

CALL ME NORMA

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SYNOPSIS:After a hectic day of filming, Marilyn Monroe grapples with her inner demon, Norma, who appears only in reflections. Turning to pills for relief, Marilyn ultimately faces her fate, acknowledging the exploitation she's endured. Embracing her alter ego, Marilyn finds peace, leaving her troubles behind as she walks into the light.

INT. MARILYN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Marilyn stands before her mirror, bathed in the eerie half-light of her room. The air is thick with tension, the only sound is the soft whisper of Norma's voice, barely perceptible, yet hauntingly present.

A half-empty bottle of pills sits on the table, a stark reminder of Marilyn's inner turmoil.

In a sudden fit of frustration, Marilyn seizes a nearby vase. With a primal scream, she hurls it at the mirror.

CRASH! The mirror shatters into a thousand glittering fragments, each one reflecting the fractured state of Marilyn's mind.

For a moment, there is silence, broken only by Marilyn's heavy breathing.

EXT. MOVIE SET - DAY

Judy Garland "Who Cares" is playing in the background.

Marilyn walks confidently onto the set, her presence commanding attention. She passes the SET DESIGN TEAM arranging props, their voices distant echoes in the bustling atmosphere.

Further down the hallway, Marilyn encounters the GRIP adjusting camera equipment. She reaches for her cigarette, and lights it.

She nods at the CAMERAMAN, who nods back with a knowing smile, their communication wordless but understood.

Approaching the DIRECTOR, sitting in his chair, Marilyn exchanges a subtle acknowledgment, a silent agreement.

Marilyn strides down a dimly lit hallway, flanked by rows of closed doors, each concealing its own secrets. The distant hum of activity fills the air, a symphony of anticipation and tension.

As Marilyn passes, the doors seem to watch her, their silent guardianship casting a shadow over her path. She moves with purpose, her steps echoing off the walls like a heartbeat in the stillness.

INT. DRESSING ROOM- DAY

Marilyn steps into the dimly lit room, her footsteps echoing against the silence. As she passes a full-length mirror, she hesitates, her gaze drawn to her own reflection. Vulnerability flickers in her eyes.

She moves towards the makeup chair and sits down, the script in her hands, her coffee untouched. Moments tick by in eerie silence.

A soft glow fills the room as the vanity lights come to life, casting long shadows across the space. Dresses, photos, and scattered makeup create a haunting atmosphere. Marilyn, stares into the mirror.

As tears stream down her face, Marilyn's reflection morphs, and she sees Norma staring back at her. Norma smiles at Marilyn provocatively, adding to Marilyn's unease.

Frantically, Marilyn stands abruptly, panic evident in her movements. She reaches into her purse, her hands shaking as she fumbles to find the pill bottle. With trembling fingers, she finally grasps it and hastily unscrews the cap.

The pills spill out of the bottle, scattering across the floor with a clatter. Marilyn gasps, her heart pounding in her chest. Without hesitation, she sinks to her knees, picking up each pill one by one, her desperation visible.

Once she collects the pills, Marilyn pops two of them into her mouth, swallowing them with an audible gulp. As she does, the glow of the mirror lights suddenly dims, casting the room into deeper shadows.

A shiver runs down Marilyn's spine, her expression clouded with worry. With a hesitating glance over her shoulder, she gathers herself and walks towards the door. As she pushes it open, the scene seamlessly transitions to the knob of her front door at home.

INT. MARILYN'S HOME - NIGHT

Marilyn walks down the dimly lit hallway of her house, her silhouette flickering against the walls. She passes by the kitchen where Eunice Murray moves about, unseen, attending to various tasks.

EUNICE (OS)

Is everything okay, Miss Monroe?

MARILYN

I don't know, Eunice. Just feeling a bit tired.

EUNICE (OS)

You've been working so hard lately. Anything specific on your mind?

MARILYN

I am... I'm just tired.

EUNICE (OS)

Can I fix you a plate of something, Miss Monroe?

MARILYN

No, thank you. I'm going to take a bath and go to sleep.

Marilyn quietly pours herself a drink and heads to the bathroom.

INT. MARILYN'S BATHROOM-NIGHT

Turning the vintage knobs, Marilyn starts the bath, the sound of water filling the room. With a subtle shift, she undresses.

Marilyn looks in the mirror and starts examining her face. She then gets a glimpse of Norma.

MARILYN

I can't do this. I can't, not right now.

Marilyn turns away from the mirror and steps into the warm water, Marilyn submerges herself into the water, glass still in hand. She sits in silence, as the bathroom fill with steam.

Marilyn, wrapped in a towel, steps out of the bath.

She walks to the foggy mirror, wipes it with her hand, revealing her reflection. Marilyn sees Norma staring back at her.

Norma looks intense and serious, doesn't lose eye contact with Marilyn. "Me and the Devil" (Instrumental) by Soap&Skin is playing.

NORMA

(Condescendingly)

You think I'd just disappear, that you could drowned me out, (Norma laughs) I see You Marilyn, I know your pain.

Oh don't look away. It's time we deal with this, this little problem, you let fester for years.

MARLYIN

Im not a bad person.

NORMA

That's what you think, but look at your life.

You shut it off,
You can't even sleep,
You called my name,
relief is what You seek.
Inside,
just a girl,
not yet sixteen,

MARILYN

Please, stop...

NORMA

(Condescending)

Oh, so I can't voice my thoughts,
fearing what I've seen. Does this
ring a bell?

Sit right here, play the part,
they say,
You're Marilyn,
Sorry not smart,
they convey.

(Derisive)

But I am and you could be,
if you'd just dare,
To show the real me,
It's not hard Marilyn if you just
revealed the truth.
Beyond the image, you're just a
poor lost sheep. Im finally going to
break you free from all these
lies. Look at me, Im going to fix
all of this.

Tears stream down Marilyn's face when a sudden knock on the door surprises her.

EUNICE MURRAY

Miss Monroe?

MARILYN

Yes

EUNICE

I've just put some food on a plate
for you, it's in the fridge.

MARILYN

Thank you, Eunice.

Marilyn opens the medicine cabinet. The pill bottle clinks against the glass shelf as her fingers delicately retrieve it. She swallows the pills, and everything slows down, highlighting the gravity of the moment. The medicine cabinet door shuts, and the scene transitions with a subtle dissolve, merging seamlessly into a new moment.

INT. MARILYN'S BEDROOM-MORNING

Now, Marilyn is revealed, lying in her bed, an empty plate rests beside her. The soft sunlight filters through the curtains, casting a gentle glow on her face. Marilyn wakes up groggy and looks like she did not sleep at all.

Marilyn rises from her bed, an air of restlessness about her. She paces through the house, pouring herself a drink like a ritual, a fleeting attempt to drown the echoes of loneliness.

INT. MARILYN'S BEDROOM - MID AFTERNOON

Marilyn is sitting on the bed with her phone, trying to call someone, and can't seem to get a hold of them. She tries another time, no answer, and then a third time and no answer.

MARILYN

Why won't he pick up?? Pick up!

On the third time, she slams the phone down. She reaches for her drink on the nightstand. Marilyn goes to the mirror over her dresser. Marilyn doesn't hesitate stares right at Norma.

NORMA

Something bothering you?

MARILYN

Oh damn him! Why has love got to be so tough? You think you know someone, but do you really? Does anyone know anyone? I don't even know myself but I'm trying, and trying to be happy is almost as difficult as trying to be a good actress.

NORMA

(Petty)

My dear Marilyn perhaps it's not love that's the problem, but rather...

Marilyn looks over at the phone, then back at Norma.

MARILYN

Why won't he call me back?

NORMA

So needy.

MARILYN

It seems like I get so close to happiness and then it's just pulled away from me. Can't a girl ever just be happy? I don't even want the fame anymore; I don't care. Some days I feel like I'm making strides, then wham (slams hand down cabinet) it's gone... What has Fame done for me? Really what?! I guess Fame is like caviar, it's delicious to have, but you can't have it every day.

NORMA

(Mocking)

And yet, here you stand, resilient and strong.

MARILYN

Why are you mocking me?

Marilyn starts pacing around the bedroom.

MARILYN

Maybe that's why I'm tired. I've had too much. Why should I care anyway? They all think I'm crazy, but I always feel like I'm being watched. Wouldn't you feel crazy? Marilyn let's take a picture, look this way Marilyn, act this way Marilyn, you're not doing it right Marilyn, be on time Marilyn. So many voices, all yelling at me.

NORMA

(Annoyed)

Oh God forbid all that fame has bestowed upon you.

Marilyn looks back up at Norma.

MARILYN

I'm really trying.

Norma looks right back at Marilyn with a dead gaze.

NORMA

(Angry)

if you'd just dare,
To show the real me,

MARILYN

I won't call myself an orphan, I won't. I was brought up a waif. I was never really used to being happy. I was never really counting on it. I never had a family, so you could assume I'm kind of lost. I just wanted to be honest and find the truth in who I was. Just a little girl wanting her daddy. Could you blame me?

NORMA

(In a wicked, taunting tone)
 Waif in a world, lost and alone,
 Happiness a fantasy, a dream
 overblown.
 No family ties, a ship without a
 mast,
 A truth seeker, but the past is
 recast.
 A little girl's cry, a desperate
 plea,
 Daddy's love, a mirage, as far as
 eyes can see.
 Blame not the world, blame not the
 fate,
 In the twisted dance, you sealed
 your own state. (mocking laughter)

MARILYN

Everyone keeps telling me what to do, and I think they all mean well, but I just can't. I can't stand the loneliness. This feeling in my stomach, that I've done something wrong. No one can ever say I wasn't trying, I was always trying.

NORMA

Were you really trying? Last time I checked, you're out of control, weak, and mindless. Letting others dictate your destiny. But hey, what do I know, right? You tossed me out like trash the minute you changed your name, you try to drowned me out with booze and pills... But I can fix this.

Marilyn looks down, and looks back at Norma.

NORMA (CONT'D)

I've been waiting patiently in the shadows, watching you stumble through your charade. It's time to embrace the truth... Let me in and let me fix it!

MARILYN

No. You're not real, none of this is real.

NORMA

If only that was the case. I'm all you got.

MARILYN

No.

Sunlight filters through the bedroom windows as Marilyn, wearied, delicately drapes a silk scarf over the mirror. The room's ambiance transforms, casting a warm glow on the bedroom. Shadows dance with Marilyn as she moves towards the dimly lit hallway.

INT. MARILYN'S HOME - HALLWAY - MID AFTERNOON

The vintage clock ticks relentlessly in the dimly lit hallway as Marilyn, drained and disoriented, begins her haunting walk. Shadows play on the walls, each step echoing the weight of her shattered soul. The strains of "Snap Out of It" by the Arctic Monkeys linger, intensifying the dissonant symphony within her.

INT. MARILYN'S LIVING ROOM - MID AFTERNOON

Entering the living room once more, Marilyn's journey takes her back to the familiar space now steeped in the haunting echoes of her struggle. The furniture stands as silent witnesses to her torment. The ticking of the wall clock becomes a persistent reminder of time slipping away. Norma's elusive presence seems to dance in every shadow. Marilyn, now almost spectral herself, clutches a handful of pills as she weaves through the room. Every time she sees Norma in the glass she turns around and pours herself a drink.

INT. MARILYN'S KITCHEN - MID AFTERNOON.

Marilyn stumbles back into its confines. Shadows contort on the chrome surfaces as Marilyn avoids her own reflection. Norma's reflection in the polished surface of a kettle haunts her once again. Pills spill onto the counter, a symbolic surrender to the numbing abyss.

INT. MARILYN'S LIVING ROOM- LATE AFTERNOON

Marilyn goes straight to the phone and starts making a phone call. No one picks up on the other line. She tries it again. Still nothing.

Marilyn hangs up the phone and gets up. Norma's haunting shadow follows her on the wall as she walks down the hallway.

Disoriented, Marilyn tries to leave the house to go to the pool as she reaches for the handles she see Normas face in the glass and stares Marilyn. Marilyn turns away and pours another drink.

INT. MARILYN'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

In a daze, Marilyn stumbles back into the kitchen, shadows warp and twist, playing tricks on her disoriented senses. Norma appears in any place with a reflective surface, Marilyn starts throwing things in the kitchen.

INT. MARILYN'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The living room, now bathed in the dark, Norma's elusive presence remains etched in every shadow. Marilyn, drained and defeated, concludes her haunting walk down the hallway to the bedroom. Where the hallway is closing in on her.

Marilyn walks to her bedroom.

INT. MARILYN'S BEDROOM - JUST BEFORE MIDNIGHT

Marilyn looking defeated lights a cigarette, and walks over to the mirror to pull the silk scarf off of it.

MARILYN (CONT'D)

I did try. Like I said, I don't know if I'm angry, sad or just exhausted. I can't live like this. Who can? Could you? People telling you that you're not good enough then wanting to take pieces of you. What's left of me? Well, there's a lot to go around. I shouldn't tease, but really, we're all born sexual creatures. It's a pity so many people don't see it and crush this natural thing. It's who we are, and it's beautiful.

NORMA

(proudly encouraging)

Existence-

They have lied to you. No one cares for you more than I do

MARILYN

Maybe.

Marilyn gets up from the bed and walks to the cabinet, and pours another drink. Marilyn goes to the bed and starts making a phone call.

NORMA

What are you doing? Marilyn put the phone down.

MARILYN

Thank God you answered... I don't know who else I can trust...I'm...oh, okay. Yeah, it's fine.Don't be silly, well talk soon.(Marilyn is starring at norma in understanding)

Marilyn clutches the phone tighter.Marilyn aggressively hangs up the phone.Anyone who knows what love is but Irma Thomas starts playing. Marilyn starts pacing, lights a cigarette. She starts looking at Norma for answers, but Norma simply stares at Marilyn, and doesn't speak.

MARILYN (CONT'D)

I tried to find love. I did. I thought I could be good at love... There's been magical moments. I won't deny that, but right now at this moment there is but one man who I do really care about and I thought I would marry, but things have become...they've become hostile, especially today and well... I have too many fantasies.

(Drinks her champagne)

Now I'm upset.

NORMA

(authoritative)

You need to stop thinking like that....

MARILYN

I'm sorry I just can't. Nothing turns out right for me, you can see even today. No one likes me and everything I do turns to garbage. It just simply does. I don't have anybody, I'm always alone.

NORMA

(condescending)

I can't imagine how that feels. long line of men came and went taking pieces from us In a world that's all stage, You wore a mask, not me but you, but on the inside, felt lost

(MORE)

NORMA (CONT'D)

You want to forget about everything. You remember?

MARILYN

So many terrible memories... I can't seem to shake them. Do they ever go away? I just think about them more now. It's like even the men then wanted a piece of me. But I'm here, so maybe that means I've survived.

NORMA

You survived because of me.

MARILYN

Some people don't. No one ever told me about sex, but frankly, I didn't think it was all that important. Maybe I'm not loveable. I just feel empty. Why do these men just keep taking a piece of me? All I wanted was a daddy. Why can't they just see that? All I had was hope, hope, and hope. I had to change it. That was my wish for us. I don't even know who's who?

Marilyn stares right at Norma

MARILYN (CON'D)

I am not okay. Could he not see that? What do these men want from me?

Marilyn walks back to the bed and tries calling someone again, but no answer again. Pours herself another drink.

MARILYN (CONT'D)

I tried to get help a few months back, from these (pulls out the pills). I'm so tired. All I hear is Marilyn, Marilyn, Marilyn, and I just turn myself on. Oh I'm fine, smile Marilyn, just smile I'd say to myself. It's not their fault you're sad. How could anyone love me if I'm sad? I'd like to be happy, but who's happy? Oh, how I'm so tired. I have so many secrets, but who do I share them with, when I'm always alone. I don't have many friends. I do like people but for friends I like a few people (laughing). I do, however, have nothing but love and nothing but admiration for the brothers. Those brothers..

(MORE)

MARILYN (CONT'D)

They made me feel seen, heard, and valued. When they spoke, I'd listen, soak it all up like a sponge. They'd talk about the world, about dreams, and I'd feel a part of something bigger, something important. Maybe in another life I'll be a man,

NORMA

Must be easy to have all the power.

MARILYN

I do feel powerless. My God. I'm getting really tired of the same thing on repeat, like a record skipping. (Gets up pour herself another glass) He really makes me mad right now. Why would he say the things he said? Why would he hurt me like that? Oh, I want to hurt him, and maybe I should. I told him I would. (laughs) I'll tell the whole world, could you imagine? He tried to intimidate me. I won't stand for it anymore. I'm going to take back my power. Who am I? (Marilyn looks into mirror) Can anyone see me? Can You see me now!?

MARILYN (CONT'D)

They couldn't see me.

NORMA

(bored)

Who couldn't?

MARILYN

All of them. All those men not listening and treating me like an animal. Oh, the nightmare that's happened. All I wanted was rest. That's all I wanted. Oh, if you only knew what I saw. To be locked in like that and not get help. They treated me like I was a nut, so know what I did? (Laugh) I gave them a nut. They made me feel like I was losing my mind. Maybe I was, maybe I was becoming like them, crazy. Oh, I felt so crazy. I don't want to be crazy. I'm so scared that's what's happening - that I'm not fully here.

NORMA

We are not machines, no matter if
they say we are.

Marilyn's eyes well up with tears, but she fights to
maintain composure.

NORMA (CONT'D)

You know what you must do.

MARILYN

Why won't you just go away? You've
brought nothing but pain from my
past. Maybe you're to blame for all
of this. Why are you even here?!

NORMA

In shadows deep, your ghost
resides. You know I'm right!

Marilyn storms away from Norma and sits on the floor,
resting her back against the bed, shielding her actions from
prying eyes. She looks as though she's running out of time.

Lux Aeterna by Clint Mansell fills the air with a mournful
melody, punctuated by the relentless ticking of an unseen
clock.

With trembling hands, Marilyn inches towards the pill
bottle, her breath shallow with anticipation. Each move
feels like a descent into the abyss, a desperate grasp for
relief from the torment of her thoughts.

As she reaches for the bottle, a flicker of hesitation
crosses her face. But the weight of her despair overwhelms
her, driving her to seek solace in the pills, the only
answer she has to end this madness. Marilyn's fingers close
around the bottle, her heart pounding in her chest. As she
prepares to take them, a sudden strength grips her. Even as
she swallows the pills, a sense of newfound freedom fills
her soul.

Marilyn gets up and walks to the mirror, now facing Norma
head-on in the reflection. She looks more confident than
before.

MARILYN

I should say goodbye. Goodbye to
these men, goodbye to the misery
they bring. I've paid my dues and
more, because hell hath no greater
fury than a woman scorned.

Norma's head nods in agreement.

NORMA

They bring trouble and you just
mourn.

(MORE)

NORMA (CONT'D)

To keep the peace you should just
be quiet
but then enough is enough so you'll
start this riot,
maybe things will change when you
speak your mind,
they can keep their names

MARILYN

But they can't take mine!

NORAM

You'll change your ways, and watch
Hollywood lose.

Norma has a sinister smile on her face. Norma places both hands on the sides of the cabinet, in a powerful posture. You see Norma's background begin to glow.

NORMA

So call me Norma,
And you'll see the true me,
The person behind the facade,
And all that I can be.
It's a name that I hold dear,
A part of me that will always be,
So call me Norma,
And you'll know the real me.

(Marilyn stands to mimic Norma's pose. Both women face each other in the mirror)

NORMA (CONT'D)

So call you Norma
Then let me be free,
To show you the person,
That I truly want to be.
For in that name,
Lies our true identity,
A reminder of our past,
And our hopes for our destiny.

MARILYN

With Norma, I can be myself,
Unfiltered and true,

MARILYN/NORMA

And I hope that you will see,
The person I am, in you.

Marilyn stands before her mirror, bathed in the eerie half-light of her room. The air is thick with tension, the only sound the soft whisper of Norma's voice, barely perceptible, yet hauntingly present.

In a sudden fit of frustration, Marilyn seizes a nearby vase. With a primal scream, she hurls it at the mirror.

CRASH! The mirror shatters into a thousand glittering fragments, each one reflecting the fractured state of Marilyn's mind.

For a moment, there is silence, broken only by Marilyn's heavy breathing. Marilyn falls to the ground and moment where she breaks down bawling, then takes in a heavy sigh, then starts clearing up the mess.

NORMA
(Pleading)

No.

Marilyn get's up. Marilyn and Norma are facing each other and this mirror like way. Everything Marilyn does Norma mirrors with her body too. Marilyn embraces Norma with a maternal Hug and whispers in her ear.

MARILYN
(whispering)
Call me Norma.

NORMA
Norma.

The room is bathed in a soft glow as a single tear rolls down Norma's cheek. Marilyn looks at Norma and gently wipes the tear away. In a caring way Marilyn takes Norma's hand to escort her towards the bed. Marilyn gently guides Norma onto the bed. Marilyn leans over and turns the radio on, the ambient hum of a radio fills the air, the opening bars of "Dream a Little Dream" by Doris Day casting a nostalgic spell. Marilyn tucks Norma's hair behind her ear and tucks her in.

Norma is lying peacefully in bed, eyes shut as though Norma is resting. Marilyn, in a side profile, leans in close. Her lips graze the edges of Norma's ear, and with a hushed intensity, Marilyn imparts words that remain a secret between them, a whisper in the embrace of shadows.

MARILYN (CONT'D)
Sleep.

The second verse of "Dream a Little Dream" begins, and Marilyn dances gently around the room, lip-syncing with the music, and gently leans down to kiss Norma's forehead.

As the third verse begins, Marilyn walks out of the bedroom and down the hallway. A cinematic ripple unfolds - each door surrenders to an unseen force, swinging open in a harmonious dance with her presence. The corridor transforms into a symphony of entrances, unveiling secrets.

INT. MARILYN'S FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

As Marilyn reaches the front door, the atmosphere changes. Marilyn opens the door, revealing a burst of blinding light beyond. Marilyn walks through the door. The scene is washed in bright light.

THE END

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