

SACRIFICIAL LOVE

By

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(First Draft)

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1 EXT. COTTAGE. EVENING.

FADE FROM BLACK.

Set in a bleak landscape, a cottage stands proud of a stormy sky. Lightning flashes and a strong wind rattles its aging windows. The light is ethereal; dark and foreboding towards the back whilst the reflection of red hot white flames appear to dance off the bright white plastered walls on its front.

2 INT. COTTAGE. KITCHEN. EVENING.

A dining table is laden with food. A last meal. Unfinished. A cupboard door is open. The contents strewn as if a desperate search has taken place. The blinds are closed but a bare light bulb hanging from the ceiling swings slowly back and forth providing light. It is dim and it flickers, as if losing power.

There's a sharp rap at the door.

LYNSEY

Mom, dad? We've made it. Let us in!

Pause. Then a louder knock.

LYNSEY

Mom please, we haven't much time.

Another short pause. The door handle is twisted impatiently but has no effect. The door is locked.

LYNSEY

(muffled) Stand back.

A thud. Lynsey is attempting to break in. A second thud, the door bulges but holds firm. The third push sees the door give way and swing violently inward.

Lynsey, a woman in her early thirties, wearing a dirty and sweat stained tank top with unkempt shoulder length brown hair is framed in the doorway. A young girl, Lynsey's daughter, no older than six years moves to stand next to her. She clutches a small brown teddy bear and reaches up to hold her mother's hand.

They are both bathed in a fierce white, shimmering light coming from behind. It shines through their windswept hair and for a moment they each look decidedly otherworldly.

Lynsey gently pushes the girl into the kitchen and follows her in. She turns sharply to shut the door and pauses. Her face rests on the wood and her hand quivers slightly as she expels a deep breath.

Turning, she quickly surveys the scene. Noticing the swaying light bulb she looks to her daughter then motions towards a small portable television on the kitchen work surface.

LYNSEY

The power generator is working,
turn on the television and see
if anyone is still broadcasting.
Can you do that for me?

JESSIE

Where's gran and gramps?

LYNSEY

I don't know Jessie, but I'm
gonna find out. Stay here.

Lynsey pauses to stroke Jessie's hair.

LYNSEY

I love you sweetheart.

The young girl smiles back and moves over to the television.

Lynsey watches Jessie walk away and her eyes begin to water slightly.

Moving through the kitchen, Lynsey absentmindedly closes the open cupboard. She reaches the door that leads from the kitchen to the lounge. It is closed and she hesitates before opening it.

3 INT. COTTAGE. LOUNGE. EVENING.

In contrast to the kitchen, the lounge is bathed in a blue and cold light. Its windows are facing the dark storm. Lightning flashes intermittently.

The room is clean and tidy. Family portraits of happier times adorn a fireplace. Cushions are plumped on a three piece suite and in the centre of the room, a newspaper lays unopened on a coffee table. It's headline reads: "Science Disaster - 126 Dead". In a smaller byline: "Fire Anomaly Continues to Grow and Spread".

Lynsey opens the door and tentatively steps into the room.

LYNSEY
 Mom? Dad? I've brought Jessie.

The lounge is empty and there is no answer to her call. Noticing the newspaper, she moves to pick it up and reads the headline silently.

LYNSEY
 (under her breath) You bastards!

Glancing at the fireplace, Lynsey puts the paper back on the table and moves to the photographs. She picks one up showing herself, Jessie and a man in his late twenties. All three are hugging each other and grinning cheesily. Lynsey's eyes water again and she gently runs a finger down the image of the man.

Returning it to the fireplace, her attention focuses on another of an older couple in their early sixties. She picks it up and clutches it tightly.

LYNSEY
 (quietly and to herself) Where
 are you? You said you'd wait, I
 can't do this by myself.

Her lips quiver and her eyes water some more. Taking a deep breath she composes herself and places the picture back on the fireplace.

4 INT. COTTAGE. FIRST FLOOR LANDING. EVENING.

Lynsey runs up the stairs to the first floor landing. She is desperate now. Light is coming through a myriad of windows. The harsh shimmering white fights with the cold blue for dominance.

LYNSEY
 MOM? DAD? Where are you?

She races to the nearest door, opens it and glances in. She has no reaction. The room is obviously empty. She moves to a second door and again opens it without hesitation. She glances in and is stopped in her tracks.

LYNSEY
 No!

Lynsey opens the door fully to reveal the older couple from the second photograph lying on a bed. They are huddled together and unresponsive. Dead.

Lynsey steps into the room shaking her head in disbelief.

5 INT. COTTAGE. BEDROOM. EVENING.

The bedroom is brightly lit from the menace that is outside. Harsh white, fiery light shines off all four walls. There is a sense of heat and fire.

Lynsey moves towards the bed.

LYNSEY
I need you. Both of you. Why
didn't you wait? I said I would
make it. Jessie...

Her voice trails. Lynsey stares at the couple. They look peaceful, as if asleep. Glancing down at the bodies, she notices the woman is clutching a note. Lynsey reaches down and prises it from her dead mother's fingers and reads it aloud.

LYNSEY
"It has broken us to think you
and Jessie have been consumed by
the fire without us. We want to
be with you. Happy again."

Fighting back tears, Lynsey addresses her parents.

LYNSEY
But we made it. You just had to
wait a little longer.

Choking on her tears, Lynsey begins scouring the room and notices various pill bottles open on a dresser table. She races over and grabs hysterically at them.

LYNSEY
There's not enough. Dammit,
there's not enough.

As she spreads out the tablets, there's a sudden loud boom behind her. The window shakes violently. Lynsey turns quickly and for the first time registers the white light pouring through the window. The light is increasing with intensity. Clutching at the remaining tablets, she moves over to it and peers out.

6 EXT. COTTAGE. EVENING.

Lynsey stares through the window, shaking her head. Her mouth drops open. Reflected on the glass appears to be a wall of white, red and yellow flame. The image shimmers from the heat. Lynsey is transfixed.

Suddenly, a distant scream returns her to reality.

7 INT. COTTAGE. BEDROOM. EVENING.

JESSIE

Mum, MUM!

Lynsey turns, expecting to see that Jessie has followed her and is screaming at the sight of her dead grandparents. But she is nowhere to be seen.

JESSIE

MUM!

Realising why the voice sounds so close, Lynsey turns again to look out of the window. Peering down, she sees that her daughter has walked out of the cottage.

LYNSEY

Jessie, stay there. I'm coming.

Lynsey races from the room.

8 INT. COTTAGE. FIRST FLOOR LANDING. EVENING.

Almost tripping at the top, Lynsey jumps down the stairs two or three steps at a time.

9 INT. COTTAGE. LOUNGE. EVENING.

Running through the lounge, she hits her leg on the coffee table scattering the newspaper.

10 INT. COTTAGE. KITCHEN. EVENING.

Lynsey, pushes dining chairs out of her way and runs past the television now showing nothing but static. She cannot get to the kitchen door fast enough but it feels like an eternity.

Opening the door, she is immediately pushed back into the kitchen by the heat.

11 EXT. COTTAGE. EVENING.

Shielding her face with her arm, Lynsey forces herself into the outside. Clumps of dried grass are bursting spontaneously into flame all around her. Just a few meters in front, she spies Jessie.

LYNSEY

Jessie, come here now!

Lynsey stumbles forward and eventually grabs hold of her daughter. Jessie is transfixed at the sight ahead. They both pause to stare.

The full intensity of the apocalypse is revealed. Passing slowing over the horizon and inching forever forward, a wall of flame extends from the ground to the edge of the atmosphere, consuming everything in its path. Its ferocity is matched only by its size, extending as far to the east and to the west as the eye can see.

With their faces pink and blotchy from the heat, Lynsey pulls her daughter toward her and drags her back to the cottage. As she does so, Jessie drops her teddy bear. As the two run back to the cottage it's dry synthetic fur catches fire.

12 INT. COTTAGE. KITCHEN. EVENING.

For the second time that evening, Lynsey slams the kitchen door shut and takes the time to compose herself. She turns to Jessie who has started to sob.

JESSIE

I heard the bang. I wanted to know what it was...

LYNSEY

I didn't want you to see that. I'm sorry, I shouldn't have left you alone.

JESSIE

Is that what got dad, and gran and gramps?

Lynsey stoops down to Jessie's level and holds her daughter firmly by the shoulders. Looking her squarely in the eyes, Lynsey appears to find a new resolve.

LYNSEY

I love you Jessie. I love you more than life itself. And I will make sure that whatever that is outside, it will not hurt you.

The two embrace.

JESSIE

I love you mum.

Lynsey fights the urge to cry and hangs on to her daughter for all her worth. Eventually, she looks down at her hands and without letting go of Jessie, opens the one hand she has held tightly closed since being in her parent's bedroom. Inside her palm is a cluster of small, white tablets.

LYNSEY

(to herself) There's enough for one.

Lynsey reluctantly lets go of her daughter.

LYNSEY

I need you to be brave. The bravest you've ever been. Can you do that for me?

JESSIE

(still sobbing) Yes mum.

LYNSEY

There's my girl. Go and sit in the lounge. Don't go anywhere else. Just the lounge. I'll be with you in a minute.

Jessie doesn't question her mother and walks off to the lounge. The youngster is still sobbing but fighting hard to control it. Once Jessie is out of sight, Lynsey scans the kitchen. She spies a pestle and mortar. Perfect. Exactly what she needs. Lynsey wastes no time and starts to crush the remaining tablets into a fine white powder. As she does so, the light in the kitchen changes. The harsh light starts to break through the closed blinds and under the kitchen door. The light bulb flickers and dims again.

Lynsey, sensing that she does not have much time left, hurriedly pours some fruit juice into a glass and sprinkles the powder on top. She stirs it with her finger. As she turns to leave, the light bulb glows white hot and shatters, showering glass all over the uneaten food on the dining table.

Lynsey lets out a surprised yelp but quickly composes herself and heads straight to the lounge.

13 INT. COTTAGE. LOUNGE. EVENING.

Closing the door on the scene in the kitchen. Lynsey, sits on the sofa.

LYNSEY
Come here sweetheart.

Jessie walks over to her mother. In her hand is the photograph of her, her mother and her father. Without letting go of it, she hops onto the sofa and then to her mother's lap.

LYNSEY
Jessie, I...

Lynsey stumbles. She isn't ready to pass the drink to her only daughter. No mother should ever be in this position.

JESSIE
I know mum. I love you.

Jessie gives her mum a lasting hug, then grabs the glass and drinks it all.

Lynsey fights the urge to snap the glass away from her daughter. It's a physical struggle with her will power. Does her daughter know what she's doing? So many emotions.

When finished, Lynsey takes the glass from her daughter. The urge to cry hysterically is almost uncontrollable but she holds it together.

From in the kitchen we hear loud bangs. The heat from outside is starting spontaneous fires. From under the door, flickering flames send red and orange light into the lounge to counteract the dark, cold blue.

The roar of fire is now evident and growing much louder.

LYNSEY
Shh sweetheart, nothing is gonna hurt you now. Your mum will make sure of it.

Lynsey rocks Jessie in her arms and slowly her daughter's eyes become heavy with the need to sleep.

The roar increases and the red and orange light dancing under the kitchen door is replaced by the harshest of white. The whole house starts to vibrate and the remaining photographs on the fireplace fall off.

LYNSEY

Shh, you just go to sleep. Your
mum is here.

Lynsey's voice cracks and she begins to cry. As the roar gets louder, Jessie's arm drops, lifeless. The photograph she has been holding crashes to the floor. The glass shatters.

LYNSEY

No!

Lynsey breaks down completely and pulls the lifeless body of her daughter close to her own.

The intense white heat now fills the lounge and the vibrations also increase. Lynsey grits her teeth, ready to succumb. She screams an angry and defiant scream.

FADE TO WHITE.

END.