

STAY AWAY FROM LEON

written by

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EXT. CHURCH - NIGHT

Cathedral spires silhouetted against the moon.

ADDICTION COUNSELOR (V.O.)
Jumping ahead to our speaker for
the evening. We're lucky to have
this cat joining us.

INT. CHURCH BASEMENT - NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS MEETING - NIGHT

A burnt-out ADDICTION COUNSELOR, 50s, addresses a room full
of ADDICTS sitting in folding chairs. There's a table with
coffee and cream set up in the corner.

ADDICTION COUNSELOR
He's been saying a lot of things
that make a lot of sense for a
really long time and, you know, I
think we can all benefit from
giving him our full attention.
Right? This is Leon, okay? Leon.

The Addicts APPLAUD politely as a HANDSOME MAN in a suit with
a toothy grin takes over at the podium. Leon is in his 30s
with dark eyes, clean cut and magnetic.

LEON
Good evening. I'm an addict and my
name's Leon.

ADDICTS
Hi, Leon.

LEON
First of all, thank you for
inviting me here tonight. And thank
you for coming, for making the
effort. Means a lot. I want to
start out by talking about a
conviction of mine. No, not a court
case.

It's a practiced joke but it gets a LAUGH.

LEON (CONT'D)
I mean the kind of conviction that
you believe in. Like that every
person on this Earth, including
you, was put here for a purpose.

INT. HEROIN DEN - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Two heroin addicts - TANYA and DEREK - both late 20s, languish in a bare apartment that's only used for shooting heroin. They drape across one another on a couch, bored, their highs having evaporated. OTHER ADDICTS can be seen through open doors passed out on mattresses in adjacent rooms.

Tanya SIGHS. She leans over to Derek and WHISPERS-

TANYA

Know what I wanna do right now? I want to go somewhere we can shoot up and *fuck*.

DEREK

And you got a plan to pay for that?

TANYA

(mock shock)

You want to get paid to have sex with me?

Derek CHUCKLES.

DEREK

Mm mmmmm, baby girl. I'm asking, how you gonna pay for that dirt?

Tanya's fingers walk up his arm.

TANYA

(teasing him)

As it turns out, I know a guy...

DEREK

Well, introduce me, cause I don't have any fuckin' money.

Tanya crosses her arms, pouting.

TANYA

Yes, you do.

DEREK

Honey, you wanna get high, you gotta pay, that's the law of the jungle-

LEON

(O.C.)

I want to get high.

Tanya and Derek FLINCH, startled. They turn their bleary eyes to find Leon watching them awkwardly from across the room. He's grungier than at the NA meeting, wearing a hoodie. And they don't remember him standing there just a moment ago.

TANYA

Who the fuck are you?

LEON

Oh. Hey, I'm Leon. Your roommate invited me. I was just saying I'm new around here. Don't really know where to score yet. But I wanna, you know, get high so if you know where...

Tanya and Derek look skeptical.

DEREK

I dunno...

TANYA

Reggie invited you?

LEON

I've got money. I could hook you up. You know, for the trouble.

That changes everything.

TANYA

Oh!

DEREK

Like a finder's fee.

LEON

Exactly. Like a finder's fee.

LEON (CONT'D)

(PRE-LAP)

Everyone has a purpose.

INT. CHURCH BASEMENT - BACK TO SCENE

Leon the Motivational Speaker holds the Addicts under his spell.

LEON

But no one ever said it had to be a good one. I believe there are people who exist as a warning to others.

(MORE)

LEON (CONT'D)

Their purpose is to screw up over and over again so that other people - clean people - can say, "See that guy? Don't wind up like him."

Leon stares at the ground bitterly.

LEON (CONT'D)

Can you relate?

His words resonate. Some of the Addicts nod.

EXT. CITY STREETS - NIGHT

Late night, downtown. Tanya and Derek lead Leon to a heavysset DEALER standing on a sketchy corner.

LEON (V.O.)

My whole life, I was that guy.
"Don't be like Leon." "Stay away from Leon."

Leon swaps the Dealer a few bills for a bag of heroin.

EXT. ALLEY - LATER

Grinning from ear to ear, Tanya leads Leon and Derek as they run through the night.

LEON

(V.O.)

And it pains me to admit it, but they were right.

Tanya runs to a particular building. She keys open the back door and ushers them inside.

LEON (CONT'D)

Here?

TANYA

My place. If we go back to the flop house we'll end up sharing.

INT. TANYA'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

They push into a tiny studio - mostly bare - and Derek immediately starts cooking their shots.

LEON (V.O.)
My life was dangerous. And it was
just a matter of time before it
intersected with tragedy.

INT. CHURCH BASEMENT - BACK TO SCENE

Leon's voice drops.

LEON
Then, one night, I was struck by
the inevitable. While I was high, I
was taken advantage of and infected
with something life changing.

The Addicts in the crowd frown sympathetically.

INT. TANYA'S APARTMENT - LATER

CLOSE ON - A syringe PLUNGING its load into a vein.

Cross-legged on the floor, Tanya's breath catches as the
heroin floods her bloodstream. She closes her eyes and sinks
back onto the carpet.

LEON
(V.O.)
I blamed a lot of people for what
happened to me...

Derek shoots up. He loosens a belt wrapped around his arm and
falls back into his chair.

LEON (CONT'D)
(V.O.)
...but the truth is, I was simply
living my purpose.

Leon sits by himself in the corner, gently rolling a loaded
syringe back and forth between his fingers with anticipation.

LEON (CONT'D)
(V.O.)
But when I realized I could change
my purpose, that's when my whole
life opened up.

Instead of shooting up, Leon puts the syringe on the ground
and stands. He looks down at Tanya and Derek, both
unconscious and defenseless. He smiles to himself.

Leon walks over to where Derek lies unconscious in the chair. He picks up Derek's arm and gingerly removes the needle. Blood trickles down his forearm.

LEON (CONT'D)

(V.O.)

I pivoted my purpose by asking myself a very powerful question.

Leon stares at the blood. His breathing deepens as he opens his mouth. His eyes flutter back in his head and his CANINES GROW INTO SHARP FANGS.

Licking his lips, savoring the moment, he sinks his teeth into Derek's arm and sucks his blood.

LEON (CONT'D)

(V.O.)

What if I wasn't put here to be the bad example. What if I'm here to rid the world of addicts completely?

INT. CHURCH BASEMENT - BACK TO SCENE

Leon has the crowd eating out of the palm of his hand.

LEON

Now, things are different. I'm in control now.

INT. TANYA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Leon breaks his mouth away from Derek's arm to take a GULP OF AIR. As the rush of the heroin-filled blood courses through him, his pupils dilate.

LEON

(V.O.)

And it's an amazing feeling.

Coming down from her initial rush, Tanya's head lolls to the side and she opens her eyes. She sees Leon, his mouth and chin covered in blood, nodding off as he leans against Derek's bloodless corpse.

LEON (CONT'D)

(V.O.)

Now I cure people like you of that terrible hunger that eats you up inside.

High as shit, Tanya pushes herself up to a seat, trying to make sense of what she's seeing.

TANYA
What the fuck?

Leon looks up at her and they share a moment of clarity.

TANYA (CONT'D)
(backing away)
No... NO!

Leon CRAWLS across the floor at a SUPERNATURAL SPEED. Like a wild animal, he sinks his teeth into Tanya's neck, choking off her CRIES FOR HELP.

INT. CHURCH BASEMENT - NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS MEETING - NIGHT

Leon pauses, eyeing the crowd.

LEON
I brought a big stack of business cards with my cell phone number on it. I want each of you to take one.

INT. TANYA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Leon arranges Tanya and Derek's corpses. He sticks one of the spent syringes back in Derek's arm.

LEON
(V.O.)
Because most people don't care how our stories end. They expect the worst from us.

Tossing evidence into a trash bag, he picks up his unused syringe from the floor and pockets it on his way out the door.

INT. CHURCH BASEMENT - NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS MEETING - NIGHT

Leon gazes out over the trusting faces in the crowd around him.

LEON
But I know exactly how much your life is worth. Call me when you find yourself at the bottom and I will come find you. It's my purpose.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Leon tosses the bag of bloody evidence in a dumpster. He pulls the syringe from his pocket and considers throwing it away - but he can't.

LEON
(V.O.)
I'm Leon...

INT. CHURCH BASEMENT - NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS MEETING - NIGHT

Leon flashes a toothy grin.

LEON
(V.O.)
...and I'm an addict.

As the Addicts break into APPLAUSE we -

FADE OUT.