

HELLFIRE

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT./EXT. BURNING HOUSE - NIGHT

A conflagration inside a three-story home. Wood sizzles and the air roars like a gale.

A lone firefighter stumbles along the hallway, arms up to protect his face mask. The front door hangs open a mere twenty feet from him, beckoning.

He takes a step and the floor crumbles, exploding with flame as his leg falls through. He screams--

The gloved hand of another firefighter grabs his arm, stops his fall.

The firefighter hauls him out of the floor and propels him towards the open door. He stumbles on the porch, falls to his knees.

He looks back, sees his rescuer standing inside, half-turned to him with a hand raised in salute. The back of his yellow jacket reads MAYERS.

The ceiling collapses, burying Mayers in flaming timber.

LATER

The flashing red lights of three fire engines and two ambulances strobe across the houses along the street, casting a blood-red hue on the many bystanders watching.

DALE MCCORMICK (30) sits on the bumper of one ambulance, breathing deeply from an oxygen mask. His eyes flick to the front door of the house, then quickly back to the ground in front of him.

A chorus of cheers and claps draw his attention back to the house. Two firefighters support a third, hauling him across the lawn towards the ambulances.

McCormick's eyes stream tears, his oxygen mask forgotten.

The firefighters lay RYAN MAYERS (27) on a stretcher. Soot and charcoal mar his rugged good looks.

Paramedics slip an oxygen mask over his head. His eyes slide open for a moment and meet McCormick's.

McCormick tries to speak but chokes. He just nods his thanks.

Mayers smiles as his eyes slide closed. The paramedics lift the stretcher into the ambulance and it takes off even before the door closes.

The two firefighters who hauled Mayers out stand behind McCormick, watching the ambulance.

FIREFIGHTER #1
(low voice)
Damndest thing I ever saw, man.

FIREFIGHTER #2
Tell me about it.

McCormick turns to face them.

MCCORMICK
How'd you find him?

The two firefighters share a look.

FIREFIGHTER #1
He, ah--

FIREFIGHTER #2
It wasn't as bad as it looked. We got lucky. He got lucky.

They don't elaborate, returning their attention to the fire. McCormick shakes his head and takes a deep breath of oxygen.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - THE NEXT DAY

A private hospital room filled with flowers and gift baskets.

Mayers wakes slowly, blinking at the bright sunshine streaming onto his face.

He spies a plastic cup of water on the rolling tray and guzzles it down.

He holds out his arms, inspecting them. Not a scratch.

Feels his face and hair.

Tests his range of motion.

He lies back, puzzled but satisfied.

LATER

A NURSE (40) enters with a blood cart. She smiles warmly when she sees he's awake.

NURSE

Good morning, Mr. Mayers! How are you feeling?

MAYERS

Great. I feel great.

NURSE

Wonderful! I just need to draw some blood, okay?

Mayers presents his arm.

NURSE (CONT'D)

Heard you saved someone last night. Another firefighter?

She produces five vials and lays them on top of the cart.

MAYERS

Right place at the right time, that's all.

NURSE

Handsome and modest. Hold still now.

The nurse grabs his arm hard and pulls out a ceremonial dagger from the cart.

Mayers yanks his arm but she hold him like a vice.

She draws a long, slow cut across his forearm. Ryan screams.

NURSE (CONT'D)

There, that wasn't so bad, was it?

The nurse holds a vial under the blood streaming from his arm, catching only a bit of it.

The nurse smiles, her mouth full of pointed teeth and eyes black as pitch.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - LATER

Mayers sits up, gasping. He checks his arm but finds nothing.

ANNA-MARIA LOPEZ (24), beautiful with barely tamed hair and sharp business clothes, sits in a chair by the door. She looks up from her data pad but doesn't say anything, just studies him.

Mayers spots her and his brow furrows.

MAYERS

Who are you?

Lopez purses her lips and then smiles. She walks to him, hand extended.

LOPEZ

Anna-Maria Lopez. Investigator.

MAYERS

(shakes her hand)

How long have you been waiting?

LOPEZ

Half hour or so. Do you want me to get you anything?

Mayers looks to the door as though expecting someone.

LOPEZ (CONT'D)

Mr. Mayers?

MAYERS

No, that's all right. You have questions for me?

Lopez searches his face for a moment.

LOPEZ

Just one. What did you see in the fire?

Mayers looks at her, puzzled.

MAYERS

Fire. Lots of it.

Lopez holds out a card.

LOPEZ

I'll be in touch. Be careful.

Mayers takes the card hesitantly. It bears only a handwritten phone number.

MAYERS

What's this for?

Lopez stops at the door.

LOPEZ

For when careful isn't enough.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Mayers exits the hospital with McCormick.

The two men approach an SUV, watched by a dark figure on a parked motorcycle.

INT. MEN'S ROOM, KILLARNEY'S PUB - LATER

Mayers stands at the urinal, trying to maintain his balance.

The door opens and a short BIKER (40) strides into one of the stalls.

A thunderous fart rumbles from the stall. Tiles rattle and dust spills from the ceiling panels.

Mayers half-turns to look at the stall. The biker's boots don't quite reach the floor.

Suddenly, Mayers heaves and nearly retches. He desperately tries to block his nose from the smell. His eyes water.

He grabs the door but the handle comes off in his hand.

A large splash comes from the stall. Mayers bends down to look.

The biker's skin and clothes lie on the floor like a discarded wetsuit.

Mayers recoils, then freezes. Another splash.

He looks at the door pleadingly. Looks back at the stall and pulls his cell phone out. He dials McCormick's number.

The phone rings and rings. No answer.

He mouths "Fuck!". Pulls the card out of his pocket.

A splash and a thud that cracks porcelain. Water drips and runs down the toilet bowl.

Mayers dials the number. It rings once.

A garbled cacophony of sound explodes from the phone at an impossible volume. Mayers yells and throws the phone away from him out of reflex.

Something screeches from the stall, high-pitched and in pain.

A long, crimson slug-like creature plops to the floor. It shies away from the warbling phone. Towards him.

Mayers stares, unable to move. The slug, big as his leg, slithers faster, leaving a steaming slime trail.

The door behind Mayers flies open and Lopez grabs him, hauls him backwards into--

PUB HALLWAY

Lopez drops Mayers and yanks the door closed. She holds up her data pad for reference and hastily draws a circle on the door with a piece of chalk, followed by an arcane symbol in the center.

Just as she finishes, the door thuds hard enough to splinter.

LOPEZ

Get up!

Mayers scrambles to his feet, staring at the door. It thuds again and cracks from the bottom up to the circle.

LOPEZ (CONT'D)

Move your ass!

She pushes Mayers and they run.

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - LATER

Lopez races up to a parked motorcycle, a real crotch rocket. She leaps on and jams her key in.

LOPEZ

Get on!

Mayers stays rooted to the sidewalk.

MAYERS

First tell me what the hell is going on.

The motorcycle revs loudly. Lopez glares at him.

The pub door flies open and the short biker runs out, looking around. He spots Mayers and runs right at him.

Mayers hops onto the motorcycle behind Lopez.

The motorcycle burns rubber as it peels away. In the smoke, the short biker's eyes burn red.

EXT. BURNED HOUSE - LATER

The motorcycle screeches to a halt outside the house that was on fire the previous day.

MAYERS

What are we doing here?

Lopez dismounts.

LOPEZ

You're going to show me what you saw.

Mayers' face clouds.

MAYERS

I didn't see anything.

LOPEZ

We don't have time for this.

She grabs him and throws him off the bike. He lands heavily on his back.

Lopez holds out a transistor radio. It warbles with static and something like bagpipes.

LOPEZ (CONT'D)

Show me.

Mayers picks himself up slowly.

MAYERS

Heck of a way to ask.

LOPEZ

We don't have much time.

Mayers leads Lopez to the charred door. The hinges protest loudly when he pries it open.

What used to be a living room has been turned into a mound of burned and broken wood, tile, and plaster.

The walls remain mostly intact, only superficially singed and showing signs of smoke and water damage. Blue sky can be seen above.

Mayers looks around in awe. Touches singed wallpaper in disbelief.

MAYERS

When the inspector asked for my report he didn't believe me. I thought I imagined it, but now...

Lopez pulls out her data pad. She flips through a series of symbols before finding the one she wants.

She draws the symbol on the back of the door with a piece of charcoal.

LOPEZ

What did you see here?

MAYERS

Fire, everywhere. The walls, the ceiling, the floor. After I got McCormick out, the floor gave--

Mayers looks at the pit for a long time.

MAYERS (CONT'D)

The heat was distorting everything. I had smoke in my eyes. I didn't see--

LOPEZ

Tell me!

Mayers looks away in shame.

MAYERS

I saw the devil.

LOPEZ

(tapping her pad)
Describe him.

Mayers looks at her incredulously.

MAYERS

Uh...okay. Big, red, nearly naked, yellow eyes, big ass horns, long black hair, black fangs--

LOPEZ

Like this?

She shows him an image almost exactly like he described. He recoils in fear.

MAYERS

Yes! Oh, God! What the hell is that?

Lopez shakes her head, puts the pad away.

LOPEZ

You should be dead.

MAYERS

I was lucky!

LOPEZ

No! Not because of the fire. Because no one sees a greater demon and lives.

Mayers looks at the pit again.

MAYERS

So what I felt was real?

Lopez draws more symbols around the pit. As she gets closer to the rubble, the static from the radio clears and the bagpipes turn to screams.

LOPEZ

That's enough for now. We gotta go.

She pushes him out the door.

LOPEZ (CONT'D)

Take off your shirt.

MAYERS

What?

LOPEZ

Now.

Mayers lifts his shirt over his head. Lopez takes a UV light from her pocket and shines it across his chest.

Two glaring eyes stare back at her.

MAYERS

What the fuck is that?

LOPEZ

You've been marked.

MAYERS

Get it off me!

Lopez makes a call on her cell phone.

LOPEZ

I'm bringing him in.

She hangs up.

MAYERS

I'm not going anywhere with you until you tell me what's going on.

LOPEZ

Forget what you think you know. Magic is real. Demons are real. I'm a witch.

(off Mayers' look)

Spells and broomsticks and cauldrons, that's us. And right now I'm trying to keep you alive. Got it?

Lopez's cell phone chimes. She looks at the symbol on the screen.

She grabs Mayers and drags him onto the bike.

Behind them, the front door of the house opens and a dark figure steps out wearing a heavy coat and wide-brimmed hat.

MAYERS

Go! Go! Go!

The motorcycle roars to life and peals away.

The figure watches them race away up the street.

EXT. CITY STREETS - LATER

The motorcycle stops at a red light.

MAYERS

Where are we going?

LOPEZ

I'm taking you to the coven.

To Be Continued