

THE DEATH OF A GIRL

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SYNOPSIS: In an effort to save her dying father, Shannon calls on Father Jakobi, a famed holy man, and calls upon the goodness of his spirit. Death, however, comes calling for Shannon before her task is complete.

EXT. KINGSTON - DAY

A dozen wooden buildings bake in the middle of a vast desert. There are no people in sight.

INT. SYLVESTER'S CABIN - DAY

SHANNON(16), thin and in a dirty dress, scrapes at the bottom of an empty can with a spoon. She tips it back to try to drink the remains of the can, but it is empty. She GROANS and throws the can against the wall.

The one room cabin is full of empty bottles and cans. SYLVESTER(41) lies in a small bed in the corner. He is feverish, covered in red sores, and nearing death. The bedside table is covered in dirty rags resting amidst candle stubs, spent and melted down.

Shannon falls back onto the floor and looks up at the rafters. She closes her eyes and SOBS quietly.

Sylvester begins COUGHING violently. Shannon gets up quickly, and begins to dab Sylvester's forehead with a cloth.

Sylvester clasps Shannon's hand and speaks with difficulty. In his other hand, he holds tightly to a locket.

SYLVESTER

Shannon...

SHANNON

There's no more food, Dad.

SYLVESTER

Shannon listen...listen to me. I need my last rites.

SHANNON

Dad, stop it. You can't go!

SYLVESTER

Shannon...my last rites...

SHANNON

YOU CAN'T GO!

His eyes turn upwards and he stops coughing. He has lost consciousness. Shannon begins HYPERVENTILATING. She puts an ear over Sylvester's mouth. Still breathing.

SHANNON (CONT'D)

NO! NO! NO!

Shannon picks up empty canning jars and begins throwing them against the wall. SMASH! SMASH! A bottle strikes a Cross hanging on the wall. Shannon stares at it.

EXT. SYLVESTER'S CABIN - DUSK

The door swings open stiffly, and Shannon steps out, a handkerchief tied over her mouth.

EXT. KINGSTON - CONTINUOUS

Shannon walks slowly down the empty main street. Carrion feed on the carcasses of several horses on the road. Several crows on a porch take flight quickly, and Shannon SHOUTS, startled. Two unidentifiable corpses lie on the boards of the porch, covered in sores. Shannon covers her nose in disgust.

Shannon approaches a small wooden Catholic church.

INT. CHURCH - DUSK

Shannon steps inside of the church cautiously. It is filled with dust and decay. She walks to the altar at the front of the room.

She looks up at a rough statue of the crucifix. She fixates on the blood pouring from the statue's side.

Shannon falls to her knees at the altar, trembling.

SHANNON

Dear God...Father Jakobi is dead
with the rest, and I do not know
the rites. Dear God, don't let him
come to hell. God, please.

THUD. There is a noise from the confessional booth. Shannon jumps up from the altar, scared.

SHANNON (CONT'D)

Father?

She approaches the confessional box slowly and cautiously. All is silent.

Just as she reaches for the curtain on the priest's side, it is pulled open from the inside and FATHER JAKOBI, a several week rotten corpse, falls out.

Shannon SCREAMS. Jakobi hits the ground, GROANS, and begins to pull himself to his hands and knees. Shannon turns and runs hysterically for the exit.

EXT. KINGSTON - DUSK

Shannon stumbles into the street, twisting her ankle. The sun is setting behind distant mountains. Shannon begins to crawl into a standing position.

A misty shape begins to materialize in front of Shannon. WHISPERING. Shannon looks around frantically. The last bits of sunlight disappear. Standing several feet behind her materializes the horrid ghost of SHERIFF.

SHERIFF

Shannon...

Shannon flips around, falling over on her ankle. She crawls backwards, panting, as the ghosts of the other citizens of Kingston begin to materialize around Shannon.

SHANNON

Get back! DAD! DAD!

Shannon pulls herself up again and sprints to her cabin.

INT. SYLVESTER'S CABIN - NIGHT

Shannon throws herself inside and closes and bolts the door.

She rushes to the wall and grabs a gun. She cocks it and points it at the door.

Sylvester GROANS.

SHANNON

It's okay Dad, it's okay.
Everything's okay.

BOOM. The door shudders. Shannon steels herself and levels her gun at the door. BOOM. This time some of the boards start to give.

SHANNON (CONT'D)

I'LL SHOOT!

DEATH (O.S.)
 Sugar, you really think a bullet's
 gonna stop 'em?

Shannon spins around. DEATH(60) sits with his legs crossed on a stool by Sylvester's bed. He is well dressed in black, with a trimmed and waxed beard.

CRACK. The door gives. Shannon spins back around. Jakobi hobbles into the cabin. BANG. Shannon fires. The bullet strikes Jakobi in the chest, knocking him backwards and spraying decaying dust and dirt out of his back.

Death LAUGHS. Jakobi looks down at the bullet wound. Shannon stares at Jakobi. Jakobi takes a step forward.

JAKOBI
 That man needs his last rites.

Death is loading a golden revolver with a black ivory handle. He slowly slots in six golden bullets.

DEATH
 Awh, give it a rest father, it's
 not gonna save him now.

Death stands.

JAKOBI
 It will only take a little time.

DEATH
 I'm on a tight schedule, preach.
 Now if you'll excuse me.

Death points the revolver down at Sylvester.

SHANNON
 DAD!

Jakobi grabs Shannon, and shields her eyes. BANG.

Shannon looks up. Instead of a blood - splattered corpse, Sylvester lies peaceful and dead.

SHANNON (CONT'D)
 Dad?

Death walks towards Shannon slowly, his spurs clicking.

JAKOBI
 Run, Shannon.

Shannon runs out the door. Death CHUCKLES.

DEATH

Don't tell me what to do, maggot.

Death pushes Jakobi roughly to the side.

EXT. KINGSTON - NIGHT

Shannon runs frantically. The ghosts of all of the town members watch silently as she pushes past them.

EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT

Shannon runs into the cemetery at the end of the road. She stops at a simple wooden cross. It is SILENT.

Death suddenly appears from behind a large tombstone.

DEATH

Really miss, calm yourself, it does terrible things for your complexion.

SHANNON

Get away from me!

DEATH

Now is that really the way to address a gentleman?

Shannon picks up a rock and brandishes it.

SHANNON

LEAVE ME ALONE!

DEATH

Manors, young lady, manors!

Death lights a match, and Shannon is lifted roughly by invisible forces and bent into a painful curtsy. She is terrified. Death lights a cigarette.

DEATH (CONT'D)

Now that's more like it.

Shannon cannot move. She just stares, hanging several inches off the ground.

SHANNON

Who are you?

Death raises an eyebrow.

SHANNON (CONT'D)

...sir.

DEATH

I'm Death, sugar. And I've made friends with everybody in this village, most recently your sweet pappy. Pretty little thing like you...I'd just hate to leave you out.

Shannon falls to the ground. She begins to cry.

DEATH (CONT'D)

Sugar, don't cry. This will be better than being left alone.

JAKOBI (O.S.)

Stop!

Both Death and Shannon look to see Jakobi, hobbling towards them.

Death scowls.

DEATH

Stay down, preacher!

Death waves his hand and Jakobi is knocked backwards into a tombstone, GROANING.

Death pulls out his golden revolver.

SHANNON

Wait...let me do it.

Death looks at her, curious. Then he CHUCKLES.

DEATH

The marooned survivor, to take her own life...I respect a little nobility. As the lady wishes.

Death hands over the revolver. Shannon takes it gingerly.

She turns her back on Death and walks towards the wooden cross. Jakobi watches intently.

JAKOBI

Do not fear child, God will take your soul.

Death lights another cigarette. Shannon is panting HARD. Her finger tightens on the trigger. She holds the gun up to her head.

DEATH
 (calling to her without
 looking up)
 Maybe you don't have what it takes
 sugar.

Shannon looks at the cross in front of her. MADELINE MCGILL is carved into the wood. A ghost of a beautiful woman appears next to the grave, and reaches out to her.

Shannon shudders.

SHANNON
 Mom.

The ghost nods and smiles at her.

MOM
 (whsipering)
 It's okay.

DEATH
 I don't got all night, sugar.

Shannon steels her eyes.

She pivots on her heel and points the gun at Death. He looks up and is completely surprised.

BLAM! Shannon fires. He rocks backwards, and drops his cigarette. He looks down at his chest. Blood begins to stain the front of his jacket. She storms closer, gun raised.

DEATH (CONT'D)
 I'll de damned.

Shannon looks just as surprised as Death does. Death looks at her, and for the first time, looks afraid. In a whisp of smoke, he disappears.

Shannon shakes. She looks back to see the ghost of Madeline, slowly disappearing. She runs to the cross.

SHANNON
 Mom! Wait! Come back!

The ghost fades away. Shannon collapses in front of the cross, holding onto it and SOBBING.

SHANNON (CONT'D)
I'll come back, I promise. I
promise.

The night is silent except for her tears.

EXT. CEMETERY - MORNING

Shannon opens her eyes slowly. Dust swirls around her face and hair. It is morning. She is huddled at the foot of Madeline's tombstone. The golden revolver lies in the sand. She picks it up carefully and checks the chamber: 4 rounds. She slips it into the sash of her dress.

She stands up slowly, wincing at her ankle, and notices Sylvester's locket hanging from the tombstone. She takes it, and puts it around her neck.

She begins to walk from the cemetery, and passes Jakobi, collapsed on the ground. She crouches down by him, resting a hand on his body, and looks towards her home.

INT. SYLVESTER'S CABIN - MORNING

A white sheet lies over Sylvester's body. Shannon bows her head. She places a bouquet of desert grass and flowers on her father's body.

EXT. SYLVESTER'S CABIN - MORNING

Shannon pours some alcohol onto the boards, and she tosses a match towards the house. It ignites quickly. She watches it go up in flames.

She throws her Dad's rifle into a handcart loaded with some provisions and a dirt caked coffin.

She opens the coffin lid and peers in. Jakobi lies inside. She shuts the lid, takes one last look at the burning house, and begins to pull the handcart into the desert.

She walks into the heat, leaving the flames and carrion behind her.

THE END