

Blood Ties

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FADE IN:

EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT

Rain and wind lash an empty carpark. A light glows in the office/reception building, but the three rooms on either side remain dark.

The faded sign above the office door reads: GULF MOTEL.

RADIO ANNOUNCER(O.S.)
...now predicting Hurricane
Alex will make landfall
sometime around four a.m
tomorrow...

SUPER - PORT ISABEL TEXAS U.S.A

SUPER - JULY 2010

The radio is switched off abruptly. The office door opens, a figure stands watching the storm.

INT. MOTEL - NIGHT

It's a tidy room, though the furnishings are threadbare. A leather sofa, cracked and spewing foam, sits along one wall. The carpet bears cigarette burns and other unidentified stains.

AURELIO(60), a squat man with sleepy eyes, frowns out at the increasing rain. His sister CATERINA(62) sips coffee behind the reception counter.

CATERINA
No one will be out in this.

AURELIO
Patience, my dear sister.
Someone will come.

Both speak English with a Mexican accent.

CATERINA
You'll have to go searching again.

AURELIO
Then I will. Its all part of
our responsibility.

CATERINA
The storm is getting worse. You
might__

Aurelio cuts her off with a hand gesture. In the gloom outside, the glow of headlights.

AURELIO
Yes. Oh, yes...
(beat)
Prepare the equipment.

Caterina smiles, moves back into the office and disappears. A car pulls up outside. Aurelio watches as both front doors open, and two figures hurry around.

One is a tall man in his early thirties, MICHAEL. The other is a woman of similar age, EVE. Aurelio steps back as they get to the threshold.

AURELIO
Welcome my good people. Such a terrible night to be out.

MICHAEL
Yes, the roads are getting dangerous.
(beat)
I'm Michael Newton. This is my wife Eve.

EVE
The hurricane...is it going to hit us here? It's happened so fast.

AURELIO
Please, sit down, relax. I am Aurelio Sanchez. I run this motel with my sister Caterina.

Michael nods, sits on the sofa. He scans the room. Eve looks back out the door at the intensifying storm. Aurelio walks over and closes the door.

AURELIO
My motel has seen better days, yes. But structurally, very safe. I guarantee the hurricane will do no damage to us.

He smiles at Eve, but his eyes watch Michael. He frowns momentarily.

EVE
Is there any chance of getting some food, Mr Sanchez? I know this isn't a restaurant, but...we are very hungry.

AURELIO
Of course. My sister can provide coffee and sandwiches. I know it's poor fare, but...

MICHAEL
That would be fine, thank you.

Caterina emerges from the office.

CATERINA
Hello there. Welcome to the Gulf Motel. You are here on holidays perhaps?

AURELIO
Excuse me, dear sister. Could you prepare some sandwiches and coffee for these charming guests?

CATERINA
Of course. Excuse me.

She heads back into the office.

AURELIO
So, you are here on holidays, Mr Newton?

MICHAEL
Sort of...we're actually looking for somebody.

AURELIO
Oh?

MICHAEL
Yes. My brother David. He was here a few weeks ago, on a fishing trip. But I haven't heard from him lately.

AURELIO
Ah, I thought you looked familiar. Yes, I remember him, he stayed here, two, no, wait, three nights. Lovely man.

Michael stands up, paces back and forth.

MICHAEL
Yes, he mentioned your motel. The last I heard of him was a text message on the...twenty seventh of June.

Aurelio walks to the counter, checks a folder full of forms.

AURELIO
Lets see...Newton, Newton...aah
yes. Your brother checked out
on the thirtieth.

He holds out a sheet of paper. Michael walks over and examines it.

MICHAEL
Yes, that's his signature.

EVE
Michael, you know David. He likes to be the loner. He could be anywhere, maybe out on a boat fishing. No phone coverage...

She shrugs.

MICHAEL
Yeah, you're probably right.
But still...

Caterina returns, carrying a tray.

CATERINA
Coffee won't be long.

Aurelio turns back to the counter, tidies up the folder.

Michael takes out his mobile and hurriedly works the buttons. Suddenly, a RINGTONES comes from the office.

EVE
What...that's David's ph_

She SCREAMS as Caterina upends the tray over her. Michael lunges towards Aurelio, but smashes into Caterina and the food plates. He slips and falls to the floor.

MICHAEL
Shit! Eve, quickly...

Too late. Aurelio dives into the office, comes up behind the counter. He has a gun. Caterina recovers and joins her brother in the office. The phone call cuts off.

AURELIO
I told you to get rid of the phone.

MICHAEL
Bastards. Murdering freaks.

EVE
Michael? What's happening? You think they did something to David?

Michael sits up. Aurelio moves slowly into the room, gun not wavering from Michael's head.

AURELIO
Do not make any silly moves. I won't hesitate to use it.

MICHAEL
I know that. I know a lot about this town. About it's history and the missing people each year.

Caterina gasps. Aurelio shrugs.

AURELIO
You know everything, Mr Newton?

MICHAEL
Oh yes. Since my brother's disappearance, I researched this area. Some very interesting anomalies. A statistician would have a field day.

AURELIO
Aah, and what do these 'statistics' show?

MICHAEL
Every hurricane season, people disappear. Vanish without trace. And I know of the ritual...the sacrifice that appeases the god of storms, 'Huracan'.

Caterina goes back into the office for a moment. Returns with short lengths of rope. She starts tying up Eve.

EVE
Michael? What are they doing?
MICHAEL, for god's sake...

Caterina slaps her hard. Eve slumps to the floor, whimpers.

MICHAEL
Leave her alone, you bitch.

Caterina slaps Eve again then approaches Michael with the rope. Aurelio carefully steps around him and holds the gun to Eve's head.

AURELIO
Tie him, my dear. Any struggle and your lovely wife has her head blown off.

MICHAEL

I doubt you would do that, you fuck. That would spoil the sacrifice. We have to be alive when you throw us in the ocean, don't we?

AURELIO

I'm impressed by your research. Yes, the female is the sacrifice and the male - or warrior back in ancient times - must accompany her to Huracan's under water kingdom.

MICHAEL

How can you continue to do this? Cold blooded murder.

Eve has fainted. Aurelio stands tall over Michael.

AURELIO

My family has been anointed with this task of protecting the town, the village and farms, for generations. Centuries of faithful service to the great God.

MICHAEL

So even when you ancestors moved up here from Mexico, you brought the murdering beliefs with you.

AURELIO

Yes. And not one hurricane in all that time has damaged our homes.

He walks to the door, opens it. The winds howls through, driving rain behind it.

CATERINA

The hurricane...it draws nearer.

AURELIO

Do not worry, sister. Our offerings to Huracan are ready. He will be here to accept our gifts.

He turns back to Michael, who is making a valiant effort to sit up and test his bonds. Aurelio delivers a swift kick to Michael's ribs. He winces but doesn't make a sound.

CATERINA

I hear something...

The 'something' is the sudden drop of the wind and rain. There is an eerie moment of complete silence. Then...

The lights flicker, go off, then back on, but remain dim. A dark figure steps through the doorway. It drips seawater. Aurelio bows his head and intones:

AURELIO
My Lord and Protector
Huracan...once again we offer
you our humble sacrifice. So
that, once more, you keep us
safe from the wrath of your power.

The shape steps into the light. The body remains black, but the head and face are that of a man. Michael gasps.

MICHAEL
David?

Aurelio raises his head slowly. Disbelief in his eyes. Caterina faints dead away.

DAVID
My brother?

MICHAEL
Yes, I...whats happened? Are
you alive?

DAVID
No. The gods accepted me as
their sacrifice. During the
last hurricane.

Aurelio sinks to his knees. The gun tumbles from his grasp. He stares at the dark shape in front of him.

DAVID
But I did not die. I became
strong and was able to vanquish
the Lord Huracan.

MICHAEL
I don't understand...brother.

DAVID
I too was confused. But I
realised there are greater gods
in this universe. One
especially who doesn't demand
blood.

(beat)
Perhaps He grew tired of the
killing.

MICHAEL
I...don't know what to say,
brother.

David smiles, turns back to Aurelio.

DAVID
There must be one more
sacrifice before it ends. One
more hurricane to quell.
(beat)
I will take this one and his
foul sister. She tortured me
before the end.

MICHAEL
What about us?

David waves a sodden hand. The ropes binding Michael and the comatose Eve melt away. He walks to Caterina, lifts her limp form. She stirs, look about.

David lifts Aurelio effortlessly in his other hand.

DAVID
Goodbye, brother.

He seems to glide to the door, fades off into the night.
Michael crawls to Eve, cradles her head.

EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT

Michael stares out the open door, as SCREAMS echo from the beach.

FADE OUT.

THE END