

Under The Razorblade

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5th Draft

1 EXT. STREET - DAY 1

On a lamppost far in the background leans AMELIA (20s). She is dressed professionally but comfortable (big jumpers and the sort). Deep breaths. She lights her CIGARETTE. In a beat the cigarette is ash at her lips. She looks at it, confused. Checks her WATCH.

2 EXT. OUTSIDE A CAFE - DAY 2

Large metal tables are planted outside a respectable cafe on a large ROUNDABOUT.

YARA sits hunched at a chair, hands drawn tight in big mittens.

Amelia approaches.

AMELIA

Yara? We spoke on the phone.

She looks up at her with a jump.

Amelia goes to shake her hand, Yara just nods.

She withdraws her hand awkwardly.

CUT TO:

3 EXT. OUTSIDE A CAFE - DAY 3

Amelia is sat down, comfortably adjusting her coat. Yara places down two STEAMING MUGS OF TEA and a CROISSANT on a plate. A VASE OF FLOWERS sits between them. Yara sits back down.

AMELIA

Thank you.

Yara nods. She sits at the edge of her seat, body in tight, mittens wrapped around the warmth of the tea.

AMELIA (cont'd)

(slowly)

I know you might be anxious to have this conversation. I don't want to push you. I've been researching the organization and- you're the best lead I've got. Anything you'd be willing to...

She trails off.

YARA

I want to do this. I *need*- yeah.

She looks up and down the street anxiously. Amelia surveys her facial expressions.

Amelia pulls out an old-fashioned TAPE RECORDER from her big bag. Chunky buttons. It has a digital clock on its face, counting up the time that has been recorded.

AMELIA

I am going to be recording this conversation if that's okay with you.

Yara doesn't react.

Amelia takes a sip from the tea.

AMELIA (cont'd)

(laughing)

Tea's a bit cold!

Yara just looks at her.

Wanting to move on, Amelia presses the RECORD button of the tape recorder. There's a satisfying click, and the sound of tape rolling through the machine. The clock starts ticking up - quite threateningly.

AMELIA (cont'd)

So could you-

YARA

(interrupting)

Wait.

She looks up at the people walking past in the street. Holds out until they have passed. She nods at Amelia.

AMELIA

(continuing)

Could you tell me a little bit about your childhood?

YARA

Why is that relevant.

AMELIA

It is to me. Where were you born?

YARA

Southend.

AMELIA
 (in recognition)
 Ah! I'm from around there!

Yara looks at her blankly. The clock ticks.

YARA
 It's a place people leave.

AMELIA
 So is that how-

CUT TO:

4 EXT. OUTSIDE A CAFE - DAY

4

The mugs have moved.

YARA
 -Yes.

AMELIA
 Are you able to tell me anything
 about-

CUT TO:

5 EXT. OUTSIDE A CAFE - DAY

5

Yara is sat back in her chair, more comfortable.

YARA
 (jokey)
 - I can't! -

Amelia furrows her brow.

AMELIA
 Look. I remember your case. You were
 so *strong*. To leave like that. But- I
 think there's something more. It's
 killing me honestly. How did you-

CUT TO:

6 EXT. OUTSIDE A CAFE - DAY

6

She looks at herself, confused.

AMELIA
 I just want to know-

YARA
 There's nothing more that can be
 said.

Amelia leans forward, almost reaching Yara's face.

AMELIA
 Nothing more to be said or nothing
 more that can be said?

CUT TO:

7 EXT. OUTSIDE A CAFE - DAY

7

YARA
 -That's it.

A beat

YARA (cont'd)
 (dejected)
 I'm sorry.

They stare at each other. A standoff.

AMELIA
 Ah alright then. Shame you couldn't
 be more useful.

Dejected, Amelia gathers her bag and presses the big clunky
 STOP button on the tape recorder.

She stares at the recorder. The digital clock reads, clear
 as day, 59:46.

AMELIA (cont'd)
 That's... strange...

YARA
 What?

AMELIA
 The recording.

YARA
 Yeah sorry I-

AMELIA
 -It says we spoke for an hour.

Yara goes to look at it, confused.

YARA
But that can't be...

AMELIA
It is. Wait let me-

She rewinds the tape, we hear the long round of tape spinning back through the machine. She presses PLAY.

CUT TO:

She presses PAUSE on the recording.
A beat.

YARA
Are you going to...?

AMELIA
I just did- I, wait let me just-
She rewinds the tape again. She presses PLAY.

CUT TO:

She presses PAUSE at the end of the recording.
She looks around the street in disbelief.

AMELIA (cont'd)
I can't play it.

Yara stares at her, and to the machine.

AMELIA (cont'd)
It's not broken or anything- I just
literally can't play it.

Yara reaches to grab.

YARA
Let me-

Amelia pulls it back.

AMELIA
(voice raised)
I'm not!

A beat.

AMELIA (cont'd)
Sorry. I should go.

YARA

Okay.

Amelia stands up, coat slung over her shoulder. She looks down at Yara, who's sat back in her chair, arms crossed.

AMELIA

It's a shame you don't feel like speaking. Even just for my sake. This could have been- We all want to be listened to. Heard. Oh well.

Yara picks at the thread of her jumper absentmindedly

YARA

I'm sorry you won't get heard. I know what that's like.

Amelia looks at her. She looks at the people passing on the street, and at the cups of tea on the table. She's thinking, figuring stuff out.

And then:

AMELIA

You never got the tea.

YARA

What?

Amelia sits back down, detective energy flowing. She leans forward.

AMELIA

You never got the tea. I said hello, and then we sat down, tea in hand.

YARA

That not- I got-

AMELIA

No you didn't. That isn't what happened.

Yara looks at her, fish-like.

AMELIA (cont'd)

Time skipped for a moment. Like it had been cut out.

A beat.

YARA

That's not true.

AMELIA
 (not listening)
 -and then when you were speaking,
 when I was speaking too, bits were
 missing.

YARA
 But that's- how is that possible?

AMELIA
 I don't know.

Amelia looks around the street. Pedestrians walk past in
 regularity. Her eyes almost look into the camera.

AMELIA (cont'd)
 Do you think- Do you think you *did*
 tell me something?

YARA
 I didn't. I can't.

AMELIA
 I know, but do you *feel* you did?

Yara thinks for a moment.

CUT TO:

8 EXT. OUTSIDE A CAFE - DAY

8

It's much later, a fog has descended on the roundabout as
 dusk approaches.

YARA
 -know.

Amelia looks at her, eyes widening.

Slowly they both look to the tape recorder, still blinking
 59:46.

YARA (cont'd)
 But that's not-

AMELIA
 I think- and it's insane, but
 someone- your organisation- somehow
 is-

She is cut off by a jump cut before she can finish.

AMELIA (cont'd)
 (frustrated)
 I can't even explain it!

Yara digests this information for a moment. She stares off into the distance.

YARA
 (thinking out loud)
 They condense... Redact. Get rid of information that is inconvenient.

Amelia stares at her. She's speaking. She glances to the tape recorder.

AMELIA
 So why are they letting me hear this?

Yara shrugs.

YARA
 Scare you I suppose. They do that.

Amelia looks at Yara, eyes full of sympathy.

AMELIA
 I am so sorry.

YARA
 It's- Thank you.

A beat. Amelia looks around the thinning street - keenly aware of an invisible third observer.

YARA (cont'd)
 (quietly)
 That's the worst bit I think.

AMELIA
 What?

YARA
 It's not my voice. I have agency.
 It's the expression.

AMELIA
 I wish I could scream sometimes.

YARA
 Me too.

AMELIA
 It's not just in our words, it's everywhere.

(MORE)

AMELIA (cont'd)
 In between when we talk, that
 redaction. Little pieces of time.

Yara now has her elbows on the table.

YARA
 What do you think I've lost?

AMELIA
 What do you have left?

A beat.

YARA
 I'm not supposed to talk to you.

AMELIA
 But you want to.

Glancing around, Amelia pulls out a NOTEPAD AND PEN.

AMELIA (cont'd)
 Can you try writing something down?
 Something that you can't tell me.

She passes them over. Yara looks it over, glances at Amelia.
 She turns her back and discretely writes in the notepad. She
 slaps the cover shut and hands it back over.

Amelia opens it.

CUT TO:

9 EXT. OUTSIDE A CAFE - DUSK

9

She looks inside.

AMELIA
 There's nothing here.

YARA
 What?

AMELIA
 You didn't write anything.

YARA
 I did.

AMELIA
 Look Yara, I'm trying to help you.

YARA
I did!

CUT TO:

10 EXT. OUTSIDE A CAFE - DAY 10
Earlier in the day - the sun is out.

AMELIA
No you didn't, that isn't what
happened.

BACK TO:

11 EXT. OUTSIDE A CAFE - DUSK 11
Yara leans forward, pleading with Amelia.

YARA
Can you just believe me! Please!

12 EXT. OUTSIDE A CAFE - DAY 12
AMELIA
Shame you couldn't be more useful.

BACK TO:

13 EXT. OUTSIDE A CAFE - DUSK 13
YARA
Stop it! Stop it!

AMELIA
Yara I don't know what's happening
they're trying to turn us-

Yara is panicking now. Heavy breathing.

YARA
Y- You don't even like me! You hate
me!

AMELIA
-I ever hate you.

YARA
What?

AMELIA
I-

CUT TO:

AMELIA (cont'd)
-hate you.

YARA
I tried to speak to you- I- tried to
write it down -I am trying to scream!

CUT TO:

14 EXT. OUTSIDE A CAFE - DAY

14

AMELIA
No you didn't, that isn't what
happened.

BACK TO:

15 EXT. OUTSIDE A CAFE - DUSK

15

AMELIA
Yara please!

Yara screams, but she can't. Every time she gets to maximum
volume the film cuts. She tries again. AGH- CUT. AGH- CUT.
It's like she's been gagged.

She breathes deeply, energy expended.

CUT TO:

16 EXT. OUTSIDE A CAFE - NIGHT

16

The street is deserted. The shops have shut up. A lone
streetlamp illuminates the two of them as they sit there,
staring at each other across the table.

YARA
(slowly)
Who are you?

AMELIA
I'm a journalist.

YARA
Are we dead?

She pauses before answering.

AMELIA
Doesn't feel like it.

YARA
But this is what happens to dead
people isn't it?

AMELIA
I don't think ghosts can scream.

YARA
That makes sense.

They look around the street.

AMELIA
I think I've found my story.

YARA
But I haven't been able to tell you
anything.

AMELIA
I know.

YARA
I'm sorry.

AMELIA
Stop apologising.

YARA
Okay.

AMELIA
I don't- *need* to know.

YARA
That can't be true.

A beat.

AMELIA
I'd dread it ya'know.

YARA
Dread what?

AMELIA
Those lost bits. Every time it cuts
it's a bit of time.

The film hasn't cut for a while, it cuts to a close up with a stab.

YARA
I can't say anything.

AMELIA
I know.

YARA
I tried to write down things.

AMELIA
Yara please you don't-

YARA
(pointedly)
Thoughts can be like that, sometimes
it feels like we're just tearing off
pages.

Amelia looks at the empty notebook.

AMELIA
...And squirreling them away...

She looks at her big bag- did she store the notes in there?

AMELIA (cont'd)
I should go.

YARA
You can't-

AMELIA
I've been here for...

She looks around the street. Noticing the dark for the first time.

AMELIA (cont'd)
How long have I been here for?

YARA
I don't know.

AMELIA
This has been a lot.

YARA
It's just talking.

AMELIA
Talking is a lot.

She fiddles with the flowers in the vase on the table. She suddenly drops one when she realises it is dead.

She stands up in shock. She backs away from the table.

AMELIA (cont'd)
Get me out of here.

Yara calls after her.

YARA
You can leave! They can't stop that.

AMELIA
But the-

She looks at her: 'the what?! The story?!'. Amelia walks back, hands gesticulating.

AMELIA (cont'd)
(slowly)
They can shape our words. But I'm free. And so are you.

She points to her.

AMELIA (cont'd)
And I'm sorry but I think I've spent an awful lot of time with you.

YARA
I-

Amelia puts her hands on the back of the chair.

AMELIA
Don't speak. Think! And think like me!

Yara backs into the back of her seat.

YARA
I don't know what you mean!

AMELIA
(pleading)
I think you do! Because deep down we both remember the time we've spent together. All those bits that get lost. All those tiny sections of life that shape us and form us. They may not hear our screams but my throat still feels raw.

YARA

I- can't.

AMELIA

Use that. Think with me, please Yara.

They look at each other.

CUT TO:

17 EXT. OUTSIDE A CAFE - DUSK

17

YARA

Stop it! Stop it!

BACK TO:

18 EXT. OUTSIDE A CAFE - NIGHT

18

Amelia laughs. She picks up her bag from the floor and puts on her coat.

AMELIA

(conversationally)

My editor will be in touch.

They look at each other with understanding. With a start they both dash away from the table. The Camera cuts between the now empty chairs, desperately searching for a subject that is no longer present.

Fade to black.

THE END.