

THIS TORNADO LOVES YOU

By

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FADE IN

**EXT. COUNTRY PLAINS - SUNSET**

A long dirt road snakes through the endless sea of wild grass. At its end, a shabby little FARMHOUSE and a beat up 4x4 sit stranded from the world.

The day is crisp and clear.

**INT. FARMHOUSE/BEDROOM - SAME**

PETRA (27), a frazzle haired woman clothed in rags, stands by a BARRED WINDOW. She stares longingly at the horizon...

She closes her eyes...

**FLASHBACK - EXT. OTHERWORLD - DAY**

Next to a tall canyon waterfall, Petra sunbathes in the arms of her lover, a muscular WARRIOR (30s). Their clothes, while reminiscent of Ancient Greece, hold symbols and patterns alien to any known culture.

Petra HUMS a soft melody as the Warrior caresses her SPIRAL PENDENT NECKLACE. He leans down and kisses the flawless skin of her neck.

**END FLASHBACK - INT. FARMHOUSE/BEDROOM**

Petra touches her fingers to a ragged scar cut across her throat. Tears form in her eyes.

A DOOR OPENS. Petra jumps. METAL RATTLES.

A five foot chain cuffed to Petra's wrist tenses against a bedpost, restricting her movement.

At the door stands RICK (50s), portly with graying hair and dirty clothes. He's letting the years catch up to him.

RICK

It's okay. It's just me. I'm makin'  
a run to town. Won't be gone long.

Petra holds up her chained wrist. A question.

RICK  
I can't. Not today.

Rick crosses to her, passing a large wooden cabinet on the way. He draws a shade across the window.

RICK  
I do trust you, but we both know what today is. Homesickness can be a powerful thing. But I promise to do somethin' nice to keep your mind off it. That sound alright, Pet?

He caress her hair and kisses her cheek. She bares it.

RICK  
Alright. I'll be back soon.

Rick exits the room and closes the door. A LOCK BOLTS.

Petra sits on the bed, waiting... a screen door CREAKS... a truck door opens and closes... the engine fires up.

Petra stands and peeks out the window... the 4x4 rolls off down the dirt road.

She drops to the floor, reaches under an end table and slides out a coin. She moves to the bed's leg.

Large screws fasten it to the hardwood floor. She works the coin into the screw's groove and starts twisting.

#### **LATER**

Darkness outside.

Under the bed, Petra stretches to unscrew the final leg. A few twists and the screw falls loose.

She slides out, reaches under the end table again and pulls out a deformed PAPER CLIP.

Petra stands and drags the heavy bed over to the cabinet.

She inserts the clip into the cabinet door keyhole and twists. The door pops open revealing a bizarre trophy case.

Shelves display exotic keepsakes. A PHOTO shows Rick smiling with a shotgun above the corpse of some rare alien creature.

A plaque in the center reads, *"Keep What You Take. Care For What You Keep. The Door Opens Once. Protect the Key."*

Petra grabs an ORNAMENTAL FLASK from under the plaque and plucks her SPIRAL PENDENT NECKLACE from the shelf.

**INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

The door opens. The light flicks on. Petra enters, dragging the bed behind her until it clogs the doorway.

She pulls the stopper rod on the sink and runs the water.

As the sink fills up, Petra holds the flask before her. She bows her head and mouths a prayer.

With the sink full, she turns the water off, opens the flask and pours. BLOOD empties into the sink, staining the water.

She closes the flask and sets it aside. Then dips her finger in the water, swirling it around.

With her other hand she pushes the stopper rod. A WHIRLPOOL forms as the sink drains.

Petra takes her necklace and places it in the whirlpool. It circles a few times, then disappears down the funnel.

TIRES ON GRAVEL as the 4x4 pulls up outside.

**INT. FARMHOUSE/BEDROOM**

The bathroom light clicks off. Petra pushes the bed out of her way and closes the door behind her.

She moves to the cabinet, sets the flask back in place and closes that up too. The screen door CREAKS.

Petra pushes the bed across the room and back into place.

The door opens. Petra spins to face Rick.

RICK

It's just me, Pet. Geez, you're jumpy today.

Rick holds up a shopping bag.

RICK

I got you a little somethin'. Hope it fits.

He pulls out a slinky red dress and lays it on the bed.

He draws a key from his pocket, uncuffs Petra's wrist, then plops down on the bed and watches her expectantly.

RICK  
Go ahead. Try it on.

**INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT**

Petra, in her new dress, sits at the table opposite Rick. A candlelit dinner and wine glasses sit between them.

Petra's ankles are chained to an eye hook in the floor.

RICK  
So how was it? Good?

Petra stares at her half-eaten steak dinner.

RICK  
I used a different dry rub than usual. Maybe a little much.

Rick stands and collects their empty plates. He notices Petra's full wine glass.

RICK  
You should try some. Guy at the counter said it's a good year.

Rick walks the dishes to the kitchen sink. Petra grabs her leftover spoon and TAPS it on the table.

RICK  
Yes?

Petra points across the room to an OLD BOX TV. Rick grabs two DRY ERASE BOARDS from the counter and heads back.

RICK  
Actually, I got something else for us. I know you're gettin' tired of cards so I-

TAP-TAP-TAP. She points to the TV.

RICK  
Now hold on. Give it a chance. See, first I draw a picture and you hafta guess what it is, then-

Petra CHUCKS the spoon at the TV. It CLANGS off the glass.

RICK  
 Christ, Pet. Fine. But I'm keepin'  
 it muted.

Rick heads over, cranks the dial and flips to a NEWS SHOW.

RICK  
 Happy?

Petra nods and Rick returns to the table. He pushes one of the boards and a MARKER to Petra.

RICK  
 Now as I was sayin', first you  
 guess what I draw, then I guess  
 what you drew.

Rick starts sketching on his board. Petra looks out a nearby window to the PITCH BLACK night beyond.

RICK  
 What's your guess?

Petra turns to see Rick's sketch of a BIRD. She uncaps the marker, writes her answer and holds it up... "OWL"

RICK  
 Very good. That's a point for you.  
 Now you draw somethin'.

Petra erases her answer and starts drawing... one continuous circle swirling round and round, over and over.

RICK  
 Uh... Round. Ball. Sun. Circle.  
 Spiral? Cycle?  
 (they lock eyes)  
 Cyclone?

Petra stops drawing and sets the marker down.

RICK  
 That's it? Okay. Point for me.  
 We're tied.

Rick thinks a beat and starts drawing. Petra looks to...

THE TV - The News Program shows a "*Tornado Watch for the following counties*".

...Petra smiles.

RICK  
 Alright, what do you think?

Rick shows off a rough silhouette of a STEAM TRAIN. Petra writes on her board and holds it up...

*"You're going to die".*

Rick sighs like a disappointed teacher.

RICK  
 I'm sorry, that's incorrect. It's a  
 choo-choo train. I win.

Rick sets the board down and knocks back his glass of wine. He blows out the candle, crosses to her and chugs down her wine as well.

RICK  
 Time for bed. I'll give you the  
 mattress tonight.

Rick produces a key from his pocket.

RICK  
 Up.

Petra glares, defiant. He SMACKS his hand on the table.

RICK  
 Up!

She stands and Rick stoops to her ankles. As he uncuffs her, Petra stares longingly out the window at the still pitch black night.

**INT. FARMHOUSE/BEDROOM - LATER**

Darkness, lit only by the blue glow of an ALARM CLOCK display... "5:38am".

Thunder ROLLS in the distance, lightly shaking the house.

Petra lies on her side, wrist secured to the bed, staring at the shaded window. LIGHTNING FLASHES. She mouths a count...

"One"... "Two"... "Three"... "Four"... "Five"

THUNDER RUMBLES. A beat passes. LIGHTNING FLASHES again. Petra counts again.

"One"... "Two"... "Thr-"

A hand strokes her hair. Behind her, Rick stands bedside.

RICK

It's really comin' down out there.

THUNDER CLAPS. Rick sits on the bed, leaning over her.

RICK

You havin' trouble sleepin' too?

She stays motionless. He lies next to her.

LIGHTNING FLASHES. She attempts the count.

"One"... "Tw-"

Rick kisses her neck. His hands travel up her body. She tries to shrug him off, but he turns her over, groping.

THUNDER CLAPS. Petra pulls back and kicks out, nailing him square in the stomach.

He grunts in surprise and jumps off the bed. Petra clings to the bedpost. They stare at each other for a tense beat...

He LUNGES for her, batting her legs out of the way.

RICK

I thought we were over this.

He grabs her by the waist and pulls-

The entire bed SHIFTS.

Rick freezes... switches on a nearby light and looks down...

A loose screw rests next to the bed's unbolted leg.

RICK

What did you do?

She doesn't react.

Rick moves to the trophy case. Drawing out a key, he unlocks and opens it. He instantly sees what's missing.

RICK

Sonuvabitch. What'd you do?

LIGHTNING STRIKES outside. THUNDER ROCKS the house.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

Rick pulls Petra over to a length of chain fastened to the wall and cuffs her to it.

Outside the WIND HOWLS. Rick goes to the TV and turns it on.

ONSCREEN - "*TORNADO WARNING IN EFFECT*". The video shows a massive funnel cloud sweeping across the horizon.

Rick charges Petra.

RICK  
Make him go back.

She stares daggers at him. He grabs and shakes her.

RICK  
Tell him to go away, goddamnit!

She opens her mouth in a silent scream, pushing raspy air through her severed vocal cords. He slaps her.

RICK  
Don't fuck with me! Where did you  
opened it?

THUNDER CLAPS. The power cuts out. Windows SHATTER.

Rick and Petra hunker down as the wind ROARS inside. The house shakes violently until...

The front door BLOWS OPEN. The storm calms. Loose papers scuttle across the floor.

Rick moves toward the door, fear in his eyes. He arrives and peers outside...

RICK  
Oh my god.

Rick looks to Petra, his face white. Petra cranes her neck to see around him, but can't. Rick turns back to the storm.

RICK  
(shouting)  
Alright, you can have her back! On  
one condition!

An immense gust of wind slams into the house.

A RAIL SPIKE shoots straight through Rick's neck and lodges into the wall, pinning Petra's chain.

Rick grabs at his neck, drops to his knees... tries to scream, but only rasps air. Finally he topples over, dead.

Petra gazes over as blood pools around his body...

CLINK. Her chain falls loose, severed by the rail spike.

She stands and staggers to the door. Looks out...

**EXT. FARMHOUSE**

...her Warrior stands on the waterlogged lawn, looking like he's just been through the most exhaustive battle of his life. His hand clutches her SPIRAL PENDENT NECKLACE.

**INT. LIVING ROOM**

Petra smiles, a deep love in her eyes and steps outside.

The wind whips up again... ROARS like a freight train... then dissipates.

The power comes back up... The TV clicks on...

ONSCREEN - The view from a storm chaser's dashboard camera as it speeds down the road. In the distance, TWIN FUNNELS chew up the countryside in the low morning light.

FADE OUT