

NIGHT OF THE FIREFLIES

by
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1 EXT-CITY-DAY

1

Evening arrives, and the descending sun seems to linger low in the sky.

An orange, amber glow permeates from all directions, and a slight haze reflects the heat of the summertime.

The citizens of this city meander about slowly, wiping the beads of sweat from their face as they continue their daily activities.

We see women hanging laundry, men working construction and children playing about in the streets. Many of these figures remain silhouetted, making it difficult to determine their physical features.

2 INT. APARTMENT-CITY-DAY

2

Near a window, in the corner of the main room behind a wooden desk sits ROBERT(37).

Clean-shaven with hair just below his ears, Robert holds a finely crafted pen, turning it slowly in his right hand as he looks down at the keys of a typewriter.

The apartment remains cluttered with various odds and ends, mainly furniture, books and old photographs.

The rays of the fading sun shine through the windows, and a haze hovers just as it does in the streets of the city.

Robert suddenly places the pen on the desk and proceeds to type.

ROBERT(V.O.)

Dear Sister Maria, Once again the rain has given way to the summer and the smell of everything warm is in the air, if that makes any sort of sense. I want to apologize for not writing sooner, but things have been hectic as I'm sure you can imagine.

He stops and gazes at one of the old photographs on the wall.

ROBERT(CONT.)

The other day I was walking by an open window and heard the sweetest music playing and it made me immediately think of Sarita, and you and the other sisters running and shouting into the air and chasing after the sheep.

Robert turns back to the typewriter and continues writing.

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ROBERT(CONT.)

It pains me to tell you that I've quit my job at the newspaper, something I had worked my entire life to achieve. Now is not a good time to discuss the reasons why, but someday, maybe someday I will.

He pauses and looks down at a stack of letters on the edge of his desk.

ROBERT(CONT.)

Instead, much to your dismay I suppose, I have taken what is best described as a sort of messenger position.

3 EXT. CITY-DAY

3

The orange glow from the evening sun persists, and Robert suddenly whizzes down one of the streets riding an old-fashioned bicycle.

Although the city's certainly modern, there remains an old world feel to it, as if being in an ancient, European city which has only recently come to embrace modernity.

Despite his age, Robert Slaloms through the traffic and pedestrians with reasonable grace and ease.

With a small, messenger bag hanging from his side, he acts almost like a mail carrier as he proceeds to deliver the various letters.

ROBERT(CONT.)

It is not a terribly difficult job, and every week my editor will send me the messages that need to be written and delivered.

A montage of Robert delivering cards to various individuals occurs.

ROBERT(CONT.)

I go all over the city. No place is off limits, and neither is any message.

Robert's bicycle continues to move about the various streets with his figure silhouetted against the lingering evening sun.

ROBERT(CONT.)

I write them because it is my job, and I try not to make much else out of it.

4 INT. APARTMENT-CITY-DAY

4

Robert stands near a window twirling a pen in his hand as the rays of sunshine continue to wash over his face.

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ROBERT(CONT.)

You always told me the city was no place to live,
and I wish I could tell you otherwise. Everyday,
more and more people disappear.

5 EXT. CITY-STREET-DAY

5

TWO MEN in overcoats and fedora hats drag a woman from her
apartment and throw her into a vehicle.

The figures remain silhouetted, making it impossible to reveal any
distinct physical features.

ROBERT(CONT.)

Many are taken away without reason, and it seems a
day doesn't go by without a lone scream echoing
through the night. It is no place to be, but it is
the only place I can see myself in nonetheless.

6 INT. APARTMENT-CITY-DAY

6

Robert continues to twirl the pen in his hand.

ROBERT(CONT.)

I hope all is well there, and that Father Kelly has
gotten around to fixing the fence, although I know
the old man's hands aren't what they used to be.

He looks across the way and focuses on the window of another
apartment complex.

There, he notices a WOMAN pacing back and forth. Only the woman's
slender legs can be seen, with the rest of her body hidden behind
a lowered shade.

Robert continues to watch the moving legs for several moments.

ROBERT(CONT.)

I almost forgot to mention, a particular Carmen
Valdez movie is playing here all summer long at a
place called the Equestrian near where I live. It's
Night of the Fireflies.

7 INT. MOVIE THEATER-CITY-DAY

7

Robert sits alone in a darkened theater with the glow from the
screen reflecting off his face.

The theater remains nearly empty, with only a few other
individuals seated.

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ROBERT(CONT.)

You remember this one don't you? It's about a man from space who visits the daughter of a farmer and how they fall in love.

Robert continues to look up and watch the action taking place on screen.

8 EXT. NIGHT OF THE FIREFLIES-OPEN FIELD

8

CARMEN VALDEZ(25) leans against a tall tree as the early morning rays of sunshine emerge in the background. She wears a simple dress, and has long, flowing hair.

A short distance away stands a SPACE MAN. He does not possess any bizarre physical characteristics but rather resembles a human being, with a sleek, futuristic flight suit on.

Tall, grassy fields surround the couple and Carmen watches as the grass gently sways back and forth.

CARMEN VALDEZ

There was a neighbor boy I once knew. He moved away many years ago, but we would always come here and hide amongst the grass and pretend to travel to all sorts of places.

She moves her hand over the grass and moves several steps closer to the spaceman.

CARMEN VALDEZ(CONT.)

Why did you come here?

SPACE MAN

Like you, I was just trying to escape.

CARMEN VALDEZ

Is it really that bad where you come from?

SPACE MAN

My world has seen many things, and up until recently I thought perhaps they could be fixed. Now though, that notion seems almost impossible.

Carmen continues to move closer to him.

CARMEN VALDEZ

All my life, I've only known this world. The barn, the fields and the animals. I never knew anything else existed until I met you.

She stops in front of him.

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CARMEN VALDEZ (CONT.)

Will you stay here with me?

SPACE MAN

Are you so certain my intentions are good?

CARMEN VALDEZ

I am only certain of my heart, and of the things I realize to be true.

She places her hand on the space man's chest.

CARMEN VALDEZ (CONT.)

What are you certain of?

He places one of his hands on Carmen's cheek and gently caresses it.

SPACE MAN

There are some things which we cannot escape from.

The two continue to look into each others eyes as the sun continues to rise in the distance.

9 INT. MOVIE THEATER-CITY-DAY

9

Robert continues to gaze up at the screen.

ROBERT (CONT.)

I suppose the reason I like the movie is because it reminds me of us. Of running through the fields after the fireflies, holding them close to our faces and feeling as if there would never be another ounce of darkness.

10 INT. APARTMENT-CITY-DAY

10

Robert turns away from the window and then walks back to his desk and begins flipping through a stack of letters.

Suddenly, he notices one that seems out of place amongst the rest from his editor. It has no return address, but he slowly opens it and observes its contents.

He pulls forth a simple note which reads "Tremendously important. Tomorrow, 1200 South Lake Shore Drive, 5:30PM."

He continues to stare at the note for several moments.

ROBERT (CONT.)

I look forward to hearing from you soon, and promise to respond quicker with my next letter.

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Robert lowers the letter from his face, and sits back down in front of the typewriter.

ROBERT(CONT.)
Take care, and God speed.

Gripping onto the letter, he leans back and looks out the window as the evening rays of sunlight continue slicing through his apartment.

11 INT. BEACH HOUSE-CITY-DAY

11

Robert climbs up a small, stone staircase and makes his way to an open area overlooking the lake.

The structure appears quite old, and with strands of ivy wrapped around its body and stone columns, resembles a neglected ancient temple.

Robert looks out at the open water, as the breeze and sunlight move past his face.

Suddenly, a voice emerges from the side of him.

WOMAN(O.S.)
Strange isn't it.

Robert turns and notices a WOMAN(30) standing a short distance away from him.

Petite, and wearing a casual dress, the woman resembles a character out of an old movie, as if she just finished a scene with Humphrey Bogart. She also speaks with a British accent.

She looks out over the water as well.

WOMAN(CONT.)
You hear all sorts of stories about what this place used to be. My father would always bring me up here, telling me it was an opera house. Sometimes I would even press my ear against a wall to see if there were any echoes left from the singing.

She turns to Robert.

WOMAN(CONT.)
Do you hear anything?

Robert shakes his head.

The woman steps away and begins walking slowly down a pathway.

Robert follows a short distance behind.

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WOMAN

You travel all over the city don't you?

ROBERT

I suppose so.

WOMAN

Newspaper men do. Travel, I mean. Do you find that type of work to be rewarding?

ROBERT

What exactly do you want?

She stops and observes one of the columns of the structure.

WOMAN

You're probably aware of the things happening in this city...things which have been quite unnerving lately. More people are disappearing everyday, and in fact Constable Morris was found floating in the lake last night. He was a good man.

The woman moves away from the column and continues down the path. Robert as well follows.

WOMAN(CONT.)

I'd like to hire you to transcribe and deliver some messages for me. The only stipulation of course being that you do not ask any questions about their contents. You simply write what is instructed and deliver them. Does that pose a problem for you?

ROBERT

I suppose it would not. But why would I do this?

She stops again and looks out over the open water.

WOMAN

I cannot guarantee your complete safety, and more likely than not you'll encounter some kind of unwanted obstacle. But your deeds will ultimately not go unrewarded. If that sort of thing matters to you.

ROBERT

Who are you?

WOMAN

I'll need you to start immediately. I'll have the first batch of messages ready tomorrow morning. You'll find them in your box.

She turns away from Robert and slowly begins to walk away.

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ROBERT

Am I allowed to know your name?

The woman stops and looks back.

WOMAN

I'll see you tomorrow morning.

She continues walking away until eventually disappearing into the distance.

Robert remains standing and again focuses his attention on the open water before him.

12 INT. APARTMENT-CITY-DAY

12

Robert sits behind his typewriter once again, as the late evening sun sends amber, streaking rays into the space.

He flips through a pile of papers, observing their contents and ultimately writing them out on the typewriter.

ROBERT(V.O.)

Dear Sister Maria, I am glad to hear that Celebration was a success, and that Sister Sarah was able to get the fabric needed for the parade. You always said she had an eye for color.

His fingers press down with quick precision creating almost a melodic rendering of the typing.

ROBERT(CONT.)

I am unsure of how to answer your first question so I will skip to the second. There are aspects of this city which I do enjoy. Some of them I do not expect you to understand, because in many ways I do not understand them myself.

13 EXT. CITY-DAY

13

Silhouetted against the evening sun, Robert rides his bicycle down the various streets and alleyways, and passes the prominent statues and monuments of the city.

ROBERT(CONT.)

There is a rhythm, which for those who know where to look, can be seen everywhere. The people, the buildings, the streets all hum and buzz like the nighttime lamps.

A montage appears showing Robert delivering the secret messages to various UNDERCOVER INDIVIDUALS.

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These intimate moments are captured from a voyeur's perspective, creating a sense of mystery and suspense.

ROBERT(CONT.)

I asked Father Kelly once why he came to Sarita in the first place? And he said the light from the stars made it so he could never leave.

Robert continues going up to people's doors and having transactions in smoke-filled alleys and other ominous, low-key locations.

ROBERT(CONT.)

There is a light to this city, and I feel if I leave I may never get a chance to look at it again.

As Robert rides his bicycle away from one of the drops, he notices a strange car following him. During this sequence, he will also become aware that several shadowy figures have been watching him from a distance.

ROBERT(CONT.)

I will try to visit the ranch soon, but as I have said before things have been quite hectic and I'm not sure when I can get away.

14 INT. APARTMENT-CITY-DAY

14

Robert leans back in the chair and slowly twirls a pen in his hand.

He gets up from the chair and makes his way over to a window.

Staring out the window, he once again looks into another apartment and notices the same woman's legs moving about in front of the window.

He turns away from the window and notices that one of framed photographs on the wall has been moved slightly.

Robert moves towards the photograph.

ROBERT(CONT.)

I'm sending the picture you requested, although I do not think it is that impressive, along with the clippings for Sister Sarah.

He reaches up and slowly pulls the photograph down from the wall. He examines it, but then notices a slight indentation in the wall itself.

As he begins scratching at the obstruction, he soon creates a hole where upon he shoves his fingers through.

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ROBERT(CONT.)

Do not be afraid. I am confident in my job, and ask simply for your prayers during this time.

Moments later, Robert slowly removes his fingers from the hole and brings forth a small microphone device.

He holds it close to his face, observing its design.

ROBERT(CONT.)

Again, I will write back sooner with my next letter. Take care, and Godspeed. Robert.

Robert lowers the microphone from his face, and looks over towards the window as the incoming sunrays cause his body to glow slightly.

15 INT. MOVIE THEATER-CITY-DAY

15

Amongst the flicker of the projecting images, Robert sits and watches The Night of the Fireflies film.

16 INT. NIGHT OF THE FIREFLIES-OPEN FIELD

16

As Carmen Valdez and the Spaceman continue to hold each other in their arms, a FARMER(35) wearing overalls suddenly emerges and points a shotgun at the couple.

Carmen quickly notices this and holds one arm in front of the space man as if trying to protect him.

CARMEN VALDEZ

What are you doing here?

FARMER

I can't lose you. Not like this I can't.

CARMEN VALDEZ

There is nothing for you here.

FARMER

I gave you everything. This land and this home, and for what? So I could see it all just vanish with this, this thing.

CARMEN VALDEZ

You gave me everything you wanted, but nothing I needed. I needed something more than these fields and crops. I needed love.

The farmer moves his gun slightly over and aims at the space man.

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FARMER

Step away now and let us be.

Carmen continues to stand in front of the space man.

CARMEN VALDEZ

I won't let you do this.

FARMER

I said step away.

As the man readies to fire the gun, Carmen jumps ahead and grabs a hold of the weapon. The two struggle for a matter of moments, with the farmer eventually pushing her to the ground.

The farmer again raises his gun towards the space man. As he does this, the space extends his arm causing the farmer to grow dizzy and pass out on the ground.

The space man then helps Carmen to her feet, and the two rush away from the area.

17 INT. MOVIE THEATER-CITY-DAY

17

Robert remains motionless, and continues to watch the action unfold before him.

Suddenly, the woman from the beach house enters the theater and takes a seat directly behind Robert.

Again she wears a casual dress and hat, still exuding that classic movie star persona.

She stares up at the screen as well, watching the actions of the characters as the glow from the screen descends upon her face.

WOMAN

I've never seen this film before.

ROBERT

They don't play this one often.

Robert and the woman continue to watch the events taking place on screen.

18 INT. NIGHT OF THE FIREFLIES-FIELD-NIGHT

18

Carmen and the space man stand facing each other.

The moonlight shines bright, and a short distance away from them lies a spacecraft in which the man plans to leave earth in.

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Disc-shaped, the craft glows brightly against the background, as several trails of smoke come from beneath it.

The space man gently caresses the cheek of the young woman, and she grips a hold of it and closes her eyes.

He then removes his hand and walks up to the craft.

Slowly turning around one last time, the man nods at Carmen and then disappears into the craft.

Moments later, the craft lifts off and hovers in the air.

The power of the craft causes the surrounding grass and Carmen's hair to blow.

After several seconds of hovering, the ship jets off into space, as it does though, it leaves millions of tiny sparks floating down upon the ground.

Carmen stands in the glow of these falling embers, and tries to touch several with her hands. It's as if a summer snowfall of light has occurred.

19 INT. MOVIE THEATER-CITY-DAY

19

Robert and the woman continue to watch the screen.

ROBERT

Just like fireflies in the night.

The two continue to watch Carmen as the embers fall around her.

WOMAN

The senator is making his way up to the city for next week's elections, and presumably to strengthen his ties with the majority office. Intelligence tells us that an assassination attempt will be made, and the only way of stopping it of course is with the key.

The woman looks towards Robert.

WOMAN(CONT.)

Was Mrs. Trout able to give you that envelope for her grandson?

Robert lowers his gaze down from the screen and reaches into the pocket of his overcoat.

He then slowly pulls forth an envelope and lays it down on his lap.

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Unbeknownst to Robert and the woman, several, DARK FIGURES linger in the corners and balconies of the theater watching.

During this time, the figures use earphone devices to listen in on the conversation between Robert and the woman.

Also outside the theater, several INDIVIDUALS wait in vehicles listening to the conversation.

ROBERT

She said it was a special birthday for him, and that this hopefully would be an appropriate gift.

Robert lays his hand on the envelope.

The woman glances about the theater trying to see if she can spot anyone.

WOMAN

Unfortunately, as I mentioned before, there will be certain obstacles to overcome. And I would say these obstacles are about to come upon us at any moment.

The dark figures continue to linger in the corners of the theater listening in on their earpieces.

ROBERT

So what do we do now?

The woman looks over and notices a side exit some distance away.

WOMAN

We'll go through that exit and try and make our way to inner Lakeshore. The important thing is to move as fast as we can. And make sure you don't lose that envelope.

Robert takes a hold of the envelope and places it back into his overcoat pocket.

WOMAN

We move now. Follow me.

The woman stands up from her chair and casually makes her way over to the side exit with Robert following behind her.

The two reach the exit door and move through it.

As they do this, one of the darkened figures speaks into a walkie-talkie device.

20 EXT. STREET-CITY-DAY

20

Robert and the woman find themselves on a darkened side street.

The evening sun still hangs in the sky, while silhouetting the characters slightly.

The two slowly walk down the street, when all of a sudden a car barrels around the corner and heads right for them.

Robert pushes the woman out of the way, with the car missing both characters by inches. He helps the woman to her feet, and the two proceed to run down the street.

Robert and the woman begin traversing the side streets and alleyways, while SEVERAL MEN in hats and trench coats pursue them. The men pull forth from their trench coats small batons which they carry near their side.

After rushing down various alleyways, Robert and the woman run into a warehouse trying to evade their pursuers.

21 INT. WAREHOUSE-CITY-DAY

21

Dimly lit, with a slight haze of smoke lingering about, the area appears tremendously ominous.

Besides several boxes, many CLOCKS of different shapes and sizes litter the space, all ticking away.

Robert and the woman slowly maneuver around the clocks, trying to find a way out.

Suddenly, a clock begins chiming which causes the two characters to turn around abruptly.

They do not see anyone, but continue to move about as the ticking persists and several other clocks chime.

Moments later, the characters spot a door on the other side of the space and move towards it.

As they get closer a MAN, wearing a hat and trench coat, suddenly bursts from behind one of the clocks and swings a baton at Robert.

Robert struggles with the man and eventually subdues him.

Seconds later, TWO MORE MEN emerge and attack Robert and the woman.

During this struggle the clocks continue to tick and chime.

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Eventually, the woman and Robert fight off the two men and make their way through the door and out of the warehouse.

22 EXT. WAREHOUSE-CITY-DAY

22

Robert and the woman rush out the door and jump into a car parked a short distance away.

The woman takes the driver's seat and almost immediately begins trying to hot wire the vehicle.

As this occurs, several AGENTS can be seen out the back window making their way from the warehouse to the car.

The woman gets the car started just as the agents arrive pounding on the vehicle's windows.

She steps on the accelerator sending the car zooming off into the distance while leaving the pursuers behind.

23 EXT. DOCK YARD-CITY-DAY

23

The car pulls up to the long, wooden walkway as the evening sky glows a vibrant orange.

Robert and the woman exit the vehicle, and make their way over to a small boat sitting at one of the docks.

A SAILOR(40) stands near the wheel of the boat awaiting the actions of the other two.

Robert and the woman stand a short distance from the boat.

Moments later, Robert reaches into his overcoat and pulls out the envelope and hands it to the woman. She takes a hold of it, and for a brief moment their hands almost touch.

She then pockets the envelope.

ROBERT
So what now?

WOMAN
I'll rendezvous with the third sector tomorrow. The key will allow us to finalize plans for opposition, and hopefully when the senator arrives we can disrupt any plans for assassination.

The woman looks down for a moment and then back up at Robert.

WOMAN(CONT.)
We never could have gotten this far without you.
Are you sure you won't come along?

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ROBERT

That's not really my job.

The two smile, and the woman turns and boards the boat.

The sailor releases the boat from the dock, and begins to pull away.

ROBERT(CONT.)

Am I allowed to know your name?

The woman looks down for a few moments and then back up to Robert.

WOMAN

Be careful.

She waves goodbye to him and then turns her back.

Moments later, the boat gains a greater speed and disappears into the oncoming sunset.

Robert remains on the dock, and watches the boat sail way into the distance.

ROBERT(V.O.)

Dear Sister Maria, today I stood at the edge of a dock, and perhaps more clear than ever I could see the fields and the fireflies, and the way in which they made the sky glow.

He turns away from the docks and begins to walk back towards the city.

ROBERT(CONT.)

I am still unsure of how to answer your first question, but I will again say the light from this city is truly remarkable. And perhaps for the first time, I feel the darkness vanishing.

Robert continues to walk away as the orange glow of the setting sun seems to consume his entire body.