

YOU CAN NEVER LEAVE

by

George Willson

BLACK SCREEN.

THUNDER. RAIN. It drums on a wooden roof.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Lightning. It illuminates an old, grey two story house. Though dilapidated, it remains whole, but only a shadow of its former glory.

A light burns in a window near the front door.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

Sta bene?

DELENA (V.O.)

Non lo so.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

CHRIS, a man in his early twenties, blinks in the candlelight. He is soaked to the bone, covered in mud, and generally looks run over.

He stares into the face of DELENA, a woman in her late thirties, sweet and pretty but life has taken its toll on her features.

CHRIS

Where am I?

MICHAEL

Conscious and in our care.

Chris glances to find Michael, a man also in his late thirties, bound to a wheelchair, but with a vigor behind his eyes.

CHRIS

Gina!

Chris leaps toward the door, but his leg fails him. Topples to the floor.

DELENA

Relax, giovane. You are hurt.

Chris looks down. A slice rents one of his pants legs revealing a wicked gash in his leg.

DELENA

I will bind it for you.

CHRIS

I was driving ... Something in the road ... Went into the ditch.

DELENA

He is delirious.

MICHAEL

Bring him to the table.

Delena helps Chris to his feet. Supports him to the table. Chris limps beside her. She lowers him gently into a chair.

Delena holds out a hand. Michael places a roll of gauze in it. She skillfully wraps the wound. Holds out her hand again. Michael drops two bandage hooks in it. She secures the gauze.

CHRIS

I've got to get my girlfriend.

MICHAEL

She is already here.

DELENA

Resting upstairs.

MICHAEL

She is well.

Chris's eyes dart between them. Glances to the stairs. Walks toward them. Touches the banister. Looks back to them.

MICHAEL

Upstairs. Señora Chavez will show you.

Chris looks around. Looks upstairs. Looks back to Michael and Delena. Michael gestures for him to proceed.

Step by step, Chris creaks up the stairs. Passes pictures on the wall that have not been dusted in years. The wooden frame of the staircase shows through the worn, old carpet.

Chris reaches the summit. Looks left. Looks right. No one is present. Looks left again.

SEÑORA CHAVEZ

Por aquí, señor.

He stumbles back, barely catching himself on the banister. A woman in a maid outfit of indeterminate age stands before him gesturing down the hall. Despite her name and accent, she does not look Hispanic.

SEÑORA CHAVEZ

Señor, su novia está por aquí.

Chris shakes his head.

CHRIS

I don't...

She points down the hall. He nods. She walks. He follows.

She passes a myriad of doors, all closed. She stops and gestures to a door. Chris approaches the door slowly. Turns the handle. Opens the door.

IN THE BEDROOM

he takes a few steps. The door closes behind him. He turns around, stumbling back a few steps. Turns back to the room.

A single candle burns on a nightstand next to the bed. It fails to light the far corners of the room.

A young woman in her early twenties lies on the bed. Her clothes are as dirty as Chris's. Her eyes are closed. Chris stumbles to the bed. Kneels beside it.

CHRIS

Gina?

She sucks in a deep breath and turns her head to him.

GINA

Chris.

She sits up. They embrace.

GINA

Where are we?

CHRIS

The accident. Do you remember?

GINA

We crawled out of the car through  
the mud. Came here.

CHRIS

I don't know if I trust them.  
They seem kind of creepy.

A raspy laugh emerges from the corner of the room. Chris and  
Gina look toward it.

MALE

You are right to distrust them.

Chris picks up the candle. Holds it in front of him. Walks  
toward the voice. Gina grips his arm and follows closely.

The light illuminates a young man in his twenties sitting in a  
chair with a blanket covering his legs. He looks malnourished  
and shivers. He squints at the light through eyes surrounded by  
dark circles. This is PIERRE.

PIERRE

But it is too late.

He coughs into a towel. Lays it on his lap. It is dotted with  
new and dried blood.

CHRIS

Too late for what?

PIERRE

You.

Chris shakes his head and walks to the window. Hands the candle to Gina. Tears open the curtain. Only the dark, rainswept sky is visible.

Struggles with the window. Pierre laughs.

PIERRE

Jeune fou. You cannot leave through the windows. You cannot leave at all.

CHRIS

Why? They can't stop us. A woman and a cripple?

Pierre laughs.

PIERRE

I thought the same thing. Now look at me.

He tears back he blanket. His legs are mangled and deformed.

PIERRE

Look at me!

He grabs Chris's wrist and pulls him close. The candle fully illuminates his horrible visage.

PIERRE

Look at me.

Under the light, his legs are covered with festering sores. Gina shrieks and covers her mouth.

PIERRE

We're going to be good friends.

CHRIS

I don't think so.

Chris breaks Pierre's grip, knocking over his chair. Pierre screams at him in French.

PIERRE

On ne peut jamais quitter! On ne peut jamais quitter!

## IN THE HALLWAY

Chris drags Gina out of the room. Slams the door. Pierre continues to scream. Chris takes a few steps toward the stairs.

Footfalls. He freezes. Shadows move ahead of him. He staggers back the other way. Drags Gina into another room and closes the door behind them.

## IN THE MUSIC ROOM

Liszt's "Liebestraum" echoes through the room. Their eyes center on a man in his thirties dressed in an old tuxedo and playing a faded old grand piano that is perfectly in tune. He speaks as he plays.

FRANZ

Guten Abend.

Chris and Gina take a few tentative steps toward him.

FRANZ

Do you have any requests? I'm dying to learn a new bit of music.

CHRIS

That's okay. We were just leaving.

They turn to the door. The music stops. They slowly turn to the piano. The bench is empty. Gina's grip on Chris's arm tightens.

FRANZ (O.S.)

Mann kann nie zu verlassen.

Gina's feet tear out from under her. She screams as an unseen force drags her across the room, under the piano, and...

...her scream stops.

Chris tears the door open behind him and barrels

## INTO THE HALLWAY

where he nearly runs over Señora Chavez. She stands like a wall before him.

SEÑORA CHAVEZ

Nunca se puede dejar.

Chris pushes her out of the way. Charges down the hall. Takes the stairs two at a time. Nearly runs into

DELENA

Should you not be resting?

CHRIS

No way.

He pushes past her. Reaches for the door knob.

MICHAEL

What about your girl?

CHRIS

I'll make sure you burn in hell.

MICHAEL

Really? Where will you go?

CHRIS

To the cops.

MICHAEL

But you can never leave.

DELENA

Non si può mai lasciare.

CHRIS

Watch me.

Chris opens the door. The rain pours sheets across the dilapidated porch. He steps out and—

—back into the house. He stares in dumb surprise at Delena and Michael. Their faces hold no expression.

He steps out and again and—

—back into the house.

CHRIS

What's going on?

MICHAEL  
We've told you.

DELENA  
You won't listen.

CHRIS  
Listen to what?

DELENA  
The end.

MICHAEL  
The beginning.

DELENA  
Eternity.

Chris shakes his head in defiance. The weight of the truth crashing down on him.

MICHAEL  
Dangerous road out there.

DELENA  
I'm sure you'll be missed.

Chris drops to his knees. Shakes his head. Screams in agony.

THUNDER drowns out his voice. The rain patters outside.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

LIGHTNING flashes over the abandoned house. Its windows darkened and broken. Rotten pieces of the house lie all around the foundation.

No one had lived here in years.

THE END