

Never Too Late

Written by
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FADE IN:

INT. LIVING ROOM- DAY- BLACK AND WHITE

A small, stylishly decorated living room. Toys are strewn across the floor next to an overturned toy box.

JOSEPH (8) wanders across the carpet, a toy truck held lazily in his hand.

He traipses forward, eyes wide, curious.

He stops just before a large wooden door. A tear rolls down his face.

He wipes away the tear and wrinkles his nose in resolve then slowly pushes open the door.

A look of shock and confusion crosses his face.

The toy truck falls from his hand and CLATTERS to the ground.

INT. CAFE- DAY

A cup CLATTERS onto a table. Coffee spills across the polished wooden surface and drips onto the tiled floor.

A man stands up, shocked, his hand shaking like a leaf.

This is JOSEPH (35), a slim, muscular man in a casual shirt and trousers. He looks dazed and slightly embarrassed.

A pretty waitress, MARY (23) dashes over and mops up the coffee with a dishcloth.

She turns to Joseph and smiles apologetically.

Joseph looks around; a few customers avert their stares.

He takes out a roll of bank notes and slaps ten dollars on the table.

He goes to leave.

Mary grabs his arm and points to the half-finished pie on the table. Joseph shakes his head and exits.

EXT. CAFE- DAY

Joseph steps out into the cold morning sunlight, gulping deep breaths of air.

He leans up against a lamppost, his face pale. He takes a handkerchief from his pocket and wipes the sweat from his brow.

A young COUPLE walk past, arm in arm. The girl holds a bunch of roses.

Joseph watches them for a moment then looks back at the cafe. Mary watches him from the window. She smiles.

Joseph quickly turns and crosses the street. He looks back briefly before entering an apartment building.

INT. APARTMENT. LOBBY- DAY

Joseph walks over to the mailboxes just inside the front door.

A young GIRL eagerly checks her mail. She pulls out two Valentine's cards and smiles to herself. Then she spots Joseph, turns and walks hurriedly up the stairs.

Joseph sighs, waits for her footsteps to fade, then opens his mailbox. He pulls out a thick brown envelope and stuffs it into his pocket. Something falls from the mailbox and slides across the floor- a Valentine's card.

He hesitates for a moment, then picks it up.

INT. BEDROOM- DAY

Joseph enters his small apartment and walks over to the bed. He looks at the Valentine's card. The envelope reads: 'Joseph' - no address.

He looks out of the window at the cafe across the street, then back at the card in his hand.

He drops it, unopened, into a trash can.

INT. LIVING ROOM- DAY- BLACK AND WHITE

JOSEPH (8) sits on the floor surrounded by toys. He races a toy car around in circles with his hand, making 'brum brum' noises.

A glass SHATTERS in the next room. Joseph stops and looks up towards the door.

BANG! BANG!

He flinches at the sound of gunfire.

INT. BEDROOM- NIGHT

Joseph (35) sits upright in bed. He's fully clothed, pale and sweating.

Neon lights from the street illuminate the room.

He walks over to the sink in the corner and splashes cold water on his pallid face.

He looks at his reflection. His eyes are baggy and bloodshot.

INT. BEDROOM- LATER

Joseph exits the shower wrapped in a towel and walks over to the bed.

He picks up the brown envelope and rips it open.

He pulls out several photographs of a businessman, obviously taken with a telescopic lens without the man's knowledge.

Joseph flips through the photos one by one. Then examines a series of blueprints.

He runs a hand through his hair and sighs.

EXT. SUBURBAN HOUSE. GARDEN- NIGHT

Joseph stands in the shadows of a tree. An immaculate lawn stretches out in front of him, leading up to a large Mediterranean-style villa.

He's dressed in black and holds a silenced pistol in his gloved hand.

He looks up at the house. The lights are on. A balcony runs the full length of the first floor.

He approaches.

EXT. BALCONY

Gloved hands grip the stone balcony and Joseph silently lifts himself over.

He takes the pistol from his belt, checks the safety, then looks at his watch.

He stalks along the balcony towards an illuminated room. He stops and peers through the tall glass doors.

INT. LIVING ROOM

LUCY (6), sits at a small table, scribbling away with colored crayons.

She senses something and looks towards the window with wide, blue eyes. She sees nothing and returns to her drawing.

EXT. BALCONY

Joseph moves silently past the window, eyes alert, watching the young girl as she scrawls away at her picture.

He reaches the next window and stops, steadies his breathing, then looks inside.

INT. DINING ROOM

The table is set for dinner. Candlelight, roses, a bottle of red wine.

The BUSINESSMAN from the photo sits at the table. He stares lovingly at his beautiful WIFE.

EXT. BALCONY

Joseph slowly raises his pistol. His hand quivers just slightly. He looks into the dining room and watches as the couple chink glasses.

He breathes deeply and takes aim with the pistol.

FADE TO BLACK.

BANG! BANG!

FADE IN:

INT. LIVING ROOM- DAY- BLACK AND WHITE

Joseph (8) pushes open the door.

His MOTHER slumps over the dining table. Blood seeps from a gunshot wound in her head and drips onto the tiles.

His FATHER lies propped against the far wall. A trickle of blood runs from the hole in his forehead.

Joseph's face pales. The toy truck falls from his hand and CLATTERS to the ground.

INT. BEDROOM- DAY

Joseph's eyes spring open. He sits up in bed and runs a hand through his hair.

EXT. BACK YARD- DAY

Joseph exits the house, showered and fully dressed.

He places a trash can in the center of the patio. He takes the brown envelope and tosses it into the can.

He sprays in some lighter fluid and drops in a match.

The envelope crackles and burns.

Joseph sits in a chair and watches the dancing flames.

He squeezes his eyes shut.

INT. LIVING ROOM- NIGHT

Lucy sits at the table as before, scribbling away at her picture. A drawing of her mother and father. They are smiling, a big red heart surrounds them.

A glass SHATTERS in the next room. Lucy looks up, startled.

She picks up her picture and slowly walks over to the door.

EXT. BACK YARD- DAY

The embers burn in the trash can. A photograph of the businessman catches fire, curls up and melts in the flickering flames.

INT. LIVING ROOM- NIGHT

Lucy reaches the door and slowly pushes it open. Her eyes widen in shock.

INT- DINING ROOM- NIGHT

A broken wine glass rests on the table. Blood-red wine drips onto the tiles below.

The picture falls from Lucy's hand and flutters onto the floor. It stains dark red with wine.

INT. CAFE- DAY

The cafe is deserted.

Mary works alone, scrubbing the counter with a cloth. She looks exhausted, depressed.

The bell chimes as someone enters the cafe. Mary looks up, her face cracks into a smile.

Joseph stands in the doorway, a red rose and a box of chocolates in his hands.

Their eyes meet. Joseph smiles.

INT. DINING ROOM- NIGHT

The wine drips onto the tiled floor, soaking through Lucy's picture.

Lucy looks up at her parents, spread across the table, locked in a wild, passionate embrace.

Lucy smiles.

FADE TO BLACK.