

ABSOLUTELY FABULOUS

“PURGE”

Teleplay by Jeffrey Roun

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SCENE 1 INTERIOR EDINA'S BEDROOM – NIGHT DREAM SEQUENCE

Edina is asleep in bed, an eye-patch covering most of her face. Her nose twitches. The twitching becomes pronounced as a black blob with arms and legs enters. The blob leaps onto the bed and removes her eye patch. Edina screams and bashes at the blob.

SCENE 2 INTERIOR EDINA'S BEDROOM – MORNING

Edina wakes screaming for real. She removes her eye-patch to discover she's bashing a small black teddy bear. Saffron rushes in wearing a nightgown, holding her chest and breathing heavily. She doesn't look well.

SAFFRON: Mum, what is it? What's wrong?

EDINA: This – this thing, attacked me!

Saffron pulls the bear from Edina's grasp and gives it an ironic look.

SAFFRON: Really, Mum, you've got to stop watching horror films at night. *(coughs)* I've got to go rest. The doctor said I have to stay in bed for two more days.

EDINA: You're not *still* sick, are you darling? *(Saffron nods and turns to go. Edina's nose twitches.)* What's that smell?

SAFFRON *(sniffs)* I can't smell a thing.

EDINA: Cat urine. I smell cat urine!

For a moment, Saffron thinks it might be herself.

SAFFRON: I really don't smell anything. And we don't have a cat, so it's not likely ...

EDINA *(interrupting)* In the dream a giant black blob jumped on my chest and attacked me. Darling, do you know what this means?

SAFFRON No.

EDINA It means I've got a brain tumour. That's what happens. Black blobs attack you in your dreams. And you smell cat urine!

SAFFRON It's burned toast.

EDINA I've got a brain tumour, darling and you're worried about breakfast?

SAFFRON No, I mean the warning sign is you smell burned toast ...

EDINA (*sniffing furiously*) I do smell burned toast!

SAFFRON But it's only for epileptics. They smell burned toast right before an attack. What were you watching on telly last night before bed?

EDINA (*evasive*) Martha Stewart trials, darling. She's not guilty. She's not. She can't be.

SAFFRON I thought I heard screaming.

EDINA You did hear screaming, darling. It was Martha. She was screaming: 'They'll never take me alive!'

SAFFRON And what came on after that?

EDINA Just one of those ... Japanese genre films.

SAFFRON What genre, Mum?

EDINA Creatures from Mars genre.

SAFFRON And what sort of creatures did it have?

EDINA Black blobby sort of creatures, darling (*remembering*) that ate peoples brains!

SAFFRON Oh, Mum – stop it!

EDINA Dreams are warnings, darling. They tell you about impending disasters.

SAFFRON If you think you have a tumour, then see a doctor.

EDINA I don't like doctors. They prod and poke at you.

Mother enters to overhear this.

MOTHER Your father used to do that to me. I made him stop.

EDINA Well, that explains why I'm an only child.

MOTHER Oh no! After you, I never wanted more. (*beat*) I've come to tell you something got stuck in the toaster and burned to a crisp.

EDINA For heavens' sakes, if you can't afford to eat out, then go to a food bank. (*indicates Saffron*) I've got *her* on my doorstep because she has the sniffles ...

SAFFRON Pneumonia.

EDINA ... and bloody welfare refugees camped outside my pantry. This isn't a free zone ... get a job! Lend yourself out for medical experiments, if you have to. It's payback time for all that free Medicare when you had your tubes ripped out to deprive me of my brothers and sisters.

Saffron and Mother exchange sympathetic looks.

MOTHER It's true, I did. But not soon enough. *(To Saffron)* Shouldn't you be in bed, dear?

SAFFRON I just got up for a glass of water. I'll come down in a minute and help, Gran, before I go back.

Mother exits.

EDINA You'd help her with her old toast, but you won't help me with my brain tumour.

SAFFRON Mum, if you're really that worried, go to the doctor and have a cat scan.

EDINA Can't you go for me?

SAFFRON What good would it do for me to tell the doctor you need *your* head examined? *(beat)* I've got to go back to bed.

Saffron gets up to leave.

EDINA I could die, darling, and no one would care. I'll be sitting at my desk one day and keel right over. Then what'll you say? Um? 'My poor mother worked herself to death'?

SAFFRON That would fall under the category of criminal exaggeration.

EDINA I know what my gravestone will say, darling. It'll say, "See? I told you I was sick."

The door opens and Pasty enters, her tie stuck in the toaster, which dangles from around her neck. She bats at the clouds of smoke following her in.

SAFFRON Speaking of epileptic convulsions...

PATSY Oh, Eddie. The Azuni Collection! Everything's made from big bones, old teeth, mother-of-pearl hoop-like things. And the after-party was unbelievable. *(wavering as she speaks)* They had gamma ray lights that followed you round and round the room and in the middle of it we all sat and had Electro Shock Therapy. It was fabulous!

EDINA Pats, I have some terrible news.

PATSY (*glaring at Saffron*) You're not letting *her* move back in, are you?

EDINA No, it's just till she stops coughing. (beat) I can't go with you to Tangiers tomorrow.

PATSY (*throws herself against the door in horror*) How will I eat?

EDINA Pats ... I ... have a brain tumour.

PATSY My god! (*Edina nods sadly*) Eddie, that's fabulous! Liz Taylor had one and she made the covers of all the scandal rags in America for the first time in twenty years! (*Edina looks more pleased than shocked*) We'll dye your hair white ... you'll need fashion accessories!

EDINA I could commission Stella McCartney to make a little pin – I-Heart-My-Tumour.

SAFFRON Stop it! You two are deranged.

EDINA Oh, right! No one's allowed to be sick around here but you. (*she fakes coughing and points to a stick on the dresser*) Pass me my magic medicine stick, darling.

Saffron goes to the dresser and passes Edina a stick ornamented with dried chicken bones and feathers. It's revolting.

SAFFRON It looks like a toilet bowl brush.

EDINA It's from my dream clairvoyant. The dream catcher wasn't working.

Edina looks to her wall where a giant dream catcher is surrounded by dozens of smaller ones.

SAFFRON One probably would have done the trick.

Edina is shaking the stick in the air around herself.

SCENE 3 INTERIOR DREAM CLAIRVOYANT'S WORKSHOP – DAY – FLASHBACK

Edina lies on a mat looking up at the Dream Clairvoyant's enlarged face.

DREAM CLAIRVOYANT There are many things we must purge from your life.

EDINA What sort of things?

DREAM CLAIRVOYANT Negative people, keepsakes from those who wish you harm ... old boyfriends, excess weight ...

Edina imagines a series of people passing in front of her and leering: Bubble, Mother, Saffron, Marshall, Justin ...followed by herself, thin and smiling.

EDINA How do I do that?

DREAM CLAIRVOYANT Cross your eyes and look up to your fourth eye while I wave the magic medicine stick over you.

EDINA Can't I just throw things out the window?

DREAM CLAIRVOYANT You won't get rid of the negative energy that way. You have to purge them. Now concentrate on seeing those people in your fourth eye ...

Edina doesn't know where that is, but crosses her eyes and concentrates anyway. The Dream Clairvoyant shakes the stick over her.

DREAM CLAIRVOYANT Purge, purge.

SCENE 4 INTERIOR EDINA'S BEDROOM – MORNING (con't)

Saffron listens dubiously as Edina recalls her session.

SAFFRON And this is supposed to help you get rid of things?

EDINA Yes, darling. If you concentrate, all negativity is banished.

SAFFRON (*noting Patsy*) Then why is *she* still here?

Saffron and Patsy glare at one another.

EDINA Maybe I can purge my tumour ...

Edina concentrates, crossing her eyes and waving the stick over her head. The phone rings.

EDINA I hear bells!

Saffron picks up the phone receiver and places it in Edina's hand.

EDINA Yes? Hello?

SCENE 5 INTERIOR EDINA'S PR OFFICE – SAME

Bubble sits holding the telephone at arms' length. She's petting a cat on her lap.

EDINA (V/O) Yes? Hello? Who is it?

BUBBLE *(talking to the phone at arm's length)* It's the office, Madame.

EDINA (V/O) Bubble? Why do you sound as though you're far away, darling?

BUBBLE When Madame yelled at me the other day, she told me to keep my distance. I'm keeping my distance, Madame.

EDINA (V/O) I didn't mean on the phone, Bubble.

BUBBLE *(to the cat)* Oh ho! Now she tells us.

SCENE 6 INTERIOR EDINA'S BEDROOM – MORNING (con't)

Edina tries to get the phone closer to her ear till it's almost jammed inside.

EDINA Bubble? Hold the receiver closer so I can hear you.

SCENE 7 INTERIOR EDINA'S PR OFFICE – SAME (con't)

Bubble is still holding the telephone at arm's length.

BUBBLE Madame missed her morning appointment. Naughty, naughty.

EDINA (V/O) My morning appointment? What are you talking about? Who made an appointment for me?

BUBBLE Your loyal servant did, Madame.

EDINA (V/O) Who would that be?

BUBBLE That would be I, Madame.

SCENE 8 INTERIOR EDINA'S BEDROOM – MORNING (con't)

Edina is still fighting the phone. She hits it with the medicine stick.

EDINA Bubble – stop calling me 'Madame' and just listen to me, darling.

BUBBLE (V/O) Yes, Madame.

EDINA Now, whose appointment did I miss?

BUBBLE (V/O) American lady. Very old. Face-lift. Maybe more.

EDINA (to herself) American lady ... face-lift ... *(beat)* Bubble, I've got a brain tumour and it's affecting my memory. You've got to think. Now, who was it?

Patsy is filing her nails, bored. Saffron just shakes her head at the two of them.

BUBBLE (V/O) Can't remember, Madame.

EDINA (to Patsy and Saffron) I can believe that – her brain is one big tumour from end to end.

BUBBLE (V/O) She's a friend of that funny man, Madame.

EDINA What funny man?

BUBBLE The one who thinks he's Peter Pan and married Elvis Parsley's daughter.

EDINA Peter Pan? Elvis Parsely? ... You mean Michael Jackson?

BUBBLE That's correct, Madame.

EDINA What's Michael Jackson doing in my office?

BUBBLE Not him. He left already. It was his friend, the American lady with the face-lift.

It dawns on Edina what she's talking about.

EDINA Elizabeth Taylor?

SCENE 9 INTERIOR EDINA'S PR OFFICE – SAME (con't)

The cat has climbed onto Bubble's shoulders.

BUBBLE It might be so, Madame.

EDINA (V/O) How did I have an appointment with Elizabeth Taylor and not know about it?

BUBBLE It was made by your loyal servant, Madame. She said she'd be back – and you'd better be here.

SCENE 10 INTERIOR EDINA'S BEDROOM – MORNING (con't)

Edina is about to have a conniption. Patsy is excited.

EDINA Listen, Bubble. I'm coming in. If she gets there first, just detain her.

BUBBLE (V/O) Yes, Madame.

Edina looks at the receiver and hits it with the stick again.

PATSY Oh, my god, Eddie! Liz Taylor! The Queen of Hollywood!

EDINA (to Saffron) Don't just stand there! Liz Taylor's coming to my office! *(motioning frantically)* Clothes, darling! I need clothes! Mamma needs to get dressed!

Saffron stands looking on in disgust at her mother's helplessness.

EDINA Be sick later!

Edina points to her head, indicating her tumour, and makes a sad face. Saffron rolls her eyes and relents, opening the closet to help her mother get dressed.

SCENE 11 INTERIOR EDINA'S PR OFFICE – LATER THAT MORNING

Edina can be heard coming frantically down the hall. Bubble hides the cat in a filing cabinet.

BUBBLE (to the cat, closing the drawer) Stay there till the toast is clear.

EDINA (entering) Where is she?

BUBBLE Who would that be, Madame?

EDINA Liz Bloody Taylor, that's who! 'Face-lift'? 'Very old'?

BUBBLE Oh, the American lady. She's stuck in your office, Madame.

EDINA Stuck? In my office?

BUBBLE Madame said to detain her if she returned. She returned, so I lured her into the office and locked the door. *(swinging a key on a chain)* Now she's stuck.

In a panic, Edina grabs the key and unlocks the door. Elizabeth Taylor is standing inside, furious.

ELIZABETH TAYLOR ‘Face-lift’? ‘Very old’?

EDINA (*pointing to Bubble*) It was her ... that.

ELIZABETH I’ve never had a face-lift in my life.

BUBBLE (*to Elizabeth*) I told her so.

ELIZABETH But you could use one. A tummy-tuck, too, by the looks of it. (*beat*) I trust you’re familiar with kidnapping laws?

EDINA I (*collapsing pitifully against the wall*) ... am a very sick woman.

ELIZABETH You look healthy as a cow.

BUBBLE And she eats like a horse.

EDINA I have a brain tumour!

ELIZABETH Tsk-tsk. Been there, recovered from that. (*beat*) Well, what have you got to say to me?

Edina clasps her hands and squeaks out a non-verbal apology.

ELIZABETH Not that. Where is the diary?

EDINA The diary! The diary?

BUBBLE (*to Elizabeth*) It’s in a very safe place, Madame’s Madame.

Edina does a double take on hearing the phrase, then turns back to Elizabeth.

EDINA It’s in a very safe place.

Edina is trying frantically to get Bubble to tell her whose diary they’re talking about, but Bubble ignores her.

ELIZABETH When can I see it?

Edina looks at Bubble who consults a collection of watches on her wrist. She seems to be stuck on a stutter.

BUBBLE You can s-s-see it, s-s-s-s....

EDINA Soon!

ELIZABETH When is “soon”?

Bubble thinks again as Edina waits impatiently.

BUBBLE We ... *(She seems to be looking for the answer in the air around her)*

Edina can wait no longer.

EDINA ... just have to ...

BUBBLE ... go-o-o-o ...

EDINA ... and get it!

ELIZABETH When?

Bubble is stuck again and can't get the words out as she taps her watch six times.

EDINA She'll bring it by six o'clock!

BUBBLE To Madame's house!

ELIZABETH Bring the diary and I'll drop the kidnapping charges.

Edina salaams Elizabeth out the door. Edina brings out the medicine stick and chases Bubble with it around the room.

EDINA Purge! Purge! What diary is she talking about?

Bubble throws herself up against the filing cabinet where she put the cat.

BUBBLE It's not in here, Madame!

Edina's nose twitches furiously. She opens the drawers and sees the cat.

EDINA What is that?

BUBBLE It's a ...

EDINA Don't say 'cat.' I know what it is. *Why* is it a cat?

BUBBLE It was a present from Madame's Madame, Madame.

EDINA A present? For me, darling? I mean, did she really bring it for me?

BUBBLE Actually, she said it was for me.

Edina glares and closes the drawer.

EDINA What diary was she talking about?

BUBBLE The diary of that other American lady, Madame.

EDINA Don't give me that 'American lady Madame' crap. Whose diary?

BUBBLE The rich one with the jo-o-o-wels. First she married the dead president and then she married the Greek baboon.

Edina stops dead.

EDINA 'Dead president'? 'Greek Baboon'? We have Jackie Bloody Onassis's diary? Where did we get it?

BUBBLE We acquired it at Sotheby's, Madame.

Edina digests that for a moment, then thinks again.

EDINA And how much did we pay for it?

BUBBLE Four hundred thousand pounds, Madame.

Edina collapses back against the wall.

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To read the rest of this script please contact Jeffrey Round for a full version.