

PORTFOLIO OF SCREENWRITING SAMPLES
ALEXANDER BUTTER

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Short Film – (Horror) - Jude and Cerberus his ever faithful dog, got more than they bargained for when spend a night in the woods.

“Desert Rose: West In The East” – Page 1- 4, 18 -19 and 99 - 103.

Feature Film - (*Action adventure set in 1886 Egypt*) - Joanna West races her former mentor across Egypt in search of the legendary Book of Athena; an artifact that promises unprecedented power for all who wield it. Outnumbered and outgunned, West needs to do all that she can to triumph; the fate of the world depends on it.

(Podcast of this script can be found on the Script Department)

<https://www.thescrptdepartment.net/actionadventure>

“Pound Per-Person” – Page 3 to End – Runner Up in “Spook Screen”

Screenplay Competition.

Short Film - (horror). Ryan finds a jar that contains a coin for every person it kills.

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Short Film - (western) - All is well in the Ballard homestead until a stranger happens upon their door.

“9th Symphony” – Page 4 - 6 (END).

Short Film - (horror) - It's Christmas Eve and Jocasta has to finish her 9th Symphony but as she plays, releases more than just notes.

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DOWN IN THE WOOD

Written by

Alexander Butter

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EXT. WOODS - EVENING

A size ten boot squelches into the mud; next is not a foot but a paw.

The dimming light pierces between the trees hitting a cluster of mushrooms stand alone on the side of a tree. A KNIFE SLICES THROUGH and a hand, encrusted with dirt, places the mushrooms into a courier bag.

Their coat is a full-length wax coat. They lift one of the mushrooms to their face. The face is of JUDE (53), what some would describe as an old hippy. His hair is matted, and a big grey beard mixed with yellow nicotine stains covers the lower half, whilst more encrusted mud covers the rest.

He TAKES A BITE of the fungus, as he has done a thousand times before. It tastes exquisite. He chucks the rest of it to his ever-faithful companion CERBERUS (8, in human years), a small, scraggily, Yorkshire terrier. Cerberus relishes the food, eating it before it has even hit the ground.

The two carry on their exploration through the woodland.

The deeper they go the denser the woods become. As they fight their way through the thicket, the two come to a clearing.

EXT. CLEARING, WOODS - NIGHT

A campfire CRACKLES as the flames roast the found mushrooms, skewed on a thin metal skewer.

Jude sits on a log next to it, smoking a rolled cigarette. Cerberus lies by the fire, basking in its heat.

For a moment, Jude struggles for a breath. Cerberus sits up. Jude regains control of his breathing, coughing it off, and looks at his worried partner.

JUDE

I'm fine.

Jude takes the skewer and pulls off a couple of mushrooms, eating one, and tossing the other to Cerberus. Cerberus rolls to his feet and eats.

JUDE (CONT'D)

Tomorrow we'll head for the hills,
and see what's on the other side.
For now, it's time we got some
sleep.

Jude lies down. Cerberus snuggles into him and the two settle in for a night of dreams.

As the two drift off, they are disturbed by the SNAPPING of branches as someone or something approaches. A LOW HUM of THROAT SINGING resonates through the air.

Jude knows better than to be seen and immediately tosses mud onto the fire, extinguishing it, and hides in the bushes.

He watches inquisitively through the branches, to see who these late-night intruders are.

Lights flicker through the trees. Jude watches with curiosity.

Emerging from the woods are tall, gangly creatures with sharp features and long hair, that reach down their backs. Not one of them is dressed, leaving their body parts exposed to the cold night air, but it doesn't affect them.

Jude's jaw drops as he watches the unearthly creatures' PRECESSION.

Several of the beings carry a throne made of wood and thorns. They use long sticks to keep it steady. Upon the large adorned seat is a creature wearing a crown of thorns.

Its eyes look straight ahead, never wavering from what will be its final destination.

The others move around the clearing forming a circle and raising their lanterns.

They place the throne and its rider in the centre of them all.

The carriers take their place in the circle. The seated creature rises. Nobility runs deep through it. Their chin is high, and they raise their arms and speak to their subjects. He is their KING.

Jude can only watch as curiosity outweighs his fear.

From the mouth of the creature comes a language unlike any other found on earth. The best comparison is to the most ancient of languages, resembling GUTTURAL NOISES mixed with CLICKS.

KING
Ooohnaya kik kik teau loome!

Jude's eyes are wide with wonder. Even Cerberus is locked on such sights.

SCREAMS of a girl can travel closer. Brought into the clearing is a GIRL (18) naked as the day she was birthed.

To her, this is no sight to behold but one of terror. She SCREAMS and cries hoping that anyone will hear her and come to her aide.

The King of the creatures steps forth and runs its long, sharp fingers over the Girl's young, supple flesh.

It whispers something into the Girl's ear and she immediately collapses to the floor, entranced.

Jude's look goes from one of intrigue to horror. He turns to Cerberus and in a hushed tone, speaks to his faithful companion.

JUDE
(whispering)
They're going to hurt that girl.

Cerberus gives a worried look back and a little growl. Jude's finger touches his lips SHUSHING the dog.

The King reaches for the Girl. A long tongue flicks out of its mouth and tastes her skin. It shivers back as the taste gives it an amphetamine-like hit. Its back arches as its head, facing the sky and SCREECHES.

The surrounding subjects begin their GUTTURAL SINGING again.

The King leans back towards his victim, fingers ready to pierce the virgin flesh.

Jude leaps in front of it like a gallant knight. He brandishes a service revolver and fires it into the air.

BANG!

The GUNSHOT rings out. The SINGING STOPS. The King is beyond angry.

JUDE (CONT'D)
Stay back you filthy beasts.

The King is reviled by Jude's presence.

Cerberus BARKS loud and as viciously as it can.

KING

Ooohnaya!

Jude trains his gun on the King. He knows exactly what it is and is weary of it.

Jude reaches down to the Girl, his eyes never leaving the King and grabs her bare arm, pulling her to her feet. She snaps out of her trance, the dead-eyed look has gone and replaced with sheer terror. She SCREAMS.

Jude squeezes her arm.

JUDE

Stay calm, I'm getting you out of here.

Something in his voice calms her. Making sure his gun never lowers, Jude and the Girl back away.

The King hates him. Its followers HISS and SNARL at Jude.

Jude gives a WHISTLE. Cerberus ceases its aggressive guarding and comes to Jude's heel.

They move back slowly, each of their eyes trained on the oncoming threat.

BANG!

The GUN FIRES into the air as Jude attempts to distract his attackers. It works.

The on-comers recoil. Jude, the Girl and Cerberus make their escape into the woods.

EXT. WOODS - CONTINUOUS

Jude, the Girl and Cerberus run as fast as they can through the dense woods.

Behind them, the creatures bound through the trees and plants with ease.

Jude fires back.

BANG! BANG!

Wood from the trees EXPLODES as the bullets crash into them.

The Creatures take to the treetops. Here they move far more gracefully. They leap from tree to tree, their speed increasing.

Jude shoots up.

BANG! BANG! CLICK! CLICK!

The gun is empty.

The panicked trio begin to slow as age and cold catch up with them.

Jude's breathing is heavy, he has to stop. The Girl stops with him and so does Cerberus.

The Girl pulls at his arm.

GIRL

What the hell are you doing? Come on!

Jude gives the Girl his coat. Underneath is a torn and dirty military jumper.

JUDE

Go without me. I'm dying anyway.

The SNAP of branches above alerts the Girl to the coming attackers. She doesn't hesitate and RUNS, leaving her rescuers. Jude FALLS BACK AGAINST A TREE, his breathing heavy. He looks at Cerberus.

JUDE (CONT'D)

You should go too.

Cerberus feels his master's pain and snuggles against him, nudging him with his nose. Jude lays his hand on Cerberus's head and strokes it lovingly.

Drop, drop, drop. Viscous liquid lands on Jude, and then two gangly hands of a creature grab his head, dragging Jude to his feet. Cerberus BARKS.

EXT. CLEARING, WOODS - MOMENTS LATER

The King sits on his throne, waiting. Ahead of him Jude and Cerberus are dragged out of the woods and presented to him. The King rises from his seat and towers over Jude and Cerberus.

KING

Human, you interrupted our festival of blood. For that, the consequence must be severe.

The Girl is dragged out of the forest, SCREAMING, by 3 creatures. She tries to fight but their strength is far more than hers.

They toss her to the feet of the King, stripping her of the coat. His attention diverts to the Girl. The others have remade their circle and SING in their guttural way.

The 3 hold her down. The King reaches down and with one hand PULLS OFF THE GIRL'S HEAD, WITH HER SPINE STILL ATTACHED.

Blood spurts all over the King, Jude, Cerberus and anyone close until it finally stops.

The King's jaw unhinges and swallows the head in one, slurping the spine down like spaghetti. It arches its back and screeches to the sky. Its body emanates a light.

The other creatures scurry in and feed on the Girl's corpse.

The King turns his attention to Jude and brings his fingers up to Jude's mouth. They extend down his throat, making him gag, as they reach the back of his throat and continue down. Jude's eyes roll back. Cerberus BARKS.

The fingers make their way through Jude's body and burst out of his ankles, turning into roots, forcing themselves deep into the ground.

Jude morphs from flesh to wood as his entire body turns into a large tree. The roots ensnarl Cerberus and transform the dog's body into a tree with its master.

The job is complete. The King takes his fingers out and watches the transformation. Everything is done. The King and his people revel in their sacrifice.

EXT. CLEARING, WOODS - MORNING

The sunrise shines its warming rays on the morning dew.

The newly formed Oak tree in the centre of the clearing. The Oak has a deformed lump at the bottom and BURLS that look like a face.

The King and his subjects leave the clearing in the same manner they arrived.

The silence is broken by the distant noise of CHAINSAWS CUTTING DOWN TREES. A LUMBERJACK (26), kitted out to be warm, carrying a CHAINSAW, walks into the clearing.

The Lumberjack is repulsed by the unsightly tree and starts his CHAINSAW.

LUMBERJACK

This one can definitely go.

The Lumberjack CUTS INTO THE TREE. From the TREES EYE BURL COMES SAP, RESEMBLING A TEAR, AND RUNS DOWN THE 'TREES FACE'.

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DESERT ROSE
WEST IN THE EAST

Written by

Alexander Butter

EXT. TEMPLE - DAY

A dusty valley surrounds the weather-beaten stone temple that has been lost to time and the desert. Columns support its pointed roof and stone steps lead to a giant door.

The style is more Greek in design, reminiscent of the Parthenon.

THE TITLE CARD:

Jerusalem - 1882

Horses, with satchels hanging off their saddles, are tied up.

Three American's out of their depth in the heat, are waiting.

JIM (40's) sits on a step, cooling himself with his panama hat. A bag slung over his shoulder.

DUNCAN (40's) his life has been tough and he wears every minute of it on his body.

EDWARD (20's) a baby faced boy from the south.

They all wear kaki shirts and trousers, as if it was some sort of uniform.

INT. TUNNEL, TEMPLE - DAY

A long stone tunnel that leads in to darkness.

BOOM. An explosion sends stone flying inwards.

The dust settles.

The silhouette of a woman is reflected in the dust. She is JOANNA WEST (30's).

She's dressed like a BOER. Her skin is dark. Her face grizzled with a cut on her lip. Her hair is short. Her accent British but with a twang of South African. But most importantly for her a CAVALRY SWORD on her hip.

DUNCAN

Whoo wee!! That blew like a son of a bitch.

WEST

You people have no respect for the ancient world.

JIM
And you do?

West scowls.

JIM (CONT'D)
You first, Desert Rose.

West hates being called that.

WEST
That is not my name.

JIM
You first then, West.

Jim lights a torch with a match from his pocket and the tunnel illuminates. The stone block walls are lined with cobwebs of spiders long dead. The tunnel runs off into the distance.

Jim points for West to take the first steps down the tunnel. Checking every corner of the tunnel as she does.

They all follow in the same tentative manner.

As they continue, they ease. But West is always on guard.

EDWARD
Why do they call you Desert Rose?

JIM
It's because she's a flower.

DUNCAN
...with a sweet caboose.

Duncan slaps West on the bottom.

With flash of steel, West's blade is out and on Duncan's neck.

All of Duncan's bravado gone.

Edward can't help but stare in shock.

Jim is unimpressed.

WEST
A Desert Rose is a cactus and like
a cactus if you touch me, I will
prick you. Get it.

Duncan swallows hard.

JIM

West let him go. Duncan stop being
an ass.

West holds her sword at Duncan's throat making sure he's got
the point before she sheaves it. Duncan rubs his neck.

They carry on down the long tunnel. Duncan's bravado slowly
recovers.

DUNCAN

What you gonna do with your split?

EDWARD

My Mama wants a farm.

Duncan chuckles.

DUNCAN

Screw your mama, get a big old
house for yourself. That's what I'm
gonna do.

JIM

Stay on the job.
(to West)
You've dragged us halfway around
the world, it had better be here.

WEST

Don't you trust me?

JIM

No.

West notices that random stones on the floor change colour,
they become a darker. Her mind whirling of what it could
mean.

Edward steps on one of the darker stones. The stone breaks.

Edward falls in.

He clings on to the edge for dear life.

Everyone looks for a place to stand that isn't going to
collapse.

West makes her way towards Edward.

EDWARD

Oh my god, help me!

WEST

Just hold on and don't look down.

Edward makes the mistake of looking down.

Beneath Edward's dangling body are corpses and skeletons of grave robber's past.

EDWARD

I looked down.

West, making sure to step carefully, bends down, hand reached out.

WEST

Grab on.

Edward reaches out but a stone by his hand falls into the abyss.

Edward clings on tighter.

Edward tries again. His hand meets West's.

The stones by Edward's other hand give way.

West grabs Edward's arm and drags him up.

The two get to their feet.

EDWARD

Thanks.

WEST

Be more careful.

JIM

Come on, let's go.

Jim and Duncan carefully walk on.

Edward gives a thankful smile to West before following.

Cautiously they all continue down the tunnel, stepping ever so carefully.

The tunnel opens into a circular room.

(END)

EXT. AL-AZHAR MOSQUE, CAIRO - DAY

The city is alive. Shops and businesses are still open. People walk about their lives.

TITLE CARD:

Cairo

OMAR BEAUMONT (early 20's) born and bred in Egypt. This is his city, though he's never felt comfortable in it. A man from wealth but has never had to work for it. His suit is dark and expensive.

Beaumont sits leaning against one of its pillars. Next to him his satchel. Beaumont sketches the Al-Azhar Mosque in his SKETCH BOOK with such detail you would assume he spent years studying it or at least looking at it.

Beaumont sees some BRITISH SOLDIERS pushing some of the locals around.

Beaumont is not happy with the new invading forces. Instead of being their next target he decides to leave.

Beaumont puts his SKETCH BOOK in his satchel and walks off.

A YOUNG BOY (7) with ragged clothes knocks against Beaumont.

BEAUMONT

Excuse me.

The Young Boy gives him a smile.

Beaumont is unnerved and checks his body for his wallet. It's gone.

The Young Boy runs off. Beaumont chases him.

BEAUMONT (CONT'D)

You there, stop! Give me my wallet back!

EXT. CAIRO - CONTINUOUS

Beaumont pushes through the crowd, each person a obstacle. While the Young Boy weaves through them with ease.

Beaumont chases the Young Boy to the end of the street.

There are no shops. There really isn't much of anything.

The Young Boy turns down an alley way.

Beaumont has him now. There's nowhere to run. Beaumont turns down the alley.

The Young Boy trips and falls.

Beaumont finally catches up and looms over the Young Boy.

BEAUMONT
My wallet, please.

A CRASH of crates comes from a doorway behind Beaumont. Beaumont is startled and turns to the noise.

The Young Boy scrambles to his feet and rushes at Beaumont making him recoil in fear and clearing his path.

As one last insult the Young Boy kicks him in the shin. Laughing as he does.

Beaumont hops as the pain shoots through his leg.

With the Young Boy gone, Beaumont investigates the noise.

BEAUMONT (CONT'D)
Hello?

Beaumont moves closer and closer. He's nervous.

BEAUMONT (CONT'D)
Is everything alright?

Several crates are scattered. Beaumont notices a pair of boots lying on the ground.

It's West.

(END)

INT. BURIAL CHAMBER, LIGHTHOUSE OF ALEXANDRIA - CONTINUOUS

A British Soldier pours a barrel of gunpowder around the chamber.

The British Soldier leaves. Jim lights a match and ignites the powder. Flames rage around the room. Jim and Edward run out of the chamber.

Adrenaline kicks in and West comes alive. She finds her way to her feet.

BEAUMONT

Allah save us.

A surprisingly calm West moves towards a sarcophagus and rubs the ropes binding her on the sharp edge.

WEST

Just calm down.

BEAUMONT

Calm down. The place is on fire.

The rope frays. West rips her arms apart, freeing herself. She helps free Beaumont.

The flames rise.

West looks for a way out. Beaumont is still panicking.

WEST

Beaumont help me find a way out.

The flames have almost engulfed the room. The smoke causes West to cough as she looks for a way out.

The smoke is making it harder and harder to breath.

West rips her sleeve off and ties it around her mouth.

Beaumont does the same. It has bought themselves some extra moments.

West makes her way towards the tunnel entrance. Avoiding the flames as she does.

The tunnel is a mass of fire. No exit.

West turns back to the chamber. Fear sets in.

WEST (CONT'D)

Can't get out that way.

BEAUMONT
We're trapped.

West grabs Beaumont.

WEST
I need you to calm down. You and I
both know that the people who built
this would build themselves a back
way out in case of collapse. So
where could that be?

Beaumont calms and looks around.

A backdraft shoots a fire ball down the tunnel.

BEAUMONT
Look out.

But it's too late and it hits West, throwing her back against
the wall.

BEAUMONT (CONT'D)
West!

Beaumont runs to her. She is barely conscious and hurt.

Beaumont tries to rally her.

BEAUMONT (CONT'D)
West, are you ok? West.

West comes around and tries to stand.

BEAUMONT (CONT'D)
Are you ok?

WEST
I'm fine. It just knocked the wind
out of me. We need to find a way
out.

Beaumont helps her to her feet.

Then a ray of hope.

Beaumont spots a stone high on the wall, where the smoke
seems to be filtering out.

BEAUMONT
This way.

Beaumont and West scabble their way towards it.

He places West against the wall. She is still coughing hard.

Beaumont reaches up but the stone is just out of reach.

Beaumont moves around.

He pushes against a sarcophagus. It moves slightly. He tries again this time putting all his weight into it. It moves. He digs in with all his might and pushes it towards the wall.

Reaching the wall, he climbs on top and feels around the stone.

Beaumont tries to pull on it, but it won't move.

Beaumont jumps down and pushes the lid off another sarcophagus. Inside is a body holding a sword.

Beaumont rips the sword off the corpse.

BEAUMONT (CONT'D)

I just need to borrow this.

He jumps back on to the sarcophagus and jams the sword into the outline of the stone. Using the sword as a lever, Beaumont forces the stone out.

CRASH. The stone hits the floor next to West.

The flames get ever closer.

Behind the stone is a crawl way.

BEAUMONT (CONT'D)

West.

West is groggy, the smoke has filled her lungs.

BEAUMONT (CONT'D)

I need you to climb up.

Beaumont helps West up.

West waves him off. She climbs up onto the sarcophagus and into the crawl space.

Beaumont, right behind, pulls himself in, just as the room is swallowed by flames.

INT. STAIRWAY, LIGHTHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A creaky wooden spiralling staircase reaches to the top of the building.

Beaumont and an injured West makes their way up the staircase.

The flames follow from the crawl space to the bottom of the staircase.

The staircase wobbles. West and Beaumont hold on to the railing. It snaps in West's hand. She leans over seeing the fire consume the floor beneath them.

West steadies herself. As she does the step beneath her gives-way.

West falls through the staircase. As she falls, she catches herself on the step. West dangles in mid-air, the flames have consumed the ground beneath her.

BEAUMONT

West! Hang on!

Beaumont reaches down and pulls her up.

They carry on up the staircase. With every step another step falls apart. Falling into the fire below.

As they reach the last few steps the, the staircase falls apart.

West and Beaumont launch themselves on to the platform at the top of the building.

The flames have engulfed the stairs. There is no way back.

A hatch is set into the roof. Beaumont tries to push it open.

WEST

Hit it!

Beaumont slams his shoulder into the hatch, and it swings open.

EXT. ROOFTOP, LIGHTHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

West and Beaumont clamber on to the domed roof. The wind swirls around them.

Beneath them the sea. With no way back, West prepares to jump.

BEAUMONT

There's no way down. What are you doing?

WEST
We have to jump.

BEAUMONT
No.

WEST
Yes. Ready? On three.

BEAUMONT
Wait...

WEST
One.

BEAUMONT
I can't...

WEST
Two.

West grabs hold of Beaumont.

BEAUMONT
...swim.

WEST
Three.

West propels herself off the roof with Beaumont in tow.

The fall is long. The screams are loud echoing across the sea.

They SPLASH into the sea.

(END)

A POUND PER PERSON

Written by

Alexander Butter

Property Of Abscreenwriting

INT. UPSCALE CLUB - LATER

Ryan is at the bar buying drinks. He pays with pound coins, much to the bartenders annoyance.

Behind him a WOMAN collapses. Panic ensues around her

INT. RYAN'S FLAT, FRONT ROOM - NIGHT

Ryan sits at a table taking one pound from a jar at a time and stacking them. Many piles of coins already cover the table. The T.V plays a crappy sitcom. Ryan flicks through the channels. The programs are terrible. However, the news catches his eye and he stops.

NEWS REPORTER (V.O)

These last few months thousands of people all over the world have been reported dying of unexplained heart seizures.

Ryan sits up paying attention.

NEWS REPORTER (V.O) (CONT'D)

So far no one knows what causes it or why it happens.

The Creature appears in the corner of the room. Ryan is terrified.

RYAN

What are you?

The Creature points to the mason jar.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Is this you? Are you the reason I can get this money?

The Creature nods. Ryan reaches in and pulls out a coin. The Creature disappears. Ryan is surprised.

Ryan stands and moves towards the corner of the room where the Creature once stood. As Ryan gets closer to the corner the Creature reappears, startling Ryan backwards. Ryan hits the table and spills all of the coins. Blood drips off of the creatures hands.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Fuck! You gave me a heart attack.

Ryan sees the blood and looks over to the news report.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Is that what's happening is that me? I mean you. Us.

The Creature nods. Ryan is shocked, not knowing how to feel about that.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Ryan walks down the street, ruminating. A HOMELESS PERSON is sat in a doorway.

HOMELESS PERSON

Spare some change.

Ryan tosses him a pound coin without thinking.

HOMELESS PERSON (CONT'D)

God bless you.

The Homeless Man clutches their chest and slumps to the ground. Ryan panics and runs off.

INT. RYAN'S FLAT - DAY

Ryan bursts through the door, slamming it behind him. Panicking he grabs the jar and throws it out the window.

Ryan looks out the window and sees the jar smashed on the ground.

INT. RYAN'S FLAT - NIGHT

Ryan is sleeping, haunted by his dreams. Knock, knock, knock. Ryan is stirred from his sleep. The gentle knocking continues. Knock, knock, knock. Ryan's eyes open. Sat on top of his wardrobe is the Creature holding the jar. Ryan is shocked away.

RYAN

I threw it out. I got rid of you.

The jar disappears and reappears next to Ryan. Ryan grabs it and throws it at the Creature.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Fuck you!

The Creature disappears and reappears on top of Ryan, pinning to the bed. Ryan is terrified. The Creature puts its face so close to Ryan's.

The black ooze from its mouth drips onto him. The Creature pries Ryan's mouth open and drips the ooze inside.

EXT. STREET - DAY

TITLE: 6 MONTHS LATER

Ryan is living on the streets. He's dirty and disheveled. Ryan sits in a doorway. A constant stream of people walk past.

RYAN
Spare some change.

Everyone ignores Ryan. Veronica walks past. Seeing Ryan she stops.

VERONICA
Ryan?

Ryan tries not to be noticed.

VERONICA (CONT'D)
Ryan, is that you?

Ryan gets to his feet.

VERONICA (CONT'D)
What happened to you?

RYAN
This isn't what it looks like.

VERONICA
Looks like you're a stinking homeless person. I thought you were rich now?

RYAN
Not anymore.

VERONICA
Good, you didn't deserve it. You were scum then and you still are. I hope you freeze out here.

Ryan is outraged by this. He sees a truck barreling down the road. Ryan sees his moment and pushes Veronica. Veronica stumbles backwards into the road. BANG. The truck hits Veronica. It's breaks screeches as it stops. Ryan is surprised by his actions but doesn't regret it.

Ryan opens his fist and inside is a pound coin.

WHEN THE MAN COMES AROUND

Written by

Alexander Butter

INT. BALLARD CABIN, KITCHEN/LIVING AREA - LATER

Inside the rustic cabin. The orange glow of the setting sun lights the room.

A wooden table sits in the middle of the open plan kitchen. Lanterns hang on the walls throwing out just enough light to see by.

Billy is lighting a fire on the other side of the room.

Mary is stirring a large pot of Rabbit Stew.

Lester walks in and sits down at the table.

Mary fills a bowl with the Rabbit Stew and places it in front of Lester.

MARY

Billy come away from there.

Billy leaves the fire and comes to the table.

Mary serves him a bowl before sitting down herself with a bowl.

They all hold hands in a circle and close their eye's. Mary leads them in prayer.

MARY (CONT'D)

Thank you Lord for blessing us with
the food to fill our bellies and
for the health that we hang on to.
Amen.

BILLY & LESTER

Amen.

The all open their eyes and break the circle. They begin to eat.

BILLY

Pa.

Lester grunts in acknowledgement.

BILLY (CONT'D)

When can I learn to shoot?

MARY

You're far too young.

LESTER

I was about his age when I learnt.
Tomorrow, how about you and I take
a walk down the trail. We can take
the rifle and try and bag us
something good for dinner.

Billy is excited.

MARY

Thought you were going to dig the
well. You've been putting it off
all summer.

LESTER

You're right. Maybe next week then.

BILLY

Please Pa.

Billy looks to Mary for approval.

MARY

Fine. But no rabbits, they're a
murder to skin. Now eat up.

Billy, happy, scoffs his food down.

Mary shoots Lester a cheeky smile. Lester reciprocates.
Lester coughs hard.

MARY (CONT'D)

Drink your water.

Lester takes his glass and has a swig. It eases his cough.

KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK.

A rhythmic beating on the door makes everyone pause.

KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK.

Mary gets up and answers the door.

The sun has now set. The outside world is thrown into
darkness.

In its shadow is CLAY STANTON (20's), a roguish young man.

CLAY

Hello Ma'am, sorry to disturb you
on such a night, but is this the
road to Little Ridge?

MARY

It is but Little ridge is about another day's ride. It's not an easy path.

CLAY

Seems I've got quite a night ahead of me. Thank you kindly.

Clay turns to leave. Lester appears in the doorway.

LESTER

What you wantin' in Little Ridge?

CLAY

Work. An old friend tells me of a job there.

LESTER

I'm afraid your friend is mistaken. There's no work in Little Ridge.

CLAY

Oh.

LESTER

I may have a few jobs, if you're not afraid of some hard labour.

CLAY

No sir I am not.

LESTER

Good. Well, I'm Lester Ballard, this here is Mary and my boy over there is Billy.

CLAY

Nice to meet you all. I'm Clay. Clay Stanton.

MARY

Have you eaten?

CLAY

No Ma'am I have not.

LESTER

Eat with us.

CLAY

I would hate to intrude. I'll just set up my camp, if that's ok with you?

LESTER

I'd hear nothing of it. We have plenty of food and a warm fire.

Mary ushers him in.

CLAY

Much appreciated.

Clay walks in, he has a terrible limp and sits at the table next to Billy.

CLAY (CONT'D)

This is mighty generous of you.

Mary places a bowl of Rabbit Stew in front of Clay. Clay starts to eat.

BILLY

We normally pray.

MARY

Billy! You don't presume how someone should live their life.

LESTER

So, where'd you from?

CLAY

A tiny town in Minnesota. Elmmington. Ever heard of it?

LESTER

No. Sounds nice though.

MARY

How's your Mama feel about you being so far away?

CLAY

My Mama is dead Ma'am and my Papa too.

LESTER

Sorry to hear that.

CLAY

Time heals all wounds.

Billy notices Clay's revolver.

BILLY

Hey Pa, he's got a gun too.

CLAY
You wanna have a look?

Billy excitedly nods.

Clay pulls out his revolver and places it on the table.

CLAY (CONT'D)
You a shooter?

BILLY
Pa is gonna teach me tomorrow. He's
the best shooter out there.

LESTER
That was many years ago.

MARY
No guns on the table.

CLAY
Sorry Ma'am. I meant no disrespect.

Clay holsters his gun.

The fire on the other side of the room is fading.

MARY
Billy, put another log on the fire
for me.

CLAY
I'll do it.

Clay gets to his feet and limps over to the fire.

Lester coughs. He goes for his water, but his convulsions
make him knock it over.

Mary springs up and gets a rag. She dries the water.

MARY
Careful.

Lester waves her away with an "I'm ok" attitude. Lester swigs
what's left of the water in the glass and finally stops
coughing.

Clay takes a log from the pile and throws it on the fire. It
takes a second, but the log catches fire and the flames rise.

BILLY
What happened to your leg?

MARY

Billy! Where are your manners today?

Clay chuckles.

CLAY

It's fine.

Clay stands up and walks back towards the table. He stops and rolls up his trouser leg, revealing a WOODEN LEG.

BILLY

Wow.

CLAY

I made it from a tree on my parents' farm. Something to remember them by.

Clay rolls down his trouser leg.

LESTER

You ok to work in that thing?

CLAY

It's not hindered me yet.

MARY

They raised you well.

CLAY

Thanks Ma'am.

MARY

What was it that took them?

CLAY

When I was a kid my Papa caught some rustlers taking are sheep. He went after them with his rifle and shot two of them and wounded another before they took off. About a night or so later they came back. They dragged my Mama and Papa out of their beds and strung them up to our tree outside. They even stole one of my Papa's custom pistols. So, I got my Papa's rifle and pointed it right at the men. I remember them laughing before one took a shot and hit me square in the leg.

MARY

Holy Mary and Joseph. Did they catch the men?

CLAY

Unfortunately, not. Since that day I swore to find them and make them pay.

As quick as a flash Clay draws his gun and shoots Lester twice in the chest.

BANG. BANG.

The force of the bullets knocks Lester and his chair to the ground.

Billy is scared. Mary runs over and cuddles him protectively.

Clay walks over and lifts Lester's shirt. There is a scar just above his waist.

Lester springs to life and grabs Clay.

Clay shoots Lester a few more times, this time in the head.

BANG. BANG. BANG.

Lester is well and truly dead.

Clay gets back to his feet.

Mary grabs a fire poker and points it at Clay, whilst holding Billy behind her.

CLAY (CONT'D)

I'm sorry about that Ma'am.

MARY

You stay back!

CLAY

Your husband here wasn't always Lester Ballard. He was once Lester James. I've been hunting him and his friends for years. He was the last. The one who did this to my leg.

Clay pulls out a wanted poster from his pocket and shows it to Mary.

CLAY (CONT'D)

I believed he was in Little Ridge.
It was quite a shock when I saw him
at the door.

Clay puts the wanted poster back in his pocket.

MARY

You could've just waited; he was
dying of consumption.

CLAY

He wasn't God's to take.

Clay goes to Lester's body. He takes his pistol and empties
out the bullets. He puts the pistol in his belt. He then
rummages through his pockets.

MARY

What gives you the right to do
this?

The pockets are empty.

CLAY

What gave him the right to destroy
my life?

Clay lifts Lester's legs.

MARY

You just leave him right there.

CLAY

I can't do that. No body, no
reward.

Clay drags Lester's body towards the door.

Mary rushes at him. She swings the poker and hits Clay in the
face. Cutting him.

Clay drops Lester's body.

CLAY (CONT'D)

Ma'am stop.

Mary swings again.

Without hesitation, Clay pulls his revolver.

BANG.

Mary drops to the floor, a bullet hole between her eyes.

9th Symphony

Written by

Alexander Butter

Property Of Abscreenwriting

INT. STUDIO 118 - NIGHT

The noise from the Child's imprisonment lingers on Jocasta as she plays the piano.

She stops and rubs her tired eyes.

Ahead, is a BURNT WOMAN, around (50) but it's hard to know because her body is blackened, with parts melted away.

The Burnt Woman screeches like a banshee as she runs at Jocasta.

Jocasta, terrified, falls back off her seat. She shrieks with fear, her eyes clenched shut.

As she opens them the figure has gone.

Jocasta has had enough.

She grabs the sheet music and stuffs it in her bag.

Jocasta goes straight for the door and pulls at the handle. It won't open. She pulls and pulls but it still won't open. She bangs on the door.

JOCASTA

Hello?!!!! Mike!!! Mike!!! Open
up!!!!

She bangs harder and harder.

The lights go out and are replaced by a flickering of ambers and reds.

Behind her, a fire rages.

Boney burnt fingers reach around her face and squeeze. The terror makes Jocasta scream.

Jocasta rushes forward. Turning she sees the spectre and the fire.

Jocasta hits the fire alarm.

A red light flashes. A high pitch screech rings around the room for all to hear.

Jocasta comes face to face with the Burnt Woman. The voice of the Burnt Woman comes out. It's raspy, smoke slithers out instead of breath.

BURNT WOMAN

No breaks.

The Burnt Woman slams her head into the door over and over.

Blood splatters on the door where the Jocasta's head has been.

Jocasta passes out.

INT. CORRIDOR, HOUSE - DAY

Jocasta walks down a white corridor. Ahead of her is the piano room and the Child.

The Child is sitting at the piano playing the '9th Symphony' concerto.

INT. PIANO ROOM, HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Jocasta stands next to the Child as she plays.

The Child turns to her and in an anxious, whispered voice gives her a warning.

CHILD
She's coming.

Jocasta looks down the corridor. The Burnt Woman runs at them, arms wide scorching the walls with her fingertips.

BURNT WOMAN
No breaks!!!

Jocasta cowers.

INT. STUDIO 118 - NIGHT

The studio burns. The fire alarm rings loud.

Jocasta's eyes flutter as she regains consciousness. Blood runs from her skull down her face.

Fire has consumed the entire room, there is no escaping it.

Jocasta sits up, her body barricading the door. She coughs as the smoke fills her lungs.

On the opposite side, the Burnt Woman watches Jocasta.

Jocasta shouts over the cacophony of the fire and alarm.

JOCASTA
What do you want?!

The Burnt Woman just stares at her as the room fills with flames.

BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG!

Frantic banging, as Mike hammers his fist on the door.

MIKE (O.C.)
Jocasta!!

The hammering turns to thumping as Mike uses his shoulder. The door opens just enough so Mike can put his head and arm in.

To Mike, there is no fire. The room is just the same as he left it.

Mike sees Jocasta, slumped against the door.

MIKE (CONT'D)
My god, Jocasta.

For Jocasta, the room still burns. She suffocates as the smoke fills her lungs.

Mike forces the door open and grabs her arms, dragging her out.

Jocasta's final breath seeps from her mouth. The Burnt woman watches, making sure the job is done.

And then it is. Jocasta is DEAD.

INT. PIANO ROOM, HOUSE - DAY

The Child stands over the beaten body of the Teacher trapped in the grand piano. The riding crop in the Child's hand is covered in blood.

The Child slams the lid of the grand piano closed.

She pours petrol over the piano, strikes a match and without a pause drops it. Within seconds the piano is engulfed in flames.

The screams of the Teacher ring out as the strings absorb her anguish.

THE GRAND PIANO BURNS