

Cherry

by

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## Cherry

Cast:

JIMMY – Male, 23-30, slight southern accent

BRITTANY – Female, 22, innocent

GREG – Male, 40, tough guy

CHLOE – Female, 31, cold, nasty

DON – Male, 40, slick

Greg and Don can be played by the same actor.

Setting:

Present day. Action takes place in a basement, with flashbacks to the recent past.

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Play opens with a single spotlight on Jimmy who is standing

JIMMY

I kill people. Have for a long time now. Seems like I've been killing them since the start of time. But I guess that's mostly in my head.

Lights up, which reveal Brittany sitting, chained to her chair, struggling with chains. There is a duffle bag on the floor. Jimmy crosses towards her.

JIMMY (cont)

First time for real was seven years ago. And honestly, it wasn't my fault. Not that I was a saint. After dropping outta school I put my hacking skills to good use. Ran an email scam – no I wasn't a Kenyan prince or a vacationing friend who lost all his money – give me some credit here. I'd convince old folks that I was their teen grandson, who had a falling out with my parents. I'd get 'em on the phone ...

Lights shift, simulated phone call

JIMMY (cont)

Paw Paw, sorry I haven't been in touch ... Please don't tell 'em I called you. Dad'll just get more angry ... Yeah, they threw me out of the house ... Cause they said I was disrespectful ... I hate to ask you this, but I needed to eat, and I borrowed some money from some bad people. Really bad people. If I don't give 'em three thousand by tomorrow I gotta (*pause*) work for them ... These older men, who want to meet young boys, pay them and (*pause, tearfully*) I need to spend the night with them ...

Lights shift, Brittany struggles

JIMMY (cont)

No righteous Alabaman over the age of 60 wants to think about their grandson turning queer. Half of the time I'd get the three grand, and half the time (*beat*) I'd get a couple thousand more. Call it gay-surance.

BRITTANY

Pulls on chains

Please let me go.

JIMMY

Relax dear. Ain't no way you gettin' out of those chains. I know what I'm doing. (*beat*) One family I scammed tracked me down. I was approached by a go-between, a friend of the family.

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Lights shift

GREG

Enters

They don't want to press charges. They just want the money back.

JIMMY

Hands thick envelop to Greg

I appreciate that. Tell 'em it was nothing personal. I'm just trying to survive.

GREG

Looks at money, suddenly pulls out gun

But this IS personal, you pile of shit. Now get on your knees.

JIMMY

Gets on knees

Please. I'm sorry. Tell me what I need to do.

GREG

Behind Jimmy, pointing gun at his head

You need to ... die. I gladly took on this assignment. Killing's become kind of an obsession with me – ever since the first time I shot someone. Sometimes I don't know why I do it. But in your case, it's gonna be a pleasure to -

Jimmy pulls a knife from his belt, reaches behind and stabs Greg's leg. Greg screams in pain. They struggle. Lights to black. A gunshot. Lights on. Jimmy is alone on stage.

JIMMY

My first kill. Didn't mean to do it, but (*beat*) I LOVED it. I've heard meth heads say that after their first hit they knew they were addicts. That was me with killin'. It's kind of like that guy said – it became an obsession. At times I tried to deny it ... even thought about getting treatment ... but they don't have groups where you can say "Hi – I'm Jimmy – and I haven't slashed a throat in 4 months."

BRITTANY

Why do you do it?

JIMMY

It's a secret. If I told you, I'd have to kill you. (*laughs*). But I'm going to do that anyway. I'll tell you later.

BRITTANY

If you've killed so many people, how come I haven't heard of you?

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JIMMY

I'm what you might call a quiet killer. I don't write satanic symbols in blood at the crime scene, I don't dress up in clown suits, I don't eat the dead – I mean, (*eye roll*) really. Oh, and there are my victims. No senator's daughters for me. They're people who won't be missed – they ain't nice people, and don't have good relations with friends or family.

BRITTANY

Mostly men?

JIMMY

Yeah – but that don't mean your safe. Women can be just as treacherous.

BRITTANY

Not all women. Haven't you ever been fond of a girl?

JIMMY

I know what you're up to. Tryin' to be friendly with me.

BRITTANY

I can't trick you. So no harm in answering. Have you liked a girl?

JIMMY

Once, I guess.

BRITTANY

How'd you meet?

JIMMY

After this one kill – I was kinda careless and almost got caught. I decided to "go on leave," and (*puts on backpack*) went backpacking in Yellowstone. Ah, beautiful sunset.

(Lights shift to a sunset, then begin to slowly fade simulating darkness. Jimmy takes pictures with cell phone. Chloe enters)

CHLOE

Better if you shoot with the sun at your back.

JIMMY

But I want a picture of what's in front of me. (*puts phone down, turns, sees Chloe*). I'm Jimmy.

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CHLOE

Chloe. You're the first person I've seen in three days. Got any food? I'm starving.

JIMMY

Got some jerky. (*Hands her a stick*) How long you been traveling?

CHLOE

Wolfs it down, talking while eating

Two months – been to Zion, Bryce, Tetons – going to Glacier next. Got it all mapped out. (*Pulls out map inside a book from her backpack*) Got any more?

JIMMY

Long trip. I've been gone for four weeks. (*hands her another stick*) Ya know, you could say please and thank you.

CHLOE

Who the fuck are you, Miss Manners? Anyway, I've had three boyfriends dump me in the past year. I needed to get away. Be with nature. Nature won't dump me.

JIMMY

You don't seem like you're the type to get dumped.

CHLOE

Lately it's been that way. I guess I did my share of leaving as well. Left a husband and two-year old brat a few years back. Fucking pests.

JIMMY

(beat) Gettin' dark fast. Whatcha reading?

CHLOE

Chandler. The Big Sleep. Love murder mysteries. Ever read that kind of stuff?

JIMMY

Occasionally, but I'm not much of a reader, (beat) more of a doer.

CHLOE

Chandler's the best. Lots of cherry.

JIMMY

Cherry?

CHLOE

When I feel a strong emotion, I either taste flavors or see colors. It's called synesthesia. For example, when I'm in a good mood, I taste lemon. Or I see bright

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green when stressed. When I read a well-written murder, I feel like I got a dozen cherry cough drops in my mouth.

JIMMY

Syn-es-the-si-a. Interesting.

CHLOE

Right now I'm tasting chocolate.

JIMMY

What's that mean?

CHLOE

Crosses to Jimmy

I'm horny. Maybe it's seeing Old Faithful.

JIMMY

Whoa. We just met.

CHLOE

So? I can tell the way you look at me that you think I'm hot. After four weeks out here, you should be ready to go.

Chloe kisses Jimmy passionately, then they break

CHLOE (cont)

I can tell you're into this. But you need to be more aggressive.

JIMMY

You didn't like my kissing?

CHLOE

I need you to be powerful, more forceful. That's a huge turn on.

JIMMY

How's this?

Kisses Chloe more deeply

CHLOE

Rougher still.

JIMMY

Grabs her head forcibly

I'm doing the best I can.

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CHLOE

Be a man. (*Lights are now black*) ... I need it rough ... Stop being such a pussy ... Show me what you can do ... Yes! Yes! More! ... O.K. ... O.K. Now. Stop!

Lights up, Jimmy on stage

JIMMY

Def-in-ite-ly Cherry. Oh, I often take on a characteristic of the departed. So now, I'm a synesthetic.

BRITTANY

You said you loved her!

JIMMY

Not at the time. But she's became like a part of me. Think of her a lot – she was as fucked up as I am. Only killing I regret – it was too ... spontaneous.

BRITTANY

So you've never really been in a relationship.

JIMMY

Nope. Don't seem to be nobody's type.

BRITTANY

Seems like you never gave it a chance – put yourself out there.

JIMMY

Like on a dating site? (Sings) "You don't have to be lonely, at killers only dot com."

BRITTANY

I'm being serious. Besides Chloe, how many women have you spent as much time talking to as me?

JIMMY

No one. Even the ones I done in – they didn't talk much.

BRITTANY

Maybe I'm different.

JIMMY

That you are. Usually I just hear beggin' and cryin'. You're smart – composed.  
(beat) Maybe too smart.

Jimmy crosses to duffle bag and starts to reach in

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BRITTANY

You said your killings usually aren't spontaneous?

JIMMY

It's like a game of Jenga. Each character flaw's like a piece removed from the tower.

DON

Enters

You'll get used to this selling thing. The main thing is to look in their eyes when you go through the benefits of the software. See where they show interest, and then focus on that aspect the rest of the meeting.

JIMMY

Thanks for taking me around your territory. Bill says you're his best salesperson.

DON

It's not like we're competitors. I'm working Arizona. You get Colorado. If you tried to take over cactus land, then we'd have some issues. I love this route.

JIMMY

I guess Phoenix is a good market.

DON

It's more than that. The small towns. Lots of women either single and lonely, or ... married and lonely. Hanging around cheap hotel bars. And all of them 500 miles away from my wife.

JIMMY

Simulates pulling out a Jenga piece

You don't think she'll ever find out?

DON

Nah – too stupid. And if she did, what's she gonna do? She's dependent on my income. I got her to sign a pre-nup – she gets nothing in a divorce.

JIMMY

Simulates pulling out a Jenga piece

Guess you got it all figured out.

DON

Yep – and if I can't get any action in the towns, I just drive down to Nogales over the border. We'll go there tomorrow. Them Mexican whores really know how to earn their pesos.

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JIMMY

Don't think I could do that.

DON

You ain't a homo are you? My son's one. Beat the shit out of him when he "came out."

JIMMY

Simulates pulling out a Jenga piece and the tower collapsing  
No. In fact, I got something on my computer that you'll love to see. Come back to  
my room.

Crosses to exit

DON

Following Jimmy and exits

Is it a porno? You got the password to one of them sites? I like the barely 18 ones.  
I know I'd like –

JIMMY

Enters

Death of a Salesman. Arthur Miller's got nothing on me. That happened a week ago. Hopped on a plane to L.A., and that brings me to you.

BRITTANY

I don't fit your pattern. I have a great family relationship.

JIMMY

That's why I'm holding you here. There's something about you, but I can't figure it out yet. If we keep talking, something will slip, then I can finish the job.

BRITTANY

Like what?

JIMMY

Could be anything – maybe some kind of weird sexual perversion.

BRITTANY

Nope – I'm still a virgin.

JIMMY

Then something else – when I sense some weakness, I get a feeling – tastes like metal in my mouth.

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BRITTANY

You're gonna be disappointed.

JIMMY

That taste's never wrong. But you ARE different.

BRITTANY

That's cause I know something you don't.

JIMMY

Your father's a burglar and he taught you all his secrets? – so you can pick the lock when I'm not looking? Cause, if true, that gives me cause to –

BRITTANY

Nope. I'm a woman of deep faith. I'm sure of a higher power, and that power won't let me die.

JIMMY

Crosses to duffle bag, reaches in, and pulls out a knife  
Faith? Why didn't this power stop me from kidnapping you? Or stop my other murders? You fanatics amaze me. It's all a cult – like those Hale Bopp idiots. Well they're all dead and you will be too. I don't need a reason -

BRITTANY

You're right about one thing.

JIMMY

What?

BRITTANY

Charges Jimmy with a container of mace  
I do know how to pick a lock!

Brittany sprays Jimmy with the mace. He screams and turns away. Brittany reaches in the duffle bag, pulls out a gun, and points it at Jimmy.

BRITTANY

Don't move an inch.

JIMMY

You gonna shoot me?

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BRITTANY

Not if I don't have to. You tell me where my cell phone is. I'll let the police take care of you

JIMMY

Fuck you. You'll never fire a shot.

BRITTANY

Why – because I'm just a victim? You got the wrong girl.

JIMMY

There ain't no bullets in that gun.

Jimmy moves toward Brittany. She pulls trigger but nothing happens. She throws the gun at him which stuns him. She lunges at him knocking the knife out of his hand. They struggle. Lights to black. Sounds of struggle. Then silence. Lights up. Jimmy is lying face down and Brittany is standing holding the knife. She smiles to the audience. She claps, raises her arms in the air. After silence, lights go dark except for spotlight on Brittany. Her face becomes serious, and she looks at the knife.

BRITTANY

I kill people. Even though I just started, seems like I've been killing them since the start of time. But I guess that's mostly in my head. Mmmmmmm – Cherry.

(Spotlight off)

END OF PLAY