

**LAST RITES**

by:

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Care not for the men who wonder,  
Straw that broke your back -- you're under....

So your sickness weighs a ton,  
And God's name is Smack for some...

Alice In Chains, God Smack, Dirt -- (C) Copyright 1992, Jack Lord Music [ASCAP]

Recent ethnological and laboratory studies with islands of primates using analysis of social and biological history suggest that the pursuit of intoxication with drugs is a primary motivational force in the behavior of organisms. Our nervous system, like those of all rodents and primates, is arranged to respond to chemical intoxicants in much the same way it responds to rewards of food, drink, and sex. Throughout our entire history as a species, intoxication has functioned like the basic drives of hunger, thirst, and sex, in many cases overshadowing all other desires and activities in life. **INTOXICATION IS THE FOURTH DRIVE.**

--Dr. Segal, Intoxication

The first time I did it, I KNEW. This is IT. People go to jail for this, and it's worth it. People steal from their own families, lie to their best friends, or risk freedom and even their lives to get it and keep doing it. This is exactly how I always hoped some drug would make me feel, but never did. This is how I always wanted to feel but never could -- until right now.

--Danny Sugerman, Wonderland Avenue

Is the stair here? and st  
Where's the stair?cket  
The stair's right there.  
But, it goes nowhere.  
And the abyss? The abyss?  
The abyss you can't miss.

--Theodore Roethke



## CHARACTERS:

Alex: Late teens, or early 20's. White, short hair.

Nick: Mid-20's, very pale, long hair, earrings.

David: 30, very pale, long hair, earrings.

Mark: 35, tan, muscular, tattoos on his arms, short hair.

A studio apartment in an undetermined place. There is a fireplace which is currently being used to store an un-used air conditioner, there are paintings and photographs on the walls, and photos line the hallway leading into the room.

There is a round table near one of the walls, facing a rack of electronic equipment, a TV which is turned on and running at low volume, a stereo which is also running but has the volume turned off. Off to the side where the hallway leads into the room, and then continues towards a kitchen set off to the side.

The entire place has a sort of space-out-of-time quality to it, its difficult to tell whether its light or dark outside, and the room seems to lack any sort of vibe, or unified energy or focus; as if the people in the room are physically present, but at the same time inhabiting different spaces.

David enters the room, he is breathing hard and his face is covered with sweat, he collapses on the couch holding his stomach and starts slowly rocking back and forth while looking at the floor.

David: <running a hand across his face, and pulling his hair back out of his eyes. Wiping his hand into his jeans as his hair falls back into his face with the next rock forward> [In a ragged voice]: Is Anna upstairs?

Nick: Lookin' good dude, how many hours?

David: Fuck you too - <pushes himself back into the couch and stops rocking. As the motion ceases, his left foot starts to shake. Ignoring this he reaches into a pocket and slides on a pair of sunglasses> Why is it so fucking bright in here, god that hurts... Tell me what I already know.

Nick: The bitch ain't here; and Mr. Light is taking revenge on you for having spent the last 10 years with your eyes pinned.

David: Is anyone holding? Is anything out? Is anyone in the bathroom?

Mark: <Seemingly noticing David for the first time; raising his voice and unloading all his paranoia and misery at David> NO, AND DO NOT THROW UP IN MY FUCKING BATHROOM. I'm so tired



of this shit -- between the lightweights who get sick from dope, and you goddamn junkies who somehow manage to always make it up here before losin' it--

Nick: Preach on brother David--

David: No man, its like true-- I get in this room and everything is 10 times worse and I'm so fucking sick.

Alex: <Looking up for the first time> It's psychosomatic dude. All in your head. I read this study of ex-junkies who move to like some shack in the hills and stay off the shit for 5 years, and then they happen to drive through a neighborhood where they used to cop and BANG! they're goin' through withdrawl. It happens, and--

David: When did she leave and where'd she go?

Mark: She left about 30 minutes ago. There is no dope.

Nick: If it'll help any I could open a vein or something, you could suck some of the oblivion outta my bloodstream, I'm not using all of it at the moment.

David: Thanks for the sympathy man... 30 minutes is what-- how many seconds is that?

Nick: Depends on the time zone, in your present state its roughly equal to forever. But then, I suspect you're real aware of that right about now.

<There is a loud knock on the door, that rattles the frame, and a voice yelling out: "IS THERE ANYBODY INSIDE, OPEN THE DOOR NOW!">

Mark: <Whispering> Shut up... Everybody quiet, stop any noise.

<The banging continues, then just as suddenly stops and footsteps are heard moving away from the door...>

Nick: So...

Mark: Everybody just stop making a lotta noise for a minute. I dunno who that might have been, 'cuz they didn't get buzzed up, and TNT usually follows up by kicking in the door.

David: <Breathing deeply and very slowly... sinking even further into the couch and looking at the ceiling> So what you're saying is, everybody got off and then did some C--

Alex: Except for Mark, when he does "some" it means he shot two half-grams in a row. Which is totally unhealthy and can kill you by causing a stroke, or making your heart stop, and then of course--

David: So Mark's in outer space, Nick is obnoxious, and you've switched the category in Useless Collections of Facts, from movie trivia to Reader's Digest speaks out on drugs.