

Garry 0:12
November 13, 2020

Garry 0:20

From the sidewalk, some 20 feet away, through a picture window, well-lit, in the shining darkness of a winter evening, we watch a city home preparing dinner. Behind the window, children run in and out of the room while two adults walk in, gliding above their young with plates, silverware, dishes. The table is the center of this meal performance. It will be a silent family drama: nostalgic, familiar to the middle-class whites who have funded this production, you think. When, after the five family members have sat down and begun to eat, you see someone walk up to the front door and ring the bell,

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you almost don't notice this individual, as poorly lit as the front door is. But a family member gets up from the table, turns on the front light and opens the door. There is a brief conversation in low tones—it seems that this visitor is unexpected but not a stranger. Another chair is found, another plate added to the table, but just as the family settles in, two things happen: a fight breaks out between the visitor and the family, and three more visitors show up at the door, one of them with a German Shepherd on a leash. The fight inside stops abruptly. The doorbell rings again. The first visitor goes to the door. Another low conversation. This one goes from cheery and welcoming to antagonistic, and just when you think a second fight might break out, warm hugs are exchanged and all the visitors come inside. Since there is no more room at the table, people are sitting and standing about the room. The dog wanders from person to person, begging snacks and affection. Among the group of people, one gets up, goes to the front door, and peers out. This person sees someone off in the distance and calls out. A new visitor lopes up to the door and is welcomed inside. Not far behind this one, two more approach, carrying a small child. They are admitted to the house. In the confusion of these new arrivals, the front door is left ajar and five more visitors trickle in, unannounced.

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Inside, you can't tell if it's a party or a meeting or merely the frantic arrangement of resources to as many as possible. It is clear that most of these people do not know each other; not all of them get along. While some are being useful, others are not. While some are almost at blows, others are heavily flirting and affectionate. The dog is loved and admired by all. Someone notices the open front door and closes it. Someone else starts playing some music; you can hear it—muffled—across the lawn. Abruptly there are shouts and screams. The music is shut off precipitously and from somewhere at the back of the house, over a dozen Agents of some sort, in black with helmets, guns, and truncheons, swarm into the main room and quickly have everyone lying on the floor and out of your vision. There are a few moments of the Agents swaggering about the space, looking official and purposeful. Suddenly, as if in a horror movie, with a choked gasp, one of the Agents is pulled down to the floor. At first none of the others seem to notice. Not long thereafter, a second Agent is pulled down screaming. As a third cries out, two others rush to aid their comrade, but all three are pulled under, screaming. At the end, one last Agent, standing on a chair and clearly terrified of the floor, is looking frantically around for a means of escape. Climbing from chair to table to chair, across the room, this last agent finally wobbles over a gap too large for their stride and tumbles, screaming, to the unknown below.

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A moment of quiet.

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Then, with a light creak, the front door opens and the dog pokes a nose into the cold winter air, sniffs, and trots happily out of the house, across the lawn, and off into the dark.

Garry 5:20

The house's lights flicker twice, and with a faint sizzle, go black.