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 unsturdy 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.