

TICKS

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FADE IN:

INT. APARTMENT/BEDROOM - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

In a sparsely furnished bedroom, a MAN (early 30s), wide-eyed, nervous, sweaty, lies motionless in his bed. He stares up toward the ceiling before turning his head toward the large lump lying beside him.

The lump: a WOMAN (20s), beautiful, pale, peaceful, lost in slumber. Well placed sheets cover her otherwise vulnerable being. A slight RASPY SNORE escapes her red, red lips.

The Man throws the covers to one side and spins to right himself. He drags a tired hand across his rough growth facial hairs and stands. His stomach RUMBLES HARD. He covers his mouth, as if to contain something. It passes.

Glancing back one last time, he makes his way out the door, to...

INT. APARTMENT/HALLWAY - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

The Man plods down the hall digging a palm into his eyes. He turns to enter...

INT. APARTMENT/BATHROOM - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

The Man stops before the sink and stares into the mirror.

POV MAN (IN MIRROR)

His reflection returns his haunted, drained, worn face. He pulls down at the bags under his bloodshot eyes with an unsteady finger. He turns on the water before again peering at himself.

Closing his eyes, he bends to splash his face with the cascading liquid. Pulling back, he again takes in his face. His eyes widen.

Thick, deep red blood and small black and white dots cover his face. He stands motionless. Mouth agape, he slowly reaches up and plucks one of the dots. He pulls it close. Once more, his eyes grow wide to the point of explosion.

A bloated, tick wiggles between his fingers.

He drags his gaze away from the grotesque insect, down to the faucet. Blood pours from the spigot as ticks dip and bob about in the pooling brew like alphabet noodles in soup.

END POV

The Man tosses the wiggling thing to its brethren, then slaps and paws at his face. His eyes show nothing but terror, horror, and fear. They widen to...

INT. APARTMENT/BEDROOM - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

The Man shoots up mid-waist to sit in his bed. He blinks several times and turns to look toward the covered lump lying beside him. The slight RASPY SNORE again escapes.

He throws the covers aside. Spins. Rights himself. His hard hand drags several times across the stubble. After standing, he covers his mouth. His stomach RUMBLES. It passes.

Glancing back once more, he unsteadily makes his way out the door, to...

INT. APARTMENT/HALLWAY - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

The Man moves down the hall slowly. He turns to enter...

INT. APARTMENT/BATHROOM - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Repeat performance. He stops before the sink. Stares into the mirror.

POV MAN (IN MIRROR)

Same haunted, drained, worn reflection. Same red eyes. He stares down to the faucet. Deep breath. Turns a knob. Clear liquid escapes. He lets his breath fly out.

Eyes open, he bends and splashes his face with the liquid. He pulls back, once again taking in his visage.

All clear. Again, he lets go of a noticeable breath.

END POV

The Man shuts off the flow. He stands motionless for a second. Then his stomach RUMBLES hard.

His hand comes to cover his mouth. He moves to the toilet. He drops to his knees and lifts the lid.

BLARGG. BLARGG. BLARGG.

He heaves three times, spewing into the awaiting ceramic cavern.

Pause.

He pulls back to rest against the opposing wall.

The Man drags an arm across his mouth. His eyes dart to his forearm. Eyes enlarge.

POV MAN

A long blood smear runs across his limb as ticks do their dance amid the thick ooze.

The Man's attention turns to the toilet. Inside, a thick stew of blood and ticks. His eyes widen to...

END POV

INT. APARTMENT/BEDROOM - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Repeat performance, part three.

The Man shoots up mid-waist in his bed. Blinks. Takes in the lump. The RASPY SNORE escapes.

He reaches to touch her but halts. He draws his hand back as if it found the source of intense heat or deathly cold.

He tosses the covers aside, spins, and rights himself. A tired hand drags across the stubble. Stomach RUMBLES. Mouth covered. Passes.

One more glance back. Another uneasy step to the door.

INT. APARTMENT/HALLWAY - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

The Man cautiously makes his way down the hall. Eyes open, broad and alert. He stops and peers into the bathroom, Enters.

INT. APARTMENT/BATHROOM - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

He stops before the sink. Stares into the mirror. Same haunted, drained, worn reflection. Same red eyes. He stares down to the faucet. Breath. Turns a knob. Clear liquid. Release breath.

Eyes open. Bends. Splashes face with the liquid. Pulls back, once again taking in his visage.

POV MAN (IN MIRROR)

All clear. Another release of a noticeable breath.

END POV

The Man shuts off the flow. Motionless for a second, he then turns to look to the toilet. He finds it free of the thrice played nightmarish images. His stomach RUMBLES. His hand covers his mouth. Something catches his eye to one side.

Movement.

He turns to look out the door. The Woman heads past, moving away from the bedroom.

Pause.

He looks back to the mirror before exiting to...

INT. APARTMENT/HALLWAY - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

The Man makes his way down the hall, his eyes open and alert. He steps into...

INT. APARTMENT/KITCHEN - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

He glances over to a small table. A bowl filled with bland brown mush sits atop along with utensils. An open chair awaits before it. The Woman sits opposite the open chair. He sits in the predicated place.

The Woman gives a warm, almost seductive smile. She gestures.

WOMAN

You must be hungry.

He takes up the spoon beside the bowl and dips into the mush.

POV MAN (THE BOWL)

The spoon plunges in. The bland brown turns over several times. He draws up a bite.

END POV

He chews. His face sours.

Once more, he glances down to the feast, then stirs. The brown gives way to a thick, red ooze as the utensil turns up like a shovel dismissing the coverings of a grave. Pools of blood appear along with riders of the current.

Ticks.

He gags, spits and spews.

SMACK.

The Man pushes his chair back slaps the vileness away. It CRASHES to the wall as his seat tips back, tossing him aside. He rolls away and looks to the Woman. She flips the small table to once side revealing herself.

From the waist down, a bloated tick body with insectoid legs.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

You're going to have to eat  
sometime.

The Man's eyes widen. He opens his bloody, tick filled mouth to scream...

INT. APARTMENT/BEDROOM - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Repeat performance, finale.

He shoots up mid-waist in the bed, blinks, and turns to take in the lump beside him.

A slight RASPY SNORE escapes.

He reaches to touch her, halts, then takes hold of the sheet. A breath in, hold, then lift. Release breath. He gently lets the sheet re-cover her.

He tosses his covers aside, spins, and rights himself. He drags a tired hand across his rough growth and stands. Once more, his stomach RUMBLES. He covers his mouth. It passes.

One more glance back. Another uneasy step to the door.

INT. APARTMENT/HALLWAY - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

The Man makes his way down the hall. His eyes open, tired, drained. He enters the bathroom.

INT. APARTMENT/BATHROOM - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

He stops before the sink. Stares into the mirror.

POV MAN (IN MIRROR)

Same haunted, drained, worn reflection. Same red eyes. Pauses. His head cocks sideways as his stomach RUMBLES yet again. His lips twist a bit. He draws a finger to lift one upper corner.

A long, fanged tooth protrudes down. His brow furrows into to a horrid expression.

The Woman moves up behind him and wraps her pale arms over around his body and over his bare chest. She leans in close to his ear. The Man's eyes dart to her in the mirror.

WOMAN

Don't worry. We all have those  
dreams in the beginning.

The Man's eyes grow even wider as his mouth falls open.

FADE TO:

Blackness, interrupted by an endless SCREAM.

FADE TO BLACK.