

Sacrifice

Written by

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**INT. BATHROOM - EVENING**

Lackluster blue eyes drift downward towards a...

SHAVING MUG on a sink. Fingers dip an old-school brush into foam, swirl it half-heartedly around.

BILLY (30s) blinks at the mirror. The reflection returning his gaze: sad sack personified. Two days' growth of beard makes the effect even worse.

A female voice (CAROL, 20s) drifts through the closed door. Her tone: cheerful. Sing-song. Everything Billy's not.

CAROL (O.S.)

Billlllly! The party's not gonna wait.  
You've got to look fab. Hurry up!

BILLY

(sighs to himself)  
Why? You wanna go. I don't.

Lifting the brush as if it weighs a ton, Billy paints his face methodically. No enthusiasm in the strokes.

He fumbles to assemble a STRAIGHT RAZOR. The foam on his hand causes him to slip... The blade slices his fingertip-

BILLY

Ow!

CAROL (O.S.)

There's gonna be music. Dancing. New  
people to meet. C'mon! For once,  
we'll *both* have fun!

Billy reflectively raises his finger to suck the blood off. As his hand passes his neck: inspiration hits.

He draws a SLASH across his windpipe in blood. Sees the effect in the mirror, stifles a disgusted grin.

BILLY

Uh, Carol - I'm going to be a few  
minutes. While you're waiting, DON'T  
come in!

(to himself)  
It's either this or the party, loser.  
Don't chicken out this time.

He raises the blade to his neck - prepares to slash.

A female hand shoots between metal and flesh last second.

Billy jerks the blade back. With a jolt, looks up.

Reflected in the mirror, CAROL stands behind him. A sight to see in her little black party dress. Pretty and pressed - but good humor... gone.

CAROL

Oh no you don't. Stop!

Billy wilts, puts the razor down. Turning on the faucet, he scrubs foam away. Carol scowls.

BILLY

You don't listen, do you? All I asked was: stay out!

CAROL

I can sense when you're in a mood.

Billy grabs a towel, pats his face dry.

BILLY

(voice muffled)

Just... go to the party without me.

He marches out of the bathroom. Carol yells in his wake.

CAROL

That's not an option now. You know it's true!

## **INT. LIVING ROOM**

Like Billy - everything tired, worn out. In contrast to Carol's glam look, it's got massive bachelor pad vibe.

Billy collapses on the couch. Carol trails him like a concerned shadow. Sits down, too.

CAROL

If you're staying, I do too.

Billy flicks on the TV. Her voice rises over the noise.

CAROL

Trying to drown me out won't work.

BILLY

(chuckles darkly)

We've established THAT quite well.

He surfs between channels, refuses to meet her eyes.

BILLY

What entertainment might shut you up?  
Name it, thy will be done.

Carol's gaze shifts between Billy's face and the screen.

CAROL

Let's find a comedy? If there's any  
time we need a laugh, it's now.

Major eye roll from Billy.

BILLY

Fine. Sitcom night, it is.

Carol claps her hands, delighted. But as credits roll, her  
expression turns serious.

CAROL

When it's over, you'll make that list  
we've talked about? The one where -

BILLY

(groans)

Where I "write down all the things  
that are special in my life"?

CAROL

Yes! We'll make it a game. Put in  
some effort, it might be fun!

BILLY

Corny psychology BS, you ask me.

CAROL

Humor me. Please. You've been  
promising to do it for months!

The TV laugh track starts. Carol smiles, pats Billy's thigh.

CAROL

Even corny things are worth a shot.  
You really scared me tonight. Making  
a list *might* help. And it can't hurt,  
right?

#### **INT. KITCHEN - LATER**

Dirty dishes piled like a jenga stack in the sink.

Billy hunches over a table. A WRITING PAD'S his world. Hard  
at work, making that list. Rejected items scribbled out.

Behind him, Carol's voice suddenly intrudes:

CAROL (O.S.)  
You've been -

Startled, Billy JUMPS! He swings around. Realizing it's her, he relaxes, and returns to the task at hand.

Carol walks over, hugs him from behind.

CAROL  
- working on that two whole hours.  
That's past your bedtime, sleepyhead.

Billy grunts, shakes her off.

BILLY  
I've got Writer's block, OK? I'll  
come to bed when it's done!

Carol peeks over his shoulder, reads:

CAROL  
"I'm too old to go back to school."  
(her eyes widen)  
It's *never* too late. That's so not  
true!

She looks down, resumes reading:

CAROL  
"No-one loves me."  
(pouts at Billy)  
Well, I do!  
(reads further)  
"No matter what I do, those thoughts  
won't go away."

Billy slaps a hand over the list, obscures her view. Carol angles, finds space between his fingers to read more:

CAROL  
"Jumping onto the tracks during rush  
hour would be relatively painless..."

Carol sits down across from him, horrified.

CAROL  
What the hell do you think you're  
doing? This is supposed to be a list  
of why your life's worth living. Not  
a suicide manifesto. Jesus Christ!

Billy balls up the paper, chucks it at her. Misses.

BILLY

You nagged me into this. If you can't face the writing on the... on the paper, *you're* to blame!

CAROL

We've known each other how long? I think -

BILLY

You think for me a lot these days.

CAROL

I think you need to see someone.

BILLY

Go ahead and say it. Because I'm crazy and should be committed?

A sad smile curls her lips.

CAROL

No, it's just - maybe I'm not enough anymore. Talking to someone else might be the boost...

BILLY

"Kick in the ass", you mean?

CAROL

The *motivation* to evaluate your life. Make little changes. Here and there.

Billy arches a cynical eyebrow.

BILLY

Even changes YOU don't like?

CAROL

It's not about what I like. We need to be honest with each other. You know I care.

BILLY

I don't know *anything* anymore!

He jumps up, storms from the room. Carol looks down at the empty pad - sighs.

#### **INT. KITCHEN - MORNING**

Billy's back at the table. The writing pad's gone; a COFFEE MUG in its place.

From the entrance, concerned Carol hovers.

CAROL  
You think over what I said last  
night?

BILLY  
Are you kidding? I've been thinking  
nonstop. My mind *never* turns off.

He stands, shrugs on a jacket. And breezes past Carol into -

### **INT. LIVING ROOM**

Carol follows. She's not about to get blown off.

CAROL  
Where are you going?

BILLY  
Out.

CAROL  
Did you decide what you're going to  
do?

BILLY  
Yes.

CAROL  
You planning on telling me what that  
is?

BILLY  
(bitter)  
Don't get impatient. You'll find out.

He steps out - SLAMS the door.

### **EXT. HOUSE - PORCH**

Billy beelines for the sidewalk.

Carol stares out after him, through a frosted window. As he retreats, her view... blurs.

### **EXT. TRAIN PLATFORM - LATER**

Wheels and heavy machinery RUMBLE in the distance.

Billy stands near the edge, fidgets. Tears glimmer in his eyes. He takes a deep breath. The sound nears.

BILLY  
Forgive me, Carol. I have no choice.

He takes a step forward... BLACK OUT.

**INT. KITCHEN - LATER**

Now Carol huddles at the table. Red eyes. Helpless look.

The door creaks. She jumps to her feet - terrified at what news might be waiting on the other side.

Billy stands in the doorway. Carol runs to him, worry melting into relief.

She starts to bear hug him, thinks better of it last second. Dances around him instead.

CAROL  
Thank God. Where've you been?!?

Billy smiles. Still weary. But wise now, too.

BILLY  
I've been out. Thinking. About all of this. Me. You.

Carol turns serious. Stops dancing.

CAROL  
Good.

BILLY  
I... I did what you wanted me to do.  
I met someone new today.

CAROL  
(arches an eyebrow)  
Oh really? Who?

BILLY  
We talked. Her name is -

CAROL  
"Her"?!?

BILLY  
Dr. Newland. If you could meet, you'd dig her, too. I told her about us.



Carol cocks her head, whispers.

CAROL  
And what did "Dr. Newland" say?

BILLY  
It's not what she said, it's what she  
did. Doc wrote me a prescription.  
This.

He holds out a PILL BOTTLE. The label reads: Seroquel.

CAROL  
(reads)  
"For hallucinations." Like those  
sounds in your head?

BILLY  
Fresh off the CVS assembly line.  
Doctor's orders. Don't get me wrong,  
talking's cool. But it's an extra  
step I have to take.

He opens the bottle, locks eyes with Carol.

BILLY  
But before I take it, I *had* to come  
see you.

The two walk towards each other - almost close enough to  
hug. Billy cradles Carol's hands in his.

BILLY  
You know this is goodbye?

CAROL  
Of course.

Billy smiles sadly, pops a pill. Carol caresses his cheek.

CAROL  
But that's a sacrifice I choose to  
make. I want you to get better, live  
your life. With real people, please?

Her hand starts to FLICKER.

BILLY  
I'll never forget you.

CAROL  
We've been together almost a  
lifetime. Lots of good memories  
there.

With that... Carol vanishes.

Billy kisses the space where she once stood. He walks quietly from the room.

As he leaves, remembered words float in the air. And the sound of someone knocking on a door.

BILLY (O.S.)  
(clears his throat)  
Dr. Newland? Hi, I'm Billy Wells. I'm here for the consult?

A middle aged, female voice answers. DR. NEWLAND - professional empathy in her tone.

DR. NEWLAND (O.S.)  
Mr. Wells? Ah, come in! I know we discussed your goals on the phone -

BILLY (O.S.)  
About that. There's one thing I didn't bring up, but should. It was too embarrassing. And part of me thought I'd cancel the appointment, chicken out.

DR. NEWLAND (O.S.)  
But you're here now.

BILLY (O.S.)  
Yeah. So here goes: there's this imaginary friend I've seen since childhood. I mean, it's not like I just pretended she existed.  
(beat)  
I see her every day. Talk to her, too.

DR. NEWLAND  
Hallucinations? Good to know. Mr. Wells, please sit down. I'm very glad you followed through...

FINAL FADE OUT: