

BAPTISM

In flames leave your pain behind

Written by

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OVER BLACK:

"Before the end, angels descended from the heavens and in flames she left her grief behind..." Sara 12:2.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Elle (33), beautiful, black top with rhinestones, black miniskirt and panties on her knees, opens her eyes slowly, lying on the bed in the bluish room, partially illuminated by the red neon lights in the window.

A naked man sleeps beside her.

Elle gets up and holds her head with both hands.

On the bedside table there is a newspaper, the front cover reads "neighbors alerted by new religious sect established outside of town".

On top of the newspaper, Elle sees a wad of money. She takes the money and gets up.

INT. MOTEL ROOM BATHROOM - NIGHT

The bathroom light turns on, Elle staggers in, dizzy, looks in the mirror, an incipient bruise on her left eye.

Gagging overcomes her, leads her straight to the toilet bowl, she vomits a colorless liquid.

EXT. EMPTY CITY STREETS - NIGHT

(Music starts "Posign in Bondage by Japanese Breakfast")

The red Oldsmobile cutlass rolls down the street swaying lightly from side to side, leaving in its wake a long trail of smoke from the cigarette Elle holds in the open window.

The first lines of the sun appear in the blue sky.

Elle dances along with the music against the dark blue sky (6:00 am on the dashboard clock). She takes a last puff on the cigarette and flicks it into the street.

Glowing sparks onto the asphalt.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE ELLE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The oldsmobile slows down to a near stop, then speeds up sharply and comes to a screeching halt, the engine stops.

(music stops)

Door opens.

Elle struggles out of the car, leaves the window open and approaches the entrance to the house.

She enters.

INT. ELLE'S HOME - NIGHT

Elle opens the door and enters, but drops the keys and they fall to the floor, making a clatter. Ellie bends down to pick up the keys.

MARIE (O.S.)  
Elle? Elle? Is it you?

Elle sighs, takes the keys, gets up, pushes the door shut.

Elle walks down the hallway and to the open door.

MARIE'S ROOM

Elle leans on the doorway, avoids the eyes of MARIE (63), lying in bed.

MARIE  
Where were you?

ELLE  
You know where.

MARIE  
Honey, your eye...

Elle looks over to the side of Marie's bed, where the folded wheelchair is leaning. Pill bottles on the nightstand.

ELLE  
I'm tired, ok?

Elle gets up from the doorway and walks down the hallway to the next door, her room.

MARIE  
Elle...

Elle slams the door shut.

CUT TO:

INT. ELLE'S ROOM - DAY

(screaming outside)

Shouts of people enter from the open window. Elle jumps up, startled.

WOMAN OUTSIDE  
(desperate)  
John!

Elle gets out of bed, walks over to the window, white curtains gleaming in the sunlight.

WOMAN OUTSIDE  
Where are you, son!

Elle slams the window shut, goes back to bed and covers her head with the pillow.

Screaming continues.

Ellen opens her eyes and sighs.

INT. ELLE'S HOUSE BATHROOM - DAY

Elle turns on the shower, water falls, the room fills with steam as Elle looks at her face in the mirror, the bruise more pronounced now. Glass fogs up.

Elle rests with her eyes closed under the shower stream.

Then, she turns off the shower faucet, sighs, takes the towel and dries her hair.

New screams are heard.

Worried, Elle covers her body with the towel and walks over to the bathroom window, looks out.

Outside, in the next door patio, she sees a woman crying, people running back and forth across the street.

HOUSE CORRIDOR

Dressed, Elle walks down to Marie's room.

ELLE  
Mom? I think something happened  
outside.

Elle arrives at the door, it's closed. Elle knocks on the door.

ELLE  
Mom?

No answer, Elle opens the door and enters...

## MARIE'S ROOM

Inside, the room is empty. The wheelchair, the pills, all in the same place.

Elle notices a gray stain on the pillow, approaches the bed. She touches the stain with her fingers, it looks like dust.

Elle lifts the bed cover, dust is scattered in the air, a large scorch mark in the middle of the mattress forms a figure similar to a human body.

ELLE

Mom?

Elle releases the bed cover, the burn is covered.

## HOUSE PATIO

The door bursts open, Elle steps out in desperation.

ELLE

Mom!? Mom!?

Her screams are joined by the screams of all the people around. The sound melts into WHITE NOISE as we move farther and farther away, revealing the entire space of the countryside town.

CUT TO:

TITLE: "BAPTISM"

Images on the television screen, we see explosions, protests, empty supermarket shelves, robberies, etc.

Graphics on TV news:

"Millions of people disappear in the blink of an eye."

"Collapse of civilization."

"Is this the end of the world?"

INT. ELLE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

(WHITE NOISE stops)

Elle watches TV sitting on the living room floor, the curtains closed, the place dark.

TV ANNOUNCER

We recommend our viewers to stay safe at home.

## KITCHEN

Elle checks the shelves, a couple of cans of preserved food left. The refrigerator is empty, except for some wilted vegetables. Elle closes the refrigerator door and...

## HOUSE ENTRANCE

She opens the front door with the intention of going out, but stops when she looks outside, where her neighbors are finishing packing up their car, looking nervous.

They get into the car and drive off at high speed.

Elle's gaze now turns to the house across the street, where a HUSBAND finishes packing in the back of a van, boxes of food are visible.

His WIFE walks out of the house, leaving the door open. She hurries to the van.

However.

A group of five men approach the van as the husband closes the back door.

Elle can't hear the men's voices, but sees them point to the boxes with food. The husband tries to close the van door, shaking his head.

One of the men points a gun at the husband and shoots him. The husband's body falls to his knees in the middle of the street.

As the men go through the boxes inside the van, the wife screams in despair, hugging her dead husband on the floor. She looks around desperate...

...sees Elle staring at her from the doorway, the two exchange glances for a second. Elle closes the door.

(gunshot sound)

CUT TO:

## INT. HOUSE ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Elle wakes up sitting on the floor and leaning with her back against the door. Her eyes swollen from tears. The place is completely dark and silent.

She gets up and tries to turn the light on at the switch, but it doesn't work.

Elle approaches the living room window, moves the curtains carefully to look out onto the street, she can see that there is no light in the whole place.

The dead bodies of husband and wife are still lying in the middle of the street.

Elle can see light coming from inside the house across the street, torches.

She backs away, but a guy with a torch, just outside Elle's living room window, manages to see her through the curtains.

Elle slowly steps back from the window, silence. Her breathing as contained as humanly possible.

Suddenly...

The window glass shatters into a thousand pieces, the curtains catch fire, the flames rise quickly in front of Elle's eyes.

Someone knocks on the front door, knocks again, harder and harder.

Elle runs into the hallway, the door yields to the knocking.

She makes it to the...

#### BATHROOM

Where she locks herself in and moves quickly to the window.

Someone comes to the bathroom door, tries to open it, moves the knob hard.

Elle opens the bathroom window and rushes into the...

#### PATIO

Where he falls heavily on the grass.

She gets up in pain and runs to the backyard, reaches the back wall, stops and looks back towards the house, two men approach with torches in their hands.

Elle jumps to grab the edge of the wall and with all her strength lifts her body to pass to the other side.

A bullet hits the wall.

Elle lets go because of the shock, falls backwards on the...

#### NEXT HOUSE PATIO

Hitting the floor causes Elle to lose all the air in her lungs, she begins to choke.

It takes her a while to catch her breath, she can see the torchlight approaching, illuminating the treetop next to the wall.

Elle gets up from the grass and runs into the house, a woman is looking at her through the curtains of the window, the woman hides when she notices that Elle has seen her.

Elle slaps the glass with the palm of her hands in desperation.

ELLE  
Help me, please!

No response, the men reach the wall and try to pass through to the other side.

Elle runs across the patio to the exit fence of the house.

The gate is closed.

The men make it through to the other side, they are in the patio.

Elle climbs the fence nervously, tries to get through to the other side, but her jeans get caught on one of the top spikes of the fence.

A new shot grazes her left ear, Elle lets go, her jeans crack and she falls on the sidewalk of the...

STREET OUTSIDE THE NEXT HOUSE.

Elle tries to get up quickly, but is unable to do so because of the wound on her leg.

The men continue to advance toward her.

Elle endures the pain, manages to get up. She limps forward, but after a short walk she manages to gain speed and continues towards the corner and towards the...

MAIN STREET

Where he attempts to stop a passing vehicle. However, the vehicle evades her and continues to move forward at full speed.

Elle, desperate, looks around the corner, no one is visible nearby.

From the main street, in the distance, a van approaches.

Elle runs in the direction of the van, raises her hands and signals for the van to stop.

ELLE  
Stop! Stop, please!

The van arrives at Elle, stops. The side door opens. Inside, it's full of people, women, children.

DRIVER  
Get inside, hurry!

Elle gets into the...

INSIDE VAN

Where people make space for her to sit.

ELLE  
(to the driver)  
Please, we have to go, now!

The driver nods and looks back to the road, preparing to move forward when a bullet hits the windshield and pierces his throat.

The people inside the van scream in fear.

Elle keeps looking out the window. A group of ten, maybe more men, all in similar attire, approach the van.

The men beat the windows of the van with wooden rods violently. Then they reach in and grab people, aggressively dragging them out.

Some passengers try to hold the side door, but are unable to hold on.

Elle tries to hold on to the seat so as not to be dragged out, but she is unable to do so, the men push her out.

(Elle's scream echoes)

CUT TO:

EXT. PLANTATION FIELD - DAY

The day is intensely sunny, the heat drawn in the tanned color of the skin of the people working the land, in the profuse sweat on their foreheads.

Among these people is Elle, crestfallen, silent, concentrating solely on plowing the earthen space in front of her.

In the area surrounding the plantation, armed individuals walk around the perimeter.

A man on horseback is riding swiftly through the center of the plantation, skillfully holding the whip that strikes the air with violence.

The sun begins to go down towards the horizon, dyeing the field of orange, reddish colors.

Elle arranges the vegetables in the basket and wipes the sweat from her forehead. Next to her, GLORIA (51) and SARA (13) pick their vegetables together.

Suddenly, Gloria collapses on the ground, immobile.

SARA

Mom?

Sara moves Gloria on the floor, tries to revive her.

SARA

(frightened)

Mom!

Elle watches Sara silently, picks up her basket and walks away from the scene, with Sara's screams behind her.

VEGETABLE DELIVERY POST - DAY

Elle hands her basket of vegetables to the manager.

The rest of the people do the same, then walk away, looking at the ground, away from the plantation, towards the houses in the distance.

Two armed guys pass by with Sara crying in their arms, pushing her towards the rest of the people.

Elle looks toward the plantation, Gloria's body still lying on the dirt.

The brightness of the sun loses intensity on the horizon, transforming into a fiery red line under a dark blue sky.

Elle joins the group of people from the plantation walking crestfallen down the dirt road to the houses.

On the side of the road, three dead people crucified on wooden crosses, crows feeding off their eyes.

A sign reads:

"Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent. Revelation 3:19"

Looking out of the corner of her eye towards the crucifixes, Elle sees a person among the crosses, the silhouette appears to be that of Marie greeting Elle.

Elle stops in surprise, she turns to look, but sees no one among the crosses.

The group of crestfallen people arrive at the...

OUTSIDE THE RESTING HOUSE

Elle continues walking, confused. She looks up at the crosses one more time, nothing.

Then.

A GUARD approaches Elle, touches her shoulder, and tells her to follow him, pointing his hand.

INT. BARN - NIGHT

Elle, expressionless, leaning against the wall and half-naked, endures the onslaught of the guard, who penetrates her with force.

She fixes her gaze outside, towards the plantation. There is a woman standing in the middle of the darkness, her eyes shining through the black night.

INT. RESTING HOUSE - NIGHT

Silently, Elle enters the house and walks to her bunk bed, the silence of the place is interrupted only by Sara's sobs, the rest of the people try to ignore her and sleep.

Elle lies down, she closes her eyes. Sara's sobs continue. Elle stands up and looks at Sara, who notices, they both stare at each other. Elle smiles warmly.

CUT TO:

INT. RESTING HOUSE - DAY

Elle wakes up, gets up from the bunk bed. Looking towards Sara, she notices that her bed is empty.

CUT TO:

EXT. PLANTATION FIELD - DAY

Elle and the rest of the people are all lined up in a single line in front of the plantation.

HEAD GUARD

It seems that some of you haven't gotten the message yet!

The guards walk around the line menacingly, pointing their guns at the people.

HEAD GUARD

You're all sinners!

One of the guards rides the horse, another group of men walk to surround the plantation.

HEAD GUARD

You cannot escape!

Elle looks toward the plantation, toward the back. Marie is standing there.

LAST LINE OF THE PLANTATION

Sara is crouched down, hidden among the plants, she nervously watches the guards approaching her.

PLANTATION FIELD

Elle breathes deeply, she understands.

The HEAD GUARD (46) continues to speak, but the sound fades from Elle's mind.

She keeps her eyes on the plantation under the intense sun.

On the guards surrounding the place.

On the one on horseback crossing the center of the field, straight towards Sara.

Elle's heartbeat overpowers the silence.

Bum, bum, bum... faster and faster.

LAST LINE OF THE PLANTATION

Sara looks through the plants once more, the man on horseback is almost upon her.

PLANTATION FIELD

Elle's eyes dilate fully, the ambient sound returns.

Elle suddenly breaks into a run, running at full speed towards the side of the plantation.

The guards, surprised, unprepared.

HEAD GUARD

Stop her!

LAST LINE OF THE PLANTATION

Hearing the shout, the man on horseback stops, turns around and backs away at full speed, back towards the beginning of the plantation.

The rest of the guards follow.

PLANTATION FIELD

Elle keeps running without stopping, almost reaching the fence.

A bullet pierces the air.

Elle is hit in the right shoulder, falls to the ground.

The ambient sound is swallowed up by a new silence, interrupted by the low thuds of the horse's steps on the ground.

In pain, Elle tries to get up. The man on horseback has already reached her position, he circles around her, kicking up the dust.

Two guards come up to Elle, grab her by the arms forcefully, drag her back towards the line at the request of the Head Guard, who points with his hand.

The guards drag Elle to the feet of the Head Guard.

The Head Guard makes a few hand signals, then addresses the rest of the people in line.

HEAD GUARD

We are going to have to teach you  
by example.

Elle spurts blood from her mouth, pale, numb with pain.

HEAD GUARD

What sinners deserve!

A group of guards drags a wooden cross to Elle, dropping it on the ground.

They take Elle and put her on the cross, take her hands and feet and stretch them, she tries to resist, without success.

While some guards hold her stretched out on the cross, another guard takes a hammer, some long nails.

Pum!

The hammer hits the nail, buries itself in Elle's flesh.

Pum!

Elle screams desperately, squirming without being able to let go.

The guard hits and hits the nails, over and over until Elle is completely attached to the wood and very close to losing consciousness.

#### HEAD GUARD

Now God will be the judge of her  
sins!

One of the guards finishes digging a hole in the ground, the rest of them take the cross and lift it with difficulty, they manage to put it upright in the hole.

Elle screams once more, screams with all the strength she has left to resist the pain caused by hanging from her limbs nailed to the wood.

#### MOUNT OUTSIDE THE PLANTATION

From the height, Sara looks towards the plantation, sees Elle crucified from a distance.

#### PLANTATION FIELD

In front of her, all the people in line. Elle barely manages to open her eyes to look, however, as she does so, she sees Marie among them. They both stare at each other and smile.

The people in line are shocked to see Elle smile, the Head Guard looks confused.

Without losing her smile, Elle looks up at the sky, she sees something there, hears something, nods positively.

Unexpectedly, Elle and the cross catch fire. The flames rising fast.

Frightened, the guards recoil.

People watch in amazement as Elle's body disappears on the flames, until only ashes remain.

FADE TO BLACK.