, perhaps something stronger?"

JOHNNY

"No, thank you. Could you just let me know what my dear great aunt has left me?"

SOLICITOR

"Right. John, your Great Aunt Hermione has left you her entire estate. This includes the house, which has been rented to your benefit until now, and the contents of the house, which have been in storage since her death. You may take possession of the house effective immediately or matters can be arranged with the tenants. However, you can take possession of the items in storage effective from now."

JOHNNY

"That's great, but all I need to know is...."

SOLICITOR

"Please let me finish. Amongst the items in storage, your great Aunt specifically mentions the furniture which she would prefer you keep and not sell, her clothes which can be given to a charity, and items that she herself had been given for safekeeping. These include a large box of family records, some of which do not hold happy memories, particularly about her older brother, your great uncle, of whom you have probably not heard mention, who died in prison. She had thought of throwing some of these items out on numerous occasions, but had never been able to bring herself to do so."

JOHNNY

"Thanks, isn't that lovely. I've been waiting long enough for this. Get the tenants out, give them some cash if you need to, and I'll take the lot, clothing too - you never know, I might need them for a night in drag (LAUGHS MENACINGLY); any high-heeled shoes? (LAUGHS AGAIN). Just give me the agent's contact details so I can get on with it."

SOLICITOR

"Certainly, John, here everything is. Thank you again for coming. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any ongoing concerns. Have a good day. I'll just see you out, shall I?"

JOHNNY

"Don't trouble yourself, I saw myself in, didn't I? Cheers"

SCENE IV

MEETING THE REAL ESTATE AGENT AT THE HOUSE

REAL ESTATE AGENT (Susan Hawkins)

"Hello, Mr Dickinson; very nice to meet you. Everything has been delivered from storage. Would you like me to....."

JOHNNY

"Yes, hello. Just give me the keys and I'll see myself in, thanks. Have a great day."

REAL ESTATE AGENT

"Okay, but if....."

JOHNNY

"Yes, I know, I'll ring if I need anything. Bye"

REAL ESTATE AGENT

"Are you sure.....???"

Johnny virtually slams the door in the real estate agent's face and Johnny is left in the house by himself to explore.

SCENE V

ALONE WITH THE INHERITANCE (OBSERVED)

Johnny starts looking at everything - the old furniture, clothes, etc. In the middle of the lounge room are several boxes. He kicks at several of them in an effort to figure out how to turn all this shit into cash. His attention then focuses on one that has a lock on it. With a little bit of fiddle, it pops open. He then begins rummaging through the contents of it, which include, firstly, lots of papers, but, then, wrapped in old newspaper, is a wooden-framed mirror, with a rough sort of wire loop at the top of it that it used to hang by. He doesn't look at the newspaper, which floats to the floor, as he un-wraps

it. He looks at the back of the mirror and finds a label of a prison and a piece of paper that's been stuck to it that says "used to record last breaths of William Hollingberry". Also among the documentation, are the other prison records of this man sufficient for Johnny to identify that this is the brother referred to in his Great Aunt's will. He puts all the papers back in the box, but shows a real interest and curiosity in the mirror, which he places on top of the mantelpiece of the nearby fireplace. He then goes to bed. He has very little trouble falling asleep, but tosses and turns with fitful dreams and wakes in a sweat. He pulls the sheets off, stumbles out of bed.

JOHNNY

"What the Hell????"

After this happens several nights in a row, he finally goes over to the mirror and looks into it in a sort of irritated yet curious manner.

It is night-time, and he has just got out of bed after yet another bad dream. To his alarm, as he peers into the mirror, it fogs up, as though someone has breathed on it. He wipes off the fogging, but it reappears. After further attempts, it then stays clear. He puts it back on the mantelpiece, but is obviously troubled. He returns to bed.

He is seen waking again, alarmed, and again goes to the mirror. On this occasion, after it again fogs up, he has the impression of seeing a crime, in which someone's throat seems to be cut. Johnny shrinks away, slams the mirror back onto the mantelpiece and goes for a drink (alcohol).

Again he is seen awaking in alarm, and, again goes to the mirror, which again fogs up, on this occasion, more suddenly and violently than before. As he looks closer, he again sees the man's throat being cut, but also the face of the perpetrator, an angry, unshaven, somewhat dirty man, who looks around at him, in a threatening manner.

Johnny registers extreme alarm and horror, and, holding the mirror at arms' length, shouts,

JOHNNY

"Who are you?"

FROM THE MIRROR

"You know me as Great Uncle William, but....."

I am the crown of blood-tipped thorns;
 I am the bull you have by the horns;
 I am the barb in Irwin's chest;
 I am the itch that won't let you rest.

But, most of all,
 I will jump your moat.
 And, before you know it
 I'll cut your throat.

I'll do all that
 And never be caught
 At least, that's what I'd always thought.

But now, I'm trapped inside this mirror,
 Where even to look
 Will make you shiver.

But Boy, look closely!
 See what I do.
 I'll shave more necks
 And live I'll through you.

Mirror, Mirror, on the Wall,
 Is meant to please
 And not appal.

The radiant shine
 That fills your eyes
 Is just the breath,
 As someone dies.
 You break my glass,
 You break my heart;
 But still, of you
 I'll be a part.

Get me out of here!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!"

Overcome with fear and disgust, Johnny then throws the mirror so that it falls face-up and shatters into large shards, which scatter onto the floor and a nearby table.

Upon this happening, he seems to be greatly affected, in that he trembles and looks terrified.

It is again night and he suddenly hears the presence of someone behind him. He lets out a combined scream and roar, upon which a person, who actually is behind him, starts to run. He picks up one the largest pieces of shard from the shattered mirror, chases the person and cuts him across the throat.

The person he has attacked falls to the ground and rolls over, upon which he sees that it's the real estate agent, who just manages to say she had come back to check on him and heard a crash.

The real estate agent then dies.

We then see Johnny Dickenson standing there, stunned, with the blood-stained shard of mirror.

We then pan to the newspaper lying on the floor. We see an article about the great uncle being found guilty of, in the setting of a serial killer, murder, by cutting people's throats.

Then, out of the darkness emerges the great uncle and there is a slow change in the young man's face to look more like his great uncle.

Shot of Johnny being led away by police. (Written over the screen? Like in Stars Wars?)

Good things come to those who wait?
It all depends on luck and fate.
But, if by far, you've been too clever
Beware the image in the mirror.