

# LIGHTS OUT

The Dark

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## LIGHTS OUT: THE DARK

by Arch Oboler

I ADAPTED THIS FOR A LIVE PERFORMANCE. THE BITS IN RED WERE TACKED ON BY ME. IN REALITY, THIS IS A TEN MINUTE SCARY SKETCH BY MR. OBOLER FOR THE ALBUM "DROP DEAD". THIS WAS PLAYED BY WALLY PHILLIPS EVERY HALLOWEEN FOR **YEARS** ON WGN RADIO IN CHICAGO. DURING BREAKFAST. TRY PLAYING THIS FOR YOUR KID RIGHT BEFORE BEDTIME. NO SLEEP FOR **HIM** THAT NIGHT. OR YOU...

**ARCH OBOLER:** Lights Out... everybody.

**SFX:** CLOCK CHIMES TWELVE TIMES. ON THE NINTH CHIME, WIND EFFECT COMES IN AND RISES. WIND DOMINATES FOR A MOMENT AFTER THE TWELFTH CHIME, THEN A GONG SOUNDS.

**SFX:** CAR INTERIOR WHILE DRIVING. AN AMBULANCE SIREN BLARES.

**DOC:** Hey, where are you turning?

**SAM:** The alarm said Pine Street, didn't it, Doc?

**DOC:** Oh, yes; yes, of course. So why the siren? The only traffic out here is on horseback.

**SAM:** (LAUGHS) Yeah. You can say that again, Doc. It's from nothin' to nowhere.

**SFX:** SIREN APPROACHING. AMBULANCE STOPS, ENGINE OFF. CAR DOOR OPENS.

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**DOC:** Okay, let's go.

**SAM:** Right with you, Doc. Right with you.

**SFX:** TWO PAIRS OF FOOTSTEPS.

**SAM:** Said somebody was hurt?

**DOC:** That's what the switchboard said.

**SFX:** FOOTSTEPS COME TO A HALT.

**SAM:** Gee, what a dump. Huh. Doesn't seem to be a bell.

**DOC:** Oh, there must be. There's a light in there.

**SFX:** DOOR OPENS, CREAKS.

**SAM:** Hmm... it's open.

**DOC:** Well, let's go.

**SAM:** (BEGINNING TO BE UNSURE ABOUT THIS) Well... all right.

**SFX:** TWO PAIRS OF FOOTSTEPS ENTERING.

**DOC:** Hello in there! Hello!  
(UNDERTONE) If this is another false alar - (CALLING OUT) Anybody here? I'm a doctor.

**WOMAN:** (LAUGHS; LOW, HORROR-STRUCK)

**SAM:** Hey, look. In the corner.

**SFX:** ONE PAIR OF FOOTSTEPS.

**SAM:** This I gotta see.

**DOC:** Lady, I'm a doctor from General Hospital, what -

**WOMAN:** (A SHRIEK OF HORRIBLE LAUGHTER;  
KEEPS LAUGHING UNDERNEATH:)

**SAM:** She is screwy, all right, ain't she?

**DOC:** Frightened.

**SAM:** Come on, Doc, you want I should get her out of here? Or the straightjacket. Shall I get the straightjacket?

**WOMAN:** (A SHRIEK OF LAUGHTER)

**SAM:** No, Doc, wait! Where you goin'?

**WOMAN:** (STOPS LAUGHING)

**SFX:** STRUGGLING WITH DOOR HANDLE.  
CONTINUES THROUGH THE FOLLOWING:

**DOC:** Can't get it open...

**SAM:** Huh? Whatsa matter? What do you want to go in there for?

**DOC:** Can't get this open. Whoever is hurt must be in there.

**SAM:** (OVERLAPS) Okay... hurry...

**DOC:** (CONT'D) Blasted door! Come on, we'll break it down.

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**WOMAN:** (LAUGHS QUIETLY IN BG)

**SAM:** But the woman...

**DOC:** Forget the woman. Come on. Put your shoulder to it.

**SAM:** Yeah, yeah, all right.

**WOMAN:** (STOPS LAUGHING)

**SFX:** STRUGGLING WITH DOOR. IT BURSTS OPEN.

(DOC AND SAM ARE PANTING.)

**SAM:** It's dark. Can't see a thing.

**DOC:** Yeah. Go in the other room, get that kerosene lamp.

**SAM:** But...

**DOC:** Go on and do as I say.

**SAM:** Yeah, yeah, I'll get it...

**SFX:** FOOTSTEPS. THEN FOOTSTEPS RETURN.

**WOMAN:** (LAUGHS SOFTLY FOR A MOMENT)

**SAM:** Here, Doc. The lamp.

**DOC:** Okay. Hold it high.

**SAM:** Yeah. (SHARP GASP) What... ?!

**DOC:** Oh, mother in Heaven!

**SAM:** What... on the floor - what is it?

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**DOC:** It's... a man.

**SAM:** Ohhhh, no! It can't be, I tell you, it can't be.

**DOC:** Oh, yes. It's a man. A man - and he's been turned inside out.

**WOMAN:** (SHRIEKS WITH LAUGHTER)

**SAM:** Inside out?

**WOMAN:** (SUBSIDES)

**DOC:** Here. See for yourself. It's a man. But the skin is the inside; the raw flesh is the outside. Organs... hanging...

**SAM:** (SHUDDERS) Yeah.

**DOC:** It's a miracle - a man turned inside out. Like you'd turn a glove inside out.

**INSIDEOUT MAN:** (BEGINS GIBBERING; CONTINUES UNDER:)

**SAM:** It's alive. It's alive.

**DOC:** Yes.

**SAM:** It's alive!

**DOC:** Yes.

**SFX:** INSIDE OUT BODY CRAWLING ON THE FLOOR.

**SAM:** Doc, it's trying to get up.

**DOC:** Oh, no!

**SAM:** It's trying to get up, I tell you! It's trying to move!

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**DOC:** Sam - hold that light high.

**SAM:** Watch -  
look at it;  
rolling over,  
trying to get  
up.

**DOC:** Stop.

Stop that.

**SAM:** Trying to get up - to get up on  
its knees. Doc, make it stop,  
kill it, do something. A man  
can't live inside out.

**DOC:** Sam, stop it; stop it, I say!

**SFX:** DOC SLAPS SAM.

**DOC:** Hysterical old woman, that's  
what you are. Now you stand  
there and shut up.

(THEY ARE SILENT FOR A MOMENT AS  
INSIDEOUT MAN GIBBERS)

**SAM:** Listen to him. Listen to him!  
Let's get out of here, Doc,  
please!

**DOC:** Don't be a fool.

**INSIDEOUT  
MAN:** (GROANS IN AGONY, THEN FLAILS  
ABOUT SOME MORE, TRYING TO  
RISE.)

**DOC:** We've got to find out, Sam.  
Why. What. Look, there's  
another door.

**SAM:** Yeah. Open.

**DOC:** The answer might be in there.

**SAM:** Doc, don't. We've got to... !

**DOC:** The lantern. Bring it!

**SAM:** Gee, Doc, why can't we just go...?

**DOC:** Hold it high.

**SAM:** Doc, what...

**DOC:** Don't move. (A BEAT) Th... there's no floor in there.

**SAM:** I... I don't see nothin'. Nothin' but dark.

**DOC:** Well, look. The Dark sort of... spills over on the edges.

**SAM:** Huh?

**DOC:** Well, look, I tell you! It's a deeper Dark than... dark.

**SFX:** A SNAKE SLITHERING...

**DOC:** There's something moving in there.

**SAM:** Doc - close the door!

**DOC:** No. No, wait.

**SAM:** Then I'll close it!

**SFX:** DOOR SLAMMING.

**DOC:** Oh, you fool! I've got to see what...

**WOMAN:** (LAUGHING SOFTLY AS SHE ENTERS)

DOC: She's coming in here.

SAM: Come on, Doc, let's get out of here.

DOC: No, Sam, I'm going to find out what this is all about. All my life, things have been What They've Been.

WOMAN: (LAUGHS LOUDER)

DOC: I'm going to find out all about this.

WOMAN: (BUSTING A GUT)

SAM: Please, Doc, please let's get out of here!?

DOC: Woman, if you know anything, tell me! What was it we saw back at that door where the floor should have been? Do you know?

WOMAN: (LAUGHS LOUDER; WANDERS AWAY, LAUGHING)

SAM: She's... she's going to the door. She's going to open it.

SFX: DOOR HANDLE OPENING.

DOC: Yes.

SFX: DOOR CREAKS OPEN.

SAM: Oh, Doc, will you listen to me? Let's get out of here!

DOC: No no. No, wait! She's just standing there - looking into



the Dark.

**SAM:** Yeah.

**WOMAN:** (LAUGHS)

**SAM:** Doc? What's that coming up out of the hole in the floor?

**SFX:** SLITHERING.

**DOC:** The Dark!

**SAM:** It's... it's like black smoke.  
(A BEAT) Listen to it.

**WOMAN:** (IN THE MIDDLE OF A LAUGH GIVES A CRY OF TERROR; CONTINUES LAUGHING. ANOTHER CRY; MORE LAUGHTER)

**SAM:** It's reachin' up! To her!

**DOC:** Yes.

**SFX:** SLITHERING IS LOUDER.

**SAM:** What is it? Smoke? Black?  
What... ?

**DOC:** Crawling up. Around her.

**WOMAN:** (LAUGHS. TERRIFIED GASP.  
LAUGHS. LAUGH STOPS - A BEAT -  
SHRIEK OF AGONY AND HORROR.)

**SAM:** It's covering her!

**SFX:** THE WOMAN IS TURNED INSIDE OUT.

**DOC:** No!

**SAM:** Inside out! It turned her...  
inside... ou... (SAM FAINTS)

**SFX: BODY FALLS.**

**DOC:** (GUESS WHO FINALLY WANTS TO  
LEAVE?) Sam. Sam, get up!  
Sam, open your eyes. The  
shadows, they're crawling along  
the floor toward us - come on,  
Sam, come on, you... (TRIES TO  
LIFT SAM) Ugh... Sam, you're  
too heavy. I can't lift you!  
Sam, you've got to hear me! The  
shadows, they're crawling toward  
me along the floor - I can't  
leave you here, you saw what  
they did to her! Look at her -  
inside out! A woman inside out!  
Oh, Sam!

**SFX: SLITHERING IS GETTING LOUDER.**

**DOC:** (PULLING SAM) I'll drag you out  
of here. Ugh. You're - so -  
heavy... They're coming faster  
and faster; like long, black  
fingers! ARGH! My legs! Let  
go of me! Sam, I can't help  
you, they're holding me back!  
The black! It's covering you!  
SAM!

**SFX: SAM IS TURNED INSIDE OUT.**

**DOC:** (WEEPING) Sam. (TO THE DARK)  
No! You... you thing, whatever  
you are, get off me! Stop  
covering me. I've gotta get out  
of here, I've got to tell them  
all about you! I've got to tell

everybody there's something like  
you loose in the world! I've  
got to warn everybody - get off  
me! Cold! Slimy! How can  
shadows be slimy? So cold!  
Covering me over. My head - let  
go! My face. (MOUTH IS  
COVERED) My mouth. (MORE AND  
MORE MUFFLED) Let go. Let go of  
me. Let go of me. ARGH!

**SFX:** **DOC IS TURNED INSIDE OUT.**

(A BEAT)

**SFX:** **GONG.**

**ARCH OBOLER:** You have been listening to "The  
Dark." "Lights Out", written  
especially for radio by Arch  
Oboler, comes to you each  
Wednesday from our Chicago  
studios. This is the National  
Broadcasting Company.

**THE END**