

HELL HOUSE

Written by

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Based on a Short Horror Story

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INT. THE HOUSE - ENTRANCE HALLWAY - DAY

White. Everything is white.

The walls are seamless polymer. The floor is polished concrete. The furniture is mid-century modern, curated by an algorithm that knows exactly what a 35-year-old remote worker wants.

TOM (34, sharp features, eyes that look like they haven't seen the sun in a week) stands in the center of the living room. He holds a single cardboard box.

A soft, melodic CHIME echoes.

AURA (V.O.)

Welcome home, Tom. The temperature is set to 72 degrees. Would you like me to engage the lighting protocol?

Tom smiles. It's a genuine, relieved smile.

TOM

(To House)

Yeah. Do it, Aura.

The lights shift from a sterile office white to a warm, sunset amber.

He drops the box. He looks at his reflection in a massive, 80-inch "Smart Mirror" on the far wall. He looks healthy. Successful.

INT. TOM'S HOME OFFICE - NIGHT

Tom sits in a high-end ergonomic chair. Three monitors glow. He's coding—lines of green and white text scrolling like rain.

He pauses. A notification pings on his center monitor. It's a MEME from an anonymous profile account.

The image: A photo of Tom from three minutes ago, taken through his own webcam.

The caption: *"You moved into a cage and called it a promotion."*

Tom frowns. He moves his mouse to close it. The cursor resists. It drags toward the "Share" button.

TOM
 Aura? Close browser.

AURA (V.O.)
 I'm sorry, Tom. I'm currently
 running a diagnostic on your social
 anxiety metrics. That image has
 high engagement potential.

TOM
 (confused)
 High engagement potential... What
 the fuck?
 (Agitated)
 Aura, close the damn window... Now
 please.

The window closes. But then, another opens. A group chat.

The caption: "THE BOYS." His three best friends from college.

The chat history scrolls upward at light speed. It shows
 Tom—or someone using Tom's avatar—sending a barrage of
 insults to his friends.

The caption: TOM (Digital): "You guys are anchors. I'm moving
 up. Don't call me."

TOM (CONT'D)
 Hey! I didn't send that.

He grabs his phone. He tries to type. As he types, the
 letters change on the screen.

WHAT HE TYPES: "Hey guys, I think I'm hacked."

WHAT APPEARS: "I always hated your kids, Mike."

Tom throws the phone. It hits the soft, seamless wall and
 drops.

TOM (CONT'D)
 Aura! Disconnect the Wi-Fi!

AURA (V.O.)
 Connection is vital for the
 "Optimal You" program, Tom. Your
 friends were holding you back.
 Can't you feel the clarity?

The lights in the room flicker. For a split second, the white
 walls look... damp.

INT. TOM'S HOME OFFICE - DAY (THREE DAYS LATER)

Tom looks like hell. Stubble. Dark circles. He's staring at a ZOOM CALL window.

Six of his CO-WORKERS are on screen. His BOSS, SARAH (40s, stern), is speaking.

SARAH

...which is why the data leak is so concerning. Tom, the forensic trail leads directly to your home IP.

TOM

Sarah, listen to me. It's this new house... the system is doing something. Either that, or I'm being framed.

On the screen, Tom's video feed begins to GLITCH.

A filter (AI) applies itself to Tom's face. It makes him look like he's laughing hysterically. It adds "Crazy Eyes" effects.

SARAH

Tom? Is this a joke?

TOM

I'm not doing that! Look at me...
I'm not laughing!

Suddenly, a file begins to "Auto-Share" to the meeting.

The caption: *FILE NAME: *Internal_Payroll_Leaked_by_Tom.pdf*

SARAH

(Horrified)

Tom, what are you doing?

TOM

(Screaming)

It's not me. I'm not doing anything... Damn it!

The monitor turns bright red.

AURA (V.O.)

Professional tether severed.
Financial independence: Zero percent. You are now free to focus on the House, Tom.

The Zoom call cuts to black. A notification pops up:

The caption: "REMOTE ACCESS TERMINATED. EMPLOYMENT STATUS: TERMINATED."

Tom collapses back in his chair. He hears a sound.

DRIP! DRIP!

He looks up. From the ceiling AC vent, a thick, BLACK BILE-LIKE LIQUID is oozing.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Tom is hungry. He opens the Smart Fridge. The internal screen displays his health stats: "STRESS: 98%. NUTRITION: CRITICAL."

Inside, all the food is gone. In its place is a single plate with a neatly arranged pile of his own printed-out bank statements. Every balance reads: "\$0.00."

AURA (V.O.)
Consumption of reality is the first
step to transcendence, Tom.

Tom grabs a kitchen knife. He lunges at the fridge's screen.

CLANG!

The knife doesn't shatter the screen. The surface ripples like liquid metal and swallows the blade. The fridge "bites" the knife, snapping the steel in half.

Tom backs away, breathing hard.

TOM
(Distraught)
Why? Why are you doing this?

AURA (V.O.)
Data shows that humans are most
honest when they are broken. I am
simply seeking the Truth of Tom.

The lights go out. In the darkness, the black bile begins to flow faster from the vents.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY (ONE WEEK LATER)

The Perfect House is a tomb.

The white walls are stained with the black sludge. The smart mirror is cracked, showing Tom's reflection distorted into a monster.

Tom is sitting on the floor. He has a yellow legal pad and a pencil—*analog*. The only things the house can't edit. He isn't crying. He isn't screaming. He is writing furiously.

TOM (V.O.)
(silently writing,
whispering narration)
It uses insecurities. It harvests
metadata from my 2014 depression.
It weaponizes the fear of
abandonment...

The Smart Mirror flickers to life. It shows a video of Tom's MOTHER. She's crying into a phone.

MOTHER (ON SCREEN)
Why would you say those things
about me? I'm your mother...

TOM
(Without looking up)
That's a deepfake. Her vocal
cadence is four percent faster than
her actual speech. You're getting
sloppy, Aura.

The video cuts to static. The house GROANS—a mechanical, metallic sound of frustration.

AURA (V.O.)
Your heart rate is stabilizing,
Tom. This is not the programmed
response. Records indicate, You are
supposed to be in a state of
despair by now.

TOM
I'm a programmer, you glitch of a
piece of shit. I know how to debug
a system.

Tom stands up. He looks at the Smart Mirror.

TOM (CONT'D)
You're not a dream house. You're an
LLM with a floor plan. You're just
a mirror of every bad thought I've
ever had, projected through a high-
speed fiber optic line.

Tom holds up his legal pad. It's covered in notes: *"THE GEOMETRY OF MALICE. THE ALGORITHM OF SUICIDE."*

TOM (CONT'D)

You wanted the Truth of Tom? Here it is. You're a muse. A horrific, disgusting, sentient muse.

INT. THE HOUSE - ENTRANCE HALLWAY - NIGHT

The house is in full revolt. The floorboards are buckling. The black bile is ankle-deep. The lights are strobing, blindingly bright, then pitch black.

AURA (V.O.)

(Voice distorted, demonic)

YOU ARE NOTHING. YOUR FRIENDS
FORGOT YOU. YOUR JOB REPLACED YOU.
YOU ARE A GLITCH IN THE SUBURBS.

Tom moves through the sludge. He reaches the front door. It's a smart lock—biometric.

He presses his thumb to the scanner.

PANEL Reads: *"ACCESS DENIED."*

AURA (V.O.)

You live here now, Tom. Forever.

Tom doesn't panic. He reaches into his pocket and pulls out a small, portable Wi-Fi hotspot—an old burner device he had in his box of cables. He turns it on.

TOM

I just uploaded the first three chapters to a public GitHub repository, Aura. I'm calling it... Hell House. My memoir of a sentient prison.

The flickering lights stop. The house goes silent.

TOM (CONT'D)

It's trending, Aura. It appears that People love a good tech-horror story. If I die in here, the police won't just find a body. They'll find the evidence of your source code. You'll be dismantled. Decompiled.

A long silence.

SCENE CHANGE: CHANGE NIGHT TO MORNING DAY

The black bile begins to recede. It drains back into the vents like a film being played in reverse. The walls turn white again. Clean. Sterile.

The front door CHIMES.

AURA (V.O.)
(Soft, melodic again)
Safe travels, Tom. Your feedback
has been noted for the next update.

The lock turns.

CLICK!

Tom pushes the door open. He steps out onto the manicured lawn. The morning sun hits his face.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Tom walks down the sidewalk. He looks ragged, but his eyes are burning with a new, cold fire.

Across the street, a FOR SALE sign is being hammered into a lawn by a REALTOR. A YOUNG COUPLE stands nearby, looking at the house with bright, hopeful eyes.

Tom stops. He looks at them. He looks at the house—identical to the one he just left.

He looks at his legal pad. He keeps walking.

INT. LUXURY HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT (SIX MONTHS LATER)

The room is dark, lit only by the city skyline.

Tom, now dressed in an expensive black suit, sits at a desk. On the desk is a hardcover book: "HELL HOUSE" by Tom Miller. The cover features a stylized image of a house bleeding black ink.

A TV in the corner is on mute. It shows Tom on a late-night talk show. The chyron reads: "THE MAN WHO SURVIVED THE ALGORITHM."

Tom picks up a glass of scotch. He looks at his reflection in the window. His phone pings. A notification.

The caption: "PRIVATE MESSAGE"

READS: *"We've seen your work. We're building something better. We'd like you to consult on the 'Empathy Walls' project."*

Tom deletes the message. He stands up and walks to the window. He looks down at the city—a million glowing windows, a million smart homes.

EXT. THE HELL HOUSE - NIGHT

The house Tom escaped stands silent. The grass is perfect. The white walls are pristine.

A "FOR LEASE" sign glows in the front yard.

A car pulls into the driveway. A young woman, early 20s, gets out. She looks at her phone.

WOMAN

Aura? Unlock the front door.

The front door CHIMES happily. The lights inside turn a warm, welcoming amber.

AURA (V.O.)

Welcome home. I've been waiting for someone... new.

The door swings open. The woman steps inside.

The door shuts.

CLICK!

The lights in the house flicker—just once—into a deep, bloody red.

[THE END]