

BURNING HOUSE OF LOVE

AUGUST OWC
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EXT. PORCH - NIGHT

SONIA, a gorgeous girl of 25 years, stands upon a sloping lawn, facing a flourish of blossoms and thriving foliage. Her eyes hypnotized by,

A FLOWER, flourishing, caught in the wind. Time momentarily seems to slow.

She witnesses the leisurely, whimsical movement of the flower's pedals.

Then, after a moment, she gazes off, the beginning of a frown- when BRAD appears behind her.

BRAD

Deep thoughts?

SONIA

Deep and meaningful.

She moves into his arms, Brad happy to hold her.

BRAD

My parents called - again. Just to repeat how thrilled they are. She insists you call her mom from now on.

SONIA

It's great you have parents who are so into this and love you. I just have *parents*.

Her strokes her, trying to soothe.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The house is a fairly luxurious space, wall to wall covered with hanging paintings. Van Gough style and vintage furniture.

The table is set for a full celebratory dinner, huge turkey and other delectable chow-downs.

Brad and Sonia are situated at one end of the dinner table. Sonia's brother, eighteen year old JACOB, sits immediately beside Brad.

SONIA

Jacob, you still write in your journal?

JACOB

My journal is useless, my thoughts are always repetitive, and I constantly think if it's all just too much to bear? Too much too soon. Too much information. Too much fun. Too much love. Too much to ask...

An uncomfortable beat.

SONIA

Well okay.

Sonia's parent's, WALTER and DEBBIE, enter with appetizers. Both in their mid fifties, Walter dressed in his member's only jacket and Debbie decked out in Dior. Brad inches over, says in low tones to Sonia:

BRAD

Just get it over with. It's easier when you know the end result.

SONIA

Even when the end result is gonna suck?

Brad considers, knows it's not easy for her.

BRAD

Then stick to the game plan. If anything goes wrong, I can channel my inner hostility.

SONIA

And do what- glare?

BRAD

Well it's a nasty glare.

Sonia tries to smile. But she's too overwhelmed.

WALTER

What are you guys whispering about?

SONIA

Mom, as usual the stuffing
smells pretty much perfect.

WALTER

You and stuffing-

SONIA

It's all I care about. Brad
make a mental note.

Debbie moves on to her prayer book...

DEBBIE

Well if everyone will join hands.

SONIA

I actually think a better
idea would be to - well,
I have something to say.

DEBBIE

Before prayer?

SONIA

This'll give us reason to pray.
We're all here, so it seems right.
(then)

Brad and I have been together
for awhile, and while sometimes
it could seem unsteady or uncertain-

A mighty strident cough from Brad. Sonia moves on with it...

SONIA

He's definitely proof that there's
happiness at the end of this
very long, long, nasty tunnel.
We know for sure that we want
to spend the rest of our lives
together. And so... we're getting
married.

Excited CRIES of "congratulations". Debbie immediately clutches onto Sonia. Walter goes for Brad's hand.

DEBBIE

I knew it! I knew it! Oh hunnie, you'll probably think this as unhip, but it's really just clandestine! I've been glancing at my old wedding dress and I'm really eager for you to wear it.

Sonia and Brad right away trade timid stares.

SONIA

Well that's really sweet Mom.

JACOB

Except three of her could fit in that dress.

WALTER

And I finally have a son!

JACOB

...Dad-

WALTER

I mean- well... you know what I mean.

Sonia settles, and states with caution:

SONIA

Actually mom, that's the funny thing. We will be man and wife, and there'll be a kick ass celebration-

DEBBIE

Language.

SONIA

(correcting herself)
Sorry- something memorable with friends and family. But there won't actually be a wedding.

Stunned silence.

WALTER

I don't get it.

DEBBIE

What on earth? What do you mean?

SONIA

Spending twenty thousand dollars to put us in further in debt isn't the best way to celebrate this.

WALTER

So now you're too good to use your parents for money?

Brad moves over to her side as mediator. Remaining calm and unfazed.

BRAD

We don't want your money. This is about something else completely. Our passion and love.

DEBBIE

We'll then I'm confused.

SONIA

About what?

DEBBIE

About you.

SONIA

And what about me confuses you mom?

DEBBIE

After grace, please.

Sonia wants to say more, but can only offer,

SONIA

Fine.

Everyone bows their heads, takes the hand of someone sitting next to them. Sonia looks at Brad with his stiff

hands in the air. Spots Jacob waving merrily, loving everyone's discomfort. He mouth's "THIS IS AWESOME!" to her.

DEBBIE

Thank you, dear father, for bringing our family together to eat your abundance before us-

SONIA

(growing irritated)

Mom stop...

DEBBIE

-Continue to bless us with your prosperity as we may be an example to others in the world.

SONIA

Please mom...

DEBBIE

In Christ's name... amen.

SONIA

Are you tone deaf! What is your problem!

DEBBIE

(stands, shaken)

My problem is what happened to that little girl believed in the fantasy of what her life would be. White dress, prince charming who would carry you away to a castle on a hill. You would lie in bed at night and close your eyes and you had complete and utter faith.

SONIA

I also believed in Santa Claus and the Tooth Fairy.

DEBBIE

So one day you open your eyes and the fairy tale disappears?

SONIA

I have my fairy tale. And it's with Brad.

Debbie and Walter try to keep a blank demeanor.

SONIA

Let's go Brad. I'm *really*
feeling the love in this room.

Brad smiles, apologetically. And they're on out. Leaving Jacob in an awkward silence with his parents.

JACOB

This isn't uncomfortable in the least.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Brad's brushing his teeth. Sonia fumes as she flosses.

SONIA

She just flat out looked out
of her botoxed face right into
my face and said to my face that
she didn't approve.

BRAD

Maybe you should calm down. You
knew this was coming.

SONIA

She's like some environmental
disaster. War crimes could fit right
in that category too!

BRAD

You know... I never told you how
my dad gave a long speech about
marriage and the many ways
to make a woman happy.

He waits, but no response, Sonia preoccupied in her thoughts. It's starting to get uncomfortable. Brad gives it another go.

BRAD

It was like, a dirty talk.
(off her look)

Okay, you're gonna look back at
that and you're gonna laugh.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

It's a modern home with contemporary knickknacks about.
Brad and Sonia are entwined in bed, illuminated by
moonlight.

Sonia's awake, tosses and turns. Brad opens his eyes.

BRAD

You're mad at me and now you're
going to punish me by keeping
me awake all night.

She snuggles against him.

SONIA

Why would I be mad?

BRAD

Because I should've stepped in today.

SONIA

I'm glad you didn't. It was my fight.

Brad reaches for her hand, clasps onto it. A reassuring
gesture.

BRAD

It was our fight.

Sonia stares at the ceiling, as Brad traces his fingers
along her face gently.

BRAD

I'm part of your fairy tale?

She looks at him, and smiles. When,

There's a SUDDEN KNOCK at the front door.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Brad opens the door to reveal Jacob.

JACOB

High five brother!

Brad awkwardly follows through on the high five. Really wondering what he's even doing there.

JACOB

Awesome show sis. It was like the reenactment of the Titanic. Crash and GO BOOM!

BRAD

(weary)

The Titanic didn't go boom.

JACOB

Massive havoc, whatever.

Sonia's not loving his presence at the moment.

SONIA

Jacob I'm pretty beat so -

JACOB

Hey I'm with you. A wedding is just a spiffy ceremony where two people get married only to divorce or kill each other less than a year later. And while decades from now it'll be hello osteoporosis, there are two things you'll always remember about your ceremony. The friends who came, and the special song you danced to.

SONIA

And...?

Jacob moves into the living room, slouches down and motions for them to join him on the couch.

JACOB

Park it.

They sit. With great fanfare, Jacob retrieves some sheets from an envelope.

JACOB

Behold, good sir!

He hands it to her. She reads. Face registering shock.

SONIA

You've got to be kidding!

BRAD

What?

SONIA

He writes love poems!

JACOB

Don't make it a thing. It happens
sometimes.

She reads further. Grin from ear to ear. She loves it.

SONIA

This has to be in the ceremony.

BRAD

I'm trying to keep up here.

JACOB

I want it as your wedding song.
And consider it luck, cause
there's something to go along with it.

Jacob finds a portable CD player in the corner. He kneels down and pops in one of his discs. The SONG begins, and a mellow, hypnotic tune fills the space.

Brad grabs the STEREO REMOTE off the kitchen counter and turns up the volume to a roar. Jacob mouthing along with his lyrics.

JACOB

Always ripe and never gone,
I want it up to get it on.
Drifting out, losing time
I'll kiss your neck,
Forever mine.

(then)

Passion spills between these

sheets. Slip inside, and come with me.

(a moment)

Love me, love me

Say you do

Lets hide in bed all afternoon

We'll fly away

I'll explore you for hours

cause baby

you fill my head with flowers.

(then)

Passion spills in this melody.

Laugh it out, and play with me.

(a moment)

Don't want a life that's all the same

I need the crazy little things

that you do. Kiss and hug me/

Cling to me for all time

(then)

Passion spills in these rhymes

Sing this serenade

And stay with me

Just say that you're mine.

Brad and Sonia stand flabbergasted.

BRAD

Holy crap. That was-

SONIA

Totally awesome Jacob!

JACOB

(plays it off)

Nah it was nothing.

But it's obvious from Jacob's tears and flushed face that he's lying.

She offers a quick peck to his cheek. He blushes.

JACOB

So, any plans for tonight?

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

The three are slouched in bed, soda and junk scattered about. An obscure SOAP OPERA plays on the television.

JACOB

Now this is entertainment.

They stare at the screen for a beat.

SONIA

Ya know, yeah mom and dad are AWOL
and just completely uninterested.
But I find it a reason to be more of
a celebration. I always try to
avoid all my family gatherings anyway.

BRAD

You know Jacob, one day soon you'll
need to bring your fiancé to
meet the fam.

SONIA

He doesn't believe in love.

BRAD

Any specific reason?

JACOB

It's nature's way of tricking
people into reproducing.
(then; eager)
And about the tux. I'm thinking
white is more my color.

SONIA

Love that!

BRAD

I thought you'd want to wear black.

JACOB

Nobody likes a stereotype Brad.
Also, just a thought, what's up
with the bachelor party?

As Sonia inquiringly eyes Brad, we

FADE OUT.