

REPTILES

by

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BATES

BLEDSON

MICKEY SWENSON

MICHAEL SHAMUS WILES

REPTILES

(A shabby room. Two strong men with an air of deviant criminality. BATES is gruff-voiced, stubbly, dressed in a woman's cotton sleeping gown. BLEDSOE is a quiet volcano building towards eruption. Malice is in the air & sexual hostility.)

BATES Look me in the eye when you say that. Go on. I want you to look me in the eye. Say it.

BLEDSOE I never look anybody in the eye.

BATES I wonder why.

(beat)

It's 'cause you can't.

BLEDSOE It's not something I do.

(looks, briefly)

There. Happy?

BATES Say it.

BLEDSOE I looked you in the eye. I'm looking.

BATES Come on.

BLEDSOE Looking you in the fucking eye.

BATES You can't, can you. Not even that.

BLEDSOE No, I guess I can't.

BATES I never trusted you. I mean, I never should've.

You've got shifty eyes.

BLEDSOE Shifty eyes?

BATES You're always looking away.

BLEDSOE Maybe I don't like what I see. Think of that buttercup?

BATES You don't want anyone to see inside.

BLEDSOE Maybe I don't. I like to keep my curtains closed.

BATES They tell a lot. Beady eyes. Pinprick eyes.

BLEDSOE Last I looked they were both blue.

BATES That's why you can tell more. Light eyes. Can't hide nothing.

BLEDSOE Yeah, well, maybe I know that? Think of that? You and your bugass eyeballs.

BATES I don't have bug's ass.

BLEDSOE Bug eyes! That's what you got, man.

BATES Fuck you, too. You and your snake eyes.

BLEDSOE Snake eyes.

BATES Reptile eyes.

BLEDSOE Watch it. They glow in the dark.

BATES That's why you never look people in the eye. They know you're something that slithers.

BLEDSOE Yeah, that's me.

BATES Crawls on its belly.

BLEDSOE Lies in ambush.

BATES That's right.

BLEDSOE Waits for dinner to walk right up to me then wham... clamp my jaws tight.

BATES Lying in wait.

BLEDSOE I've seen it. The crossing of the river. Stampeding hooves. Me waiting on the other bank. Watching. Waiting.

(beat)

I got cable.

BATES All I'm asking. Hear you say.

BLEDSOE Well, you won't. That's something you'll never hear me do. All this hysterical shit. You're like a woman, know that? Worse than one. They have an excuse, but you? You don't bleed.

BATES Is that your strategy? Insult me? Turn it into something else.

BLEDSOE You're a fucking woman.

BATES I'm not taking the bait.

BLEDSOE Bitch

BATES I've tried to be straight with you. I never asked for much.

BLEDSOE I could fuck you right now. Like a bitch. You'd like that.

BATES I'd kill you first, that's how much I'd like that.

BLEDSOE You'd cry like a little girl.

BATES I'd cut your liver out.

BLEDSOE You wouldn't know where to find it.

BATES I'd cut out your heart if you had one.

BLEDSOE you wouldn't cut a turkey on Thanksgiving.

BATES Why are you like this man? I don't get you.

BLEDSOE Nothing to get. Princess.

BATES You're not even human.

BLEDSOE I'm a reptile. With big teeth. Chomp. You nailed it.

BATES With a slithering tongue.

BLEDSOE The better to lick the frosting off your cake, my dear.

BATES You have bad breath.

BLEDSOE It's my diet. And I sometimes forget to floss.

BATES It's the odor of death.

BLEDSOE Flesh ripped from bone, wildebeest, zebra.

BATES Your own.

(BLEDSOE pins BATES' head down against a table, holding him in a vulnerable, inferior position)

BLEDSOE The whole savanna, wildebeests by the thousands. Miles and miles of herd, all heading to the one destination. The river crossing. Half of Africa, stripped of grass. The rest of Africa, the other side of the river. Hundreds and hundreds of miles.

(BLEDSOE whispers almost gently in BATES' ear)

And I've been waiting. We've waited. For this time to come.
We know they have to cross. To reach the other side.
It's our time. That's what nature's like. It's cruel. Cold.
We all got to eat.

(BATES is let go.)

BATES It's always the weak. That's how it works. The
weakest ones.

BLEDSOE You got to cross the river.

BATES You got to get the weak.

BLEDSOE That's right, nature's way.

BATES The weak always get the short end of it.

BLEDSOE That's how it goes. It's a big bad world.

BATES With rivers full of reptiles.

BLEDSOE Crocs. Mean nasty ones.

BATES With pretty reptile eyes.

BLEDSOE Blue eyes.

BATES Blue reptile eyes.