

ETHAN'S STORY

by

Dino A. Barlaam

Contact Information:

Dino A. Barlaam
DBarlaam99@aol.com
(908) 591-9886
Registered with WGAe

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - CONSTRUCTION SITE - NIGHT

An addition is being built on the property. Piles of sand and gravel surround the abandoned construction vehicles and rows of steel beams.

TWO POLICE OFFICERS section off a part of the construction site. Another TWO OFFICERS speak to a MIDDLE-AGED MAN near the entrance. Red lights from nearby police cars FLASH behind them.

EXT. SIDEWALK ACROSS THE STREET - SAME

SAGE, 26, a tall young man wearing a black coat over a dark suit, stands next to ETHAN, 25, slightly shorter in jeans, a hooded sweatshirt and an overcoat. They both watch the officers work the scene.

SAGE

Pretty cold for March.

ETHAN

Freezing. Where's global warming when you need it?

SAGE

Exactly.

ETHAN

Wanna go check it out?

SAGE

We can't go over there.

ETHAN

Why not?

SAGE

They won't let us.

ETHAN

Pussy.

Ethan takes out a cigarette and lights up.

SAGE

I don't see you going, tough guy.

ETHAN

After this. And don't start with how bad these are for me. I don't need that shit now.

SAGE

What's going on, Ethan?

ETHAN

Nothing.

SAGE

Right.

ETHAN

"Father of the Year"'s been driving me up the fucking wall. Always talking down to me. Telling me I need a job. I've been looking for weeks now to find one so I could move the hell out. I'm finally done with him. Done.

SAGE

The job market sucks right now.

ETHAN

I went to Stevens. Did he think I'd take some shitty job at Mickey D's or something?

SAGE

Don't let him get to you like that. It's not worth it.

ETHAN

Like you care, Sage?

SAGE

Of course I do.

ETHAN

How long's it been since we hung out?

SAGE

A while.

ETHAN

Why?

SAGE

Val and I are still unpacking after the move. I can't just go bar hopping anytime like we used to. We're not in college anymore.

ETHAN

Whatever. Fucking bullshit.

FLASHBACK

INT. SAGE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

Sage and VALERIE, 25, slender with raven black hair, are all over each other, kissing, touching, full of passion.

The cordless phone on the night stand suddenly RINGS. They ignore it for a moment.

It RINGS again.

VALERIE

Should we get it?

Sage glances over at the caller ID display. The caller ID display on the phone reads "ETHAN M."

Sage returns his focus to Valerie. He leans down and kisses her on her neck. She closes her eyes, grins and wraps her arms around him. Sage pulls the covers up as the phone continues to RING.

BACK TO SCENE

EXT. SIDEWALK - NIGHT

Ethan takes a slow drag of his cigarette.

SAGE
Things change, Ethan.

ETHAN
You're tellin' me.

FLASHBACK

INT. UPSCALE APARTMENT - NIGHT

This apartment that Ethan shares with his dad is spacious, well-decorated. The ultimate bachelor pad.

Ethan and SEVERAL FRIENDS, all in their 20s, drink, smoke, snort cocaine and make out in various spots. Heavy metal music BLASTS from the stereo.

Sage sits on the couch. He appears uncomfortable.

A GOTH CHICK slides next to Sage. He turns to her. She winks at him. Sage gives her a forced grin.

She moves closer and plays with his hair.

GOTH CHICK
I'm Suzi.

He shakes her hand.

SAGE
Sage.

GOTH CHICK
Wanna go somewhere more private?

SAGE
I'm with someone.

GOTH CHICK
Is she here?

SAGE
No.

GOTH CHICK
Then what's the problem?

SAGE

I'm sorry.

Sage gets up and heads for the kitchen. She frowns.

INT. KITCHEN

Sage finds Ethan, drunk, talking to KURT by the keg.

ETHAN

Hey! Get this guy a friggin' beer. C'mere, Sage. Have a drink. You remember Kurt.

Kurt and Sage shake hands.

KURT

You went to Kennedy, right?

SAGE

Yes. But no beer, thanks.

Kurt grabs a plastic cup and fills it up.

SAGE (CONT'D)

I said--

ETHAN

Aw, come on. My dad's in Florida for two weeks. Your Val's away for the weekend. Live a little.

Ethan takes the full cup of beer from Kurt and shoves it into Sage's hand.

KURT

It's a party, man.

ETHAN

Exactly.

SAGE

This is what? The third party this week?

ETHAN

So?

Sage puts the cup on the counter.

SAGE

I'm going to go.

ETHAN

Whatever, dude. Your loss.

SAGE

What if someone calls the cops?

ETHAN

No one's gonna do that.

Sage walks out of the kitchen. Ethan's about to call out to Sage, when--

Kurt lets out a loud BURP. Everyone laughs, including Ethan.

BACK TO SCENE

EXT. SIDEWALK - NIGHT

Ethan drops his finished cigarette on the pavement and steps on it.

ETHAN

Let's go.

The two cross the street.

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - NIGHT

The two make their way up to the yellow police tape. They notice the two Police Officers finish taking their statement from the Middle-Aged Man.

The Officers head back to one of the patrol cars as the Middle-Aged Man trudges towards the main entrance of one of the buildings.

The two other Officers stand several yards away near the steel beams of the construction site. One of them talks into his radio.

SAGE

What're those two doing?

ETHAN

Calling it in.

SAGE

What happened here?

One of the Officers steps away for a moment, and allows Sage to see what they've been standing over. Sage's eyes widen when he spots

ETHAN'S FROZEN, DEAD BODY

disheveled and wearing pajamas, on the ground leaning against a steel beam.

Sage starts breathing heavily.

SAGE (CONT'D)

Ethan?

The Ethan standing next to Sage turns to him.

ETHAN

Boo.

Sage leans over, grabs the side of a nearby tree and VOMITS onto the grass. He stands, wiping his mouth.

SAGE

Is that...?

ETHAN

What a way to go, huh? So drunk I wandered out here and fell asleep. Could be worse, I guess.

Sage lifts the tape and approaches the lifeless body when Ethan grabs Sage's arm and pulls him back.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Where you going?

The two Officers walk past Sage and Ethan without noticing them.

Sage turns to Ethan with a look of utter desperation.

Ethan shakes his head "No".

Sage lets go of the yellow tape.

SAGE

Why?

ETHAN

It's too late.

Sage's eyes fill with tears.

SAGE

You're smarter than this. You're better than this.

ETHAN

We all make mistakes, Sage.

SAGE

This isn't some stupid mistake.

ETHAN

Yes, it is.

FLASHBACK

INT. SAGE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Sage grabs his keys off the coffee table and heads for the door.

The phone RINGS. Sage glances at the caller I.D. It reads "ETHAN M."

As the phone continues to RING, he heads out the front door.

BACK TO SCENE

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - NIGHT

SAGE

No, no, no. This isn't
happening. Ethan, please.

ETHAN

Things change, friend. Don't
worry. You and me, we're good.

SAGE

No, wait!

FADE TO WHITE.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Valerie and Sage stare out at the New York City skyline.
He's wearing the same dark suit and overcoat as he was in
the dream.

His face is stone as tears well up in his eyes. Valerie
puts a comforting hand on his shoulder.

VALERIE

You okay?

SAGE

I'm fine.

A single tear runs down his face. He wipes it away.

SAGE (CONT'D)

Where the hell is everyone?
Doesn't anyone even care?

VALERIE

There's nothing you could've done.
Ethan chose his own path.

SAGE

I turned my back on him, Val.

VALERIE

He turned his back on us, too. A
long time ago.

SAGE

Right.

A long silence.

She takes his hand in hers and gives him a quick kiss on
the lips. The couple heads for a black SUV near the back
of the lot.

A glowing SIGN on the building near their SUV reads
"DONNELLY FUNERAL HOME".

FADE OUT.