

KNIVES OUT

A Murder Mystery by

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SCREEN SCRIPT

EXT. THROMBEY ESTATE MANOR HOUSE - DAWN

The grounds of a New England manor. Pre-dawn misty.

INT. MANOR - PANTRY / LIVING ROOM / FOYER / HALLWAY - DAWN

INSIDE THE MANOR

Unlit and still. Gothic with a theme of antique games, arcane puzzles and decorative weapons.

First floor: A drawing room, living room, kitchen. The detritus of a party. Stray champagne flutes.

INT. THROMBEY ESTATE - 2ND FLOOR - DAWN

Follow one housekeeper named FRAN carrying a tray of coffee up a flight of stairs.

Second floor: a hallway, doors all closed. The house has not woken up, and Fran steps lightly. Up a much narrower creaky flight of steep stairs.

INT. THROMBEY ESTATE - 3RD FLOOR MASTER BEDROOM - DAWN

Third floor: the master bedroom suite.

FRAN
Morning Mr Thrombey

But the bed is empty, unslept in. A robe thrown across it.

Fran heads out onto the landing and UP an EVEN NARROWER half flight of stairs, which leads to a single door.

FRAN (cont'd)
Mr Thrombey you up there? Mr Thrombey
I'm coming in

INT. HARLAN THROMBEY'S STUDY - DAWN

A cramped attic study, every shelf crammed with curios.

The door swings open and Fran sees:

HARLAN THROMBEY himself. 85 years old. Slung across a white leather day bed.

Throat slit. Drenched in blood. Very much dead.

Fran's tray slips out of her hands for a second.

FRAN

Shit.

CUT TO: Title card, on black.

THEN TO:

INT. MARTA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

MARTA CABRERA wakes with a cry.

Plain, modern, cramped. Marta, in her late twenties, takes a moment to catch her breath. Opens a window.

EXT. SOUTH BOSTON HOUSING PROJECT - MORNING

A tiny window in a cheap apartment building opens, Marta's face appears breathing deep.

SUPER: "ONE WEEK - after Harlan Thrombey's demise"

INT. CABRERA KITCHEN - MORNING

Marta sits in front of a laptop. Her MOM is at the table with her, her sister ALICE watches CSI on an iPad on the counter top. Murder related dialog from the show.

Marta scroll through a jobs site, tired, eyes dead. Her mom watches, concerned.

MOM

Alice, turn that off now.

ALICE

Why it's almost over, what - they're finding out who did it and the wifi sucks in my room so it doesn't play it's like two minutes left what there isn't even anything bad on it, it's just normal tv and they're just talking ok ok godddd whatever ok whatever.

MOM

Now please just turn it off.

Turn it off. Now.

Alice. Off.

They're talking about murder on it, your sister just had a friend she loves slit his throat open she doesn't need to be hearing that right now let's be sensitive!

Mom standing yelling, Alice slams the iPad cover closed. Marta puts her head in her hand. Looks at her mom, who looks back at her with protective sympathy. Marta starts laughing at the absurdity of it, but the laugh turns into crying.

MARTA

Alice you can keep watching your show
it's alright.

ALICE

No, I guessed who did it anyway. I'm
sorry Marta.

Alice hugs her sister. Marta's phone rings. WALT THROMBEY.

MARTA

It's Harlan's son.

(answers)

Hi, Walt.

(listens)

Uh huh.

Her face shifts in confusion.

MARTA (cont'd)

What?

EXT. PRIVATE ROAD - LATE MORNING

A long narrow private road leading to the Thrombey estate.

Marta's shitty SUBCOMPACT car buzzes by, towards the house.

EXT. THROMBEY ESTATE FRONT DRIVE

Several cars, including a police cruiser with a few uniformed officers by it. Marta pulls up. An officer eyes her, approaches.

COP

Hey! Excuse me ma'am. Are you with
the help?

MEG, Thrombey's college aged granddaughter, trots out.

MEG

Hey! Her name is Marta, she was
granddad's nurse, she's with us.
"The help?".

MARTA
(to the cop)
It's ok, sorry.

MEG
(mutters)
No. It's not ok. What the hell?

They hug, and are both instantly crying. They laugh.

MARTA
Not very good. Alone, lots of just, this
(the crying)
and not knowing what to do next.

MEG
Anything you need, you're part of this family Marta.

MARTA
Thank you.

INT. FOYER

Thrombey's eldest daughter Linda opens the door for Marta.

LINDA
How you doing kiddo.

Linda is 60ish, well put together, sharp and steely eyed. She dresses and speaks with just a little more sharpness than any situation she's in requires.

MARTA
Hi Linda. How are you?

LINDA
Ueuh. The funeral helped. I guess. Just seeing him. I thought you should have been there. I was out voted.

Linda's husband Richard walks in, on the phone. Same age as Linda, gruff and confident, will put his feet up on anything.

RICHARD (ON PHONE)
I'm not the cop so I don't know. Alright fine, don't come, get arrested. Die up your own ass all I care.
(hangs up)
He's not coming.
(MORE)