

UNWANTED COLLATERAL

By

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EXT.CLARA'S HOUSE-NIGHT

It rains heavily. A young woman of twenty-five years old, runs towards a small house. She has no umbrella. She quickly unlocks the door with a key and enters.

INT.LIVING ROOM-CONTINUES

A room with only an old-looking, tattered sofa. She locks the door and runs out of the room. She holds a handbag and a small, white sack.

INT.BEDROOM-CONTINUES

She enters the room and sees her daughter, 6-year-old Anna lying asleep in bed. She smiles at her and turns to walk away when the girl calls her.

ANNA

Mum...

CLARA

(hugs her)

My baby... I'm here.

ANNA

I'm hungry.

CLARA

I know. I brought you something.  
Let's go to the kitchen.

Clara carries her in her arms and exits the room.

INT.KITCHEN-CONTINUES

They arrive at the small room which has a kerosene stove and a small table with two chairs. A basket of a few pots and plates sits on the sink. Clara places Anna on a seat at the table and unveils the container of fast food then goes to the sink to pick a plate.

ANNA

(checking food)

Mum...what is this?

CLARA

What is what? Oh, that's some vegetables and meat sauce. Don't you like it?

ANNA

I like it.

CLARA

Good. Let me heat it a bit ok.  
It's cold.

(CONTINUED)

Clara pours the food into a pot and places it on the stove. Five minutes later, she serves it into two plates, giving Anna one. They eat in silence. Anna eats quickly as she's hungry. Suddenly, a phone rings. Clara picks it from her handbag and stares at the caller which says 'Boss'. She answers it and walks to a corner of the room.

CLARA

Hello ma'am-

BOSS

Where are you?

CLARA

Home.

BOSS

Come back immediately. We have a problem.

CLARA

Yes please.

Call ends.

EXT.HOUSE-NIGHT

Minutes later, Clara locks the front door and runs quickly through the rain carrying an umbrella. A taxi stops and she enters it and it pulls away.

INT.HOUSE-BEDROOM-NIGHT

Anna lies in bed with eyes open.

INT.RESTAURANT-NIGHT

Two roles of people numbering twenty stand in the room. Before them their female boss stands. She appears stern. Clara enters the place and nervously loses her grip on the door making it bang. They stare at her. The boss smiles softly and starts talking.

BOSS

I called you here because we've lost money.

CLARA

You mean someone stole some money?

BOSS

No. The fact is that you don't seem passionate about your jobs. Recently, there's been a downward trend in our sales. Something which previously never

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BOSS (cont'd)  
existed. Now, each one of you  
would have to work an extra-time.  
However, it doesn't mean you'd  
get an increase in salary. Are we  
clear?

No one replies. Suddenly after a minute Clara talks.

CLARA  
Yes ma'am.

Moments later, Clara meets the boss in her office.

INT.BOSS'S OFFICE-CONTINUES

Boss enters room quickly and Clara follows her.

BOSS  
You said you were OK with my  
order...

CLARA  
Yes please. However, there's a  
little problem. My 6-year-old  
daughter, Anna has no one to take  
care of her. Can I bring her  
here?

BOSS  
(chuckles)  
Where do you intend to keep her?  
In the kitchen or in my office?

CLARA  
I'm sorry...

BOSS  
Don't be. Good night.

INT.CLARA'S HOUSE-BEDROOM-NIGHT

Clara enters room but doesn't see Anna. She calls her  
while searching beneath the bed and the wardrobe then  
exits the place in a hurry.

CLARA  
Anna...Anna!

INT.KITCHEN-CONTINUES

She enters room and sees Anna sitting at the dining table  
with her head on the table, probably asleep. She walks to  
her and taps her and she awakes and raises her head.

(CONTINUED)

ANNA

Mum...

CLARA

Yes darling...I'm back-

ANNA

I'm hungry.

CLARA

You...oh...ok. I'd make you some tea...

Anna stares at her for a minute and slowly puts down her head and shuts her eyes. Clara searches the cupboard and finds a tea box. She opens it and it's empty. She checks on Anna, she's asleep, and carries her out of the room.

INT.BEDROOM-CONTINUES

Anna lies in bed asleep while Clara sits checking some figures in a book. It's an expenditure book with a section that reads, 'Money owed'. It lists a name, Alex, and the amount owed, \$5000. She stares at it and suddenly starts shedding tears. Moments later, her daughter calls softly in a sleepy tone.

ANNA

Mum...

Clara wipes her face and glances at her but she doesn't talk again.

INT.BEDROOM-MORNING

Clara places a tray containing a large bottle of water and a food flask onto a small table in the room and exits quietly as Anna is still asleep.

INT.RESTAURANT-KITCHEN-DAY

Clara washes the plates while some cooks and others work.

INT.CLARA'S HOUSE-BEDROOM-DAY

Anna sits in her bedroom reading a book. The tray sits on the table with an empty flask but half-full bottle of water.

INT.LIVING ROOM-DAY

Someone enters the room, dressed in a men's trouser and shoes. He exits the place for the bedroom walking quietly.

INT.RESTAURANT-DINNING ROOM-NIGHT

Clara mops the floor. Suddenly, her phone rings and she picks it from her pocket and answers.

CLARA

Hello...

MALE VOICE

(composed)

Hello. How are you?

CLARA

I'm...oh...Al is that you? Al?

MALE VOICE

You have the money?

CLARA

Al...please give me some more time. I'd get it I promise.  
Al...Al!

Call ends. Clara hurries to complete the room and exits.

INT.CLARA'S HOUSE-NIGHT

Clara enters room and locks the door. She glances about in a pensive mood and immediately runs out of the room.

INT.BEDROOM-CONTINUES

She opens door calling her daughter's name and searches the wardrobe and under the bed. Anna isn't there. She begins to cry and dials Alex's number but it doesn't go through.

INT.ALEX'S PLACE-LIVING ROOM-NIGHT

In a dark room, Anna lies in a sofa. Suddenly, Alex turns on the light and she awakes. He holds a plate of little rice and stew and hands it to her.

ALEX

Here eat.

Anna accepts the plate quickly and eats quickly.

ALEX

(chuckles)

Why? Don't you eat at home?

Anna slowly shakes her head.

ALEX

Oh...that explains it. Anyway,  
I'm going out. Take care of  
yourself.

He says and exits room and locks the door. Minutes later, she lies asleep in the sofa while the used plate sits on the floor surrounded by ants. The light remains on.

INT.CLARA'S HOUSE-BEDROOM-NIGHT

Clara selects almost all of her clothes from her wardrobe and places them in a rubber bag. She picks two new-looking high-heeled shoes and adds them to the sack. A moment later, she opens her wardrobe and stares at the five clothes hanging and two slippers left and bursts out crying and sits on the bed.

INT.ALEX'S PLACE-LIVING ROOM-NIGHT

Alex arrives home in a bit of a drunken state as he sings softly to himself. He turns off the light and walks away but suddenly screams and slaps his legs nosily with his hands. Moments later, he turns on the light and sees an army of black ants marching towards him from the used plate. He cries and runs out of the room returning with an insecticide and sprays them. Anna coughs slightly as he does so. Ten minutes later, he picks the plate and hurls it outside the room then locks the front door. He glances at her, looking angry and exits the room. Hours later, Anna awakes and wants to pee. She turns on the light and checks the door which's locked. Then she walks to Alex's door which is also locked. She glances about and pounds her fist on Alex's door. Five minutes later, the door opens violently and they speak, he standing inside.

ALEX

(stern tone)

Yes what do you want?

ANNA

I want to pee.

ALEX

Wait here I'd get you something.

Alex enters his room and returns with a pail. He hands it to her and immediately returns to his room and locks the door. Moments later, Anna lies in the sofa asleep while the pail stands behind Alex's door.

INT.RESTAURANT-BOSS'S OFFICE-DAY

Clara speaks to her boss.

CLARA

I'd like to mop the floors ma'am for an extra pay. I really need the money.

(CONTINUED)

BOSS

What about the other workers?  
What would they be doing once you  
de-job them?

Clara is quiet.

BOSS

You could run shifts with them if  
that's ok for you-

CLARA

(rises to respond)  
Thank you ma'am, thank you!

INT.ALEX'S PLACE-LIVING ROOM-DAY

Anna continues to sleep in the sofa. Suddenly, Alex  
unlocks his door and opens it hitting the pail behind it.  
It falls spilling the urine.

ALEX

God...what the...

He walks to her and taps her to awake.

ALEX

Hey! Hey! Wake up!

Anna doesn't awake. After five minutes, he gives up and  
exits the room for his place. He returns to the room with  
bucket and a mop and mops the urine. Then he exits for the  
outside. Anna awakes moments later and knocks on Alex's  
door and enters after peeping in and seeing no one. Ten  
minutes later, Alex returns holding a rubber bag  
containing something. He calls the girl seeing her not in  
the room.

ALEX

Anna...

He walks to his door and holds the knob to open it but  
feels some wetness in his palms. He checks it and sees  
it's water. He wipes his palm on the door and enters the  
room. Moments later, he screams Anna's name from the  
inside and furiously exits the room. He drops the bag into  
the sofa and exits the room.

EXT.BACK OF HOUSE-CONTINUES

Alex finds Anna behind the house washing her hands in a  
bowl of water. She stops on seeing him.

ALEX

(angrily)  
What did you do in my room?

(CONTINUED)

Anna stares at him for a moment then points her hand to a bucket a few steps from her. Alex glances in it and abruptly backs away.

ALEX

God! You...you...why?!

ANNA

(softly and staring at him)  
You were not around.

ALEX

So?! You could have gone outside  
instead of using my room! Oh  
God...

Alex walks away.

INT.RESTAURANT-DINNING HALL-NIGHT

Clara mops floor quickly. There's none with her. Suddenly, she holds her head and moments later, collapses onto the floor.

INT.CLARA'S HOUSE-BEDROOM-DAY

Clara lies in bed. Suddenly, she awakes and recalls she had been mopping the floor at the restaurant. She attempts to rise but stops when she sees an envelope on her. She unveils it and reads the letter and begins to cry.

NOTE: I'm relieving you of your duty at the restaurant until you get better. In case you don't know, you fainted yester night as you mopped the floor... the doctor said you are seriously anemic so I got you some food at the kitchen. Get well soon.

Boss.

She rises immediately and exits the room.

INT.KITCHEN-CONTINUES

A small basket of fruits and a white, plastic bag sit on the sink. She finds some hamburgers and food in the bag. She selects two apples and a banana out of the fruits and places them on the table then pours the rest in the white bag and exits the room quickly with them.

INT.ALEX'S PLACE-LIVING ROOM-DAY

Anna lies in the sofa. There's none in there. Suddenly, she rushes and tries opening the front door but it's locked. She tries Alex's door and it's locked. She tries opening by turning the knob until it removes. Then she pushes against the door with all her might and boots it with her leg several times until the door opens. She runs

(CONTINUED)

into the room and is heard searching through some tins. Ten minutes later, Alex enters the living room and realizes his bedroom door is open. He enters the room and screams moments later and exits. Anna hides behind the sofa looking scared.

ALEX

Anna! Anna!

He glances about the room and pushes the sofa away and sees her.

ALEX

Hey! What are you? How did you get into the room?

Anna stares at him with a sorrowful look but doesn't answer.

ALEX

Look, I don't know what you feed on at home but here is different. You'd only eat when it's ABSOLUTELY necessary. By the way, you just had your lunch and supper.

Alex exits the room for the outside and locks the door. Hours later, he returns and sees the girl lying behind the sofa. He exits the room for his bedroom and turns on some music. An hour later, he returns to the living room holding a plate of three small doughnuts. He taps her but she doesn't awake. He carries her and places her into the sofa then checks her pulse on her hand and screams.

ALEX

Anna! Anna wake up! I didn't mean it...you can eat all you want...everything!

He rushes into his room and returns with a bottle of water which he splashes over her yet she doesn't awake until he makes her drink some. She awakes and gulps down the entire bottle in a minute. Alex stares at her strangely.

EXT. CLARA'S HOUSE-NIGHT

Someone places a large box before the front door and knocks on the door and gets away. Five minutes later, Clara quickly opens door and sees the box which has some openings beside it. She returns in for a torch light and returns to look at it and spots her daughter in it.

CLARA

(shocked)

Anna?

Anna doesn't respond as she's asleep.

INT. BEDROOM-CONTINUES

Anna lies asleep on the bed while Clara stares at her sitting on the bed. Suddenly, her phone rings and she answers it.

CLARA

Hello!

MALE VOICE

I brought it back because I had no choice. But I still need my money.

CLARA

Good you did because I was just about to inform the police. You'd get your money in due time. I have a \$500 now...

The call ends abruptly. She smiles and sits down and glances at her daughter.

THE END