

A TASTE FOR BLOOD

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. ANTARCTICA - DAY

A violent wind drives a heavy blizzard through the beautiful, desolate wasteland. The snowstorm to end all snowstorms.

A TWIN OTTER AIRCRAFT lies crashed in the snow. Half buried. Clearly abandoned a long time ago.

In the near distance --

A LARGE GREY STRUCTURE

stands isolated on the pure white landscape, barely visible through the ferocious snowfall.

A weather beaten SIGN above its main entrance thrashes furiously in the gale. It reads:

"BELLINGLEY ANTARCTIC RESEARCH STATION"

INT. CORRIDOR - BELLINGLEY

Flickering fluorescent lights sporadically illuminate the grim passageway. Bloody streaks and handprints run along the walls.

SARAH, 30s, heavily pregnant, rounds a corner and staggers down the corridor as fast as her body will allow.

Painfully thin and with a huge pregnant belly, she looks like a starving African child. Bloodied. Panicked.

A MAN'S VOICE echoes down the corridor, calling after her.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)  
Saaaraaah. Ohhhhh Saaaraaah.

INT. BEDROOM - BELLINGLEY - FLASHBACK

Sarah lies sleeping in a dimly lit room. She looks both healthy and beautiful in her peaceful state.

Crouched beside her bed is COLE, 30s, outdoorishly handsome. He lovingly strokes her face.

COLE  
(hushed)  
Sarah. Sarah.

She begins to stir. Eyes flicker open. She gazes up at Cole. Smiles.

SARAH  
Hey you.

COLE  
Hey.

SARAH  
Dinner time already?

COLE  
Not yet.

SARAH  
Why'd you wake me? You're not in one of those moods are you? That's what got us in this mess in the first place.

Cole laughs.

COLE  
No, we've got plenty of time for that later.

His cocky response elicits a grin.

COLE  
The reason I woke you, is...

He hesitates. Sarah's smile begins to fade.

COLE  
There's no easy way of saying this. Me and Grover have been talking and we've decided that we're gonna head for McCarthy first thing tomorrow.

Sarah immediately sits up, worried.

SARAH  
Tomorrow? That's crazy. It's too dangerous out there.

COLE  
We've got no choice.

SARAH  
Of course you have a choice. Let someone else go.

COLE

I can't. There's only me and Grover young enough and healthy enough to make the journey. We can't delay it any longer.

SARAH

Give it a couple of days at least.

Cole shakes his head 'no'.

COLE

We've only got enough food to last three, maybe four weeks if we cut rations further. And there's no guarantee help will have gotten here by then. We can be at McCarthy in ten days.

SARAH

It could be worse over there than it is here. We don't even know what their supply levels are like.

COLE

It's worth a shot.

SARAH

What if they can't fly either? How will you get back? How are we gonna get out of here then?

COLE

I guess we'll just have to grab whatever supplies we can and come back the same way we got there. A day or two's rest at McCarthy and we'll be good to make the journey. Either way, we'll be back long before the rations are gone.

He leans in, tenderly kisses her.

COLE

I'll be back for you. I promise.

He places a hand on her pregnant stomach.

COLE

Both of you.

INT. CORRIDOR - BELLINGLEY - PRESENT

Sarah keeps moving down the corridor, frequently turning to fearfully look over her shoulder.

A loud SCRAPING sound in the distance -- something heavy being dragged on the concrete floor -- causes her to quicken her step.

She reaches a door, opens it, continues through to the next corridor.

She stops. Thinks. Turns back, through the doorway, backtracking along the corridor and ducks into --

A RESEARCH LAB

She quickly closes the door behind her, sinks to the floor, exhausted.

She reaches a trembling hand up to a SILVER CROSS that she wears on a chain around her neck. Grips it tightly. Closes her eyes.

INT. COMMUNICATIONS ROOM - BELLINGLEY - FLASHBACK

Sarah, health visibly deteriorating, stands beside the radio desk. One hand nervously rubs the silver cross, the other cups her protruding pregnancy bump.

Sat beside her, manning the radio console is BYRNE, 40s, pale and thin. He speaks into the radio mic, his voice monotone, weak. An air of resignation.

BYRNE

This is Bellingley, in need of urgent assistance. Come in, over.

Nothing.

BYRNE

I repeat, this is Bellingley, desperately in need of urgent assistance. Does anyone read me? Over.

The only response is STATIC.

SARAH

He's not coming back is he?

BYRNE

We can't give up hope.

Sarah scoffs dismissively.

SARAH

Who are you trying to kid, Byrne? When was the last time you actually expected to hear a voice on the other end of that radio?

BYRNE

Doesn't mean Cole isn't still out there.

Sarah looks at a monitor beside the radio equipment. Its screen reads:

"OUTSIDE TEMPERATURE -118c / WIND SPEED 133 mph"

SARAH

It's been almost a month, and we're in the middle of the worst winter since records began. We shouldn't have let them go.

She turns away, eyes filling with tears.

SARAH

I shouldn't have let him go.

INT. RESEARCH LAB - BELLINGLEY - PRESENT

Sarah sits with her back to the door. She shudders as the SCRAPING in the corridor gets louder. Closer. Almost outside the room.

She positions herself on all fours and presses her face to the floor, looking under the door.

SARAH'S POV

Through the gap underneath the door, the corridor floor is visible in the flickering light.

HEAVY SNOW BOOTS slowly walk past the doorway, followed by an AXE being dragged along the floor.

SARAH

watches them disappear from sight. Waits a moment. Opens the door slightly. Peers through the crack. With the coast seemingly clear she struggles to her feet.

A BALLPOINT PEN on a nearby desk catches her eye. She pockets it and exits the lab, heading in the opposite direction to her axe-wielding pursuer.

INT. RESEARCH LAB - BELLINGLEY - FLASHBACK

Sarah sits typing away at a computer. Behind her, Byrne looks into a microscope and makes notes on a pad.

He stops writing. Lays down his ballpoint pen. Wearily rubs his eyes.

BYRNE

Is it even worth carrying on with this?

Sarah ignores him. Continues with her work.

BYRNE

I mean, why bother, right? Who gives a shit any more?

She stops typing. Turns to face him.

SARAH

We have to do something, Byrne. If we just sit around this place waiting, we'll go stir crazy.

PATRICK, 40s, bespectacled, gaunt and burned out, enters the lab.

PATRICK

We've got a problem.

BYRNE

What now?

PATRICK

Grover's office.

INT. GROVERS OFFICE - BELLINGLEY - FLASHBACK

Patrick leads Byrne and Sarah into the small office. He directs them towards a CABINET in the corner. Its doors have been smashed open and hang on their hinges.

BYRNE

Who the hell did this?

PATRICK

Don't know, but they've taken all the guns.

SARAH

Why guns? There's nothing here to steal. And there's nowhere to go. Who could possibly want them?

The sound of a GUN HAMMER COCKING.

DOC (O.S)

I could.

They all turn to see DOC, 50s, grizzled and wild-eyed, stood in the doorway aiming a REVOLVER at them.

BYRNE

Doc? What the--

DOC

Canteen. Now. We're having a group meeting.

INT. COMMUNICATIONS ROOM - BELLINGLEY - PRESENT

Sarah stands over the radio console, the mic gripped tightly in her shaking hands.

SARAH

Please. Anyone. I need help. Someone has to be out there.

Only STATIC comes back through the radio.

SARAH

Cole, if you can hear me--

DOC (O.S)

He can't hear you.

Sarah drops the radio mic and spins round to see Doc stood in the doorway, holding the axe.

DOC

And he's not coming back. No one is.

INT. CANTEEN - BELLINGLEY - FLASHBACK

Sarah, Byrne and Patrick are sat at a table. They are joined by LLOYD, ARMSTRONG and BARNES. All middle-aged. All tired and emaciated.

Doc circles them, revolver in hand.

BYRNE

This is madness. You can't possibly believe this is the best solution.

DOC

You got a better idea, Byrne? We haven't got enough rations to see out the week, and it could be months before any help gets here. So, if one of you does have a better idea, i'd like to hear it.

The group all look to each other. No one speaks.

DOC

Didn't think so. It's the only way.



BYRNE  
This is cannibalism!

DOC  
Try to think of it more as survival.

LLOYD  
You can call it what you want, but it's still murder.

DOC  
The Lord will judge me as he sees fit.

He removes a PACK OF PLAYING CARDS from his trouser pocket, tosses it on the table.

DOC  
Barnes. Shuffle the deck and deal them out. One card each.

BARNES  
I don't want any part of this.

Doc aims the revolver in his direction.

DOC  
You can either deal the cards or become the first volunteer.

Barnes reluctantly takes the cards and gives them a shuffle.

SARAH  
And do you get a card?

DOC  
Of course not, my dear. I have the gun.

Barnes deals out the cards.

DOC  
Okay boys and girl, Aces are high, lowest is unluckiest. Patrick, let's see your card.

He turns it over -- King of Clubs.

DOC  
Well done. Byrne?

Eight of Clubs.

DOC  
Sarah?

Queen of Hearts.

DOC  
How apt. Lloyd?

Ace of Spades.

DOC  
It appears it's your lucky day, Lloyd.  
Armstrong?

He turns the Three of Hearts.

ARMSTRONG  
Oh, God.

DOC  
It's the luck of the draw, Armstrong. I  
can't make it any fairer than that. You  
still have a chance. There's another  
card left to go. Let's see it, Barnes.

Barnes reaches for his card, hand shaking. Takes a deep  
breath. Turns it over -- Eight of Diamonds.

ARMSTRONG  
You can't do this!

DOC  
I can, and I am. I'll make it as  
painless as possible, I promise. One  
little injection. You'll hardly feel a  
thing.

Byrne leaps from his chair and makes a grab for the gun.  
BLAM! Doc puts a bullet in his chest.

Sarah SCREAMS as Byrne slumps to the floor, dead.

LLOYD  
You killed him!

Doc looks to Armstrong, grinning.

DOC  
Looks like I was wrong, Armstrong. It's  
*your* lucky day... You got a reprieve!

INT. COMMUNICATIONS ROOM - BELLINGLEY - PRESENT

Doc stalks towards Sarah, axe in hand. Eyes full of  
insanity.

SARAH  
Keep away from me!

DOC

Why are you running from me, Sarah? I'm not going to hurt you. I just want to talk.

SARAH

Then why don't you put the axe down?

Doc looks down at the axe, then back to Sarah. Smiles. Lowers the weapon.

DOC

I'm sorry, Sarah. I know I haven't been myself since this situation began, but I'm beginning to see things a lot clearer now.

He moves uncomfortably close. She reaches into her pocket. Removes the ballpoint pen.

DOC

I'm beginning to feel a lot more like my old self.

SARAH

You're a mad man!

She stabs the pen into his shoulder. Doc CRIES OUT in pain and drops the axe. Sarah pushes past him and runs into --

A STORE ROOM

She SLAMS the door behind her. Rushes to a shelving stand and tips it over, blocking the door.

IN THE COMMUNICATIONS ROOM

Doc removes the bloody pen from his shoulder.

DOC

You bitch!

He grabs the axe and staggers to the store room door. Pushes against it. It doesn't budge.

DOC

You're just as guilty as I am!

SARAH (O.S.)

I'm nothing like you.

Doc BANGS his fist against the door.

DOC

You got a taste for it too, Sarah. You got a taste for it too!

INT. CANTEEN - BELLINGLEY - FLASHBACK

Sarah and Lloyd sit at a table, opposite each other. Their skin is pale and scabbed. Their eyes hollow and vacant. They both twitch and shift uncomfortably in their chairs.

Doc sits at the far end of the table, leaning forward on his elbows, rhythmically rubbing the side of his head with the revolver.

He stares at Sarah and Lloyd with crazy eyes.

SARAH

Let's get this over with.

She picks up the deck of cards, deals one to Lloyd, then one to herself.

Lloyd reaches for his card. His hand twitches and shakes uncontrollably, like a man suffering from Parkinson's.

After several attempts, he manages to grasp the card and turn it over -- Nine of Hearts. He looks up at Sarah, no trace of emotion on his sore face.

LLOYD

Good luck.

Doc lets out a child-like GIGGLE.

Sarah reaches for the card, her jerky movements similar to Lloyds. She turns it over -- King of Diamonds.

SARAH

I'm sorry, Lloyd.

Lloyd's expressionless face remains the same, unmoved by the threat of impending death.

DOC

And then there were two.

He begins to LAUGH insanely.

INT. STORE ROOM - BELLINGLEY - PRESENT

Sarah backs as far away from the blocked door as she can.

From the other side of the door there is the lightest of KNOCKS, then Doc SPEAKS in an unnervingly calm and gentle tone.

DOC (O.S)

Open the door, Sarah. Please.

SARAH  
Leave me alone.

DOC (O.S)  
I'm not going to hurt you. I promise.

SARAH  
You're insane!

DOC (O.S)  
I know I've been acting irrationally, but I'm fine now. Honestly. You need me, Sarah. Look at the state you're in. Are you going to deliver that baby on your own? And if you do, then what? Raise him in your cosy little store cupboard?

Sarah begins to SOB, realizing the hopelessness of the situation she's in.

DOC (O.S)  
I won't hurt you, Sarah. Let me help you with the baby. It's the only way.

She begins to slowly edge her way to the door. Tears stream down her face. She has no other choice.

The axe SMASHES through the door! Sarah SCREAMS.

DOC (O.S)  
(crazily)  
I'M COMING IN, YOU BITCH! WHETHER YOU LIKE IT OR NOT!

IN THE COMMUNICATIONS ROOM

Doc pulls the axe from the door. SLAMS it back in. Removes it again.

He approaches the small hole he's made, presses his face against it.

IN THE STORE ROOM

Doc's nose pokes through the hole in the door, sniffing the air like a wild animal.

DOC  
I smell dinner!

Sarah SCREAMS again.

IN THE COMMUNICATIONS ROOM

Doc frenziedly hacks away at the door with his axe, ROARING violently.

DOC  
I'M GOING TO EAT YOUR FUCKING BABY AS AN  
APPETIZER!

IN THE STORE ROOM

Splinters of wood fly from the door. Sarah desperately looks around the room for something. Anything.

She sees a FIRE EXTINGUISHER.

IN THE COMMUNICATIONS ROOM

Doc tosses his axe to the floor. He looks at the jagged hole he's created, admiring his handiwork.

The violent rage in his face fades to an insane glee. He lets out a child-like GIGGLE as he approaches the door.

IN THE STORE ROOM

Doc's head looms menacingly through the hole in the door.

DOC  
It's dinner ti--

THUNK! Sarah slams the fire extinguisher down on his head. He HOWLS in pain.

THUNK! She hits him again. Hard. His head twists at an unnatural angle. Splinters of broken door spear into his throat.

He makes a deathly GARGLE.

Blood splutters from his mouth and sprays down the door from his punctured neck.

Sarah ROARS a cry of pure hatred.

She slams the fire extinguisher into his head over and over and over. The hideous THUDS of metal cracking skull mix with the sickening SQUELCH of ripping flesh.

She raises the extinguisher high above her head --

SARAH  
DIE, YOU BASTARD!

-- and brings it crashing down, one last time, separating head from body.

Doc's decapitated head rolls across the floor, as a fountain of blood jets into the room from his exposed neck.

Sarah drops the fire extinguisher and collapses to the ground. She curls into a ball, CRYING uncontrollably.

INT. MAIN ENTRANCE - BELLINGLEY - FLASHBACK

Sarah and Cole stand locked in an embrace. Cole is decked out in extreme cold weather clothing, ready to brave the treacherous conditions outside.

Sarah pulls her lips away from his. She lovingly places a hand on his face.

SARAH

I wish you didn't have to do this. I want you here with me.

COLE

I know. I wish I could stay too.

He lowers the zip on his jacket, revealing a SILVER CROSS on a chain around his neck. He removes the chain and places it around Sarah's throat. Kisses her forehead tenderly.

COLE

I will be back. And I will get you home.

SARAH

I know you will.

Once again they embrace, holding each other tightly.

INT. MAIN ENTRANCE - BELLINGLEY - PRESENT

Shrouded in darkness. Silent. Eerie.

The main doors open, allowing moonlight, wind and snow to rush into the bleak building.

THREE MEN, clad in extreme weather gear -- a rescue party -- enter and switch on flashlights.

The LEAD RESCUER lowers the hood on his jacket and removes his goggles -- Cole. He shines his flashlight down the corridor, illuminating the grim, blood-stained walls.

RESCUER #2

What the hell happened here?

Afraid to answer, Cole remains silent. He begins to make his way into the building.

INT. CANTEEN - BELLINGLEY - PRESENT

Flashlight beams shine in through the doorway, scanning the room. They settle on --

A HUMAN SKELETON

propped up in a chair. A pair of spectacles rest on its head -- Patrick.

COLE  
Jesus Christ!

RESCUER #2  
You know him?

Cole's face fills with fear.

COLE  
I do... I did.

RESCUER #3  
I'm gonna go call this in. You two be careful.

INT. CORRIDOR - BELLINGLEY - PRESENT

The two men walk down the grim passageway, following the trails of blood and destruction.

RESCUER #2  
I know you probably don't wanna hear this right now--

COLE  
Then don't say it.

Rescuer #2 shines his flashlight to an EMPTY FIRE AXE CASE mounted on the wall, then lowers the beam to the SHARDS OF BROKEN GLASS on the floor beneath.

RESCUER #2  
I'd feel a hell of a lot more comfortable if we had guns.

COLE  
There's a gun cabinet just a little further down here. If we're lucky there might--

The sound of a BABY'S CRY cuts him short and stops both men dead in their tracks.

COLE  
SARAH!

He takes off running down the corridor, quickly followed by Rescuer #2.



INT. BEDROOM - BELLINGLEY - PRESENT

Pitch black. The only sign of life comes in the form of a BABY'S GURGLE.

Cole and Rescuer #2 arrive in the doorway. They shine their flashlights into the dark room, and onto --

A CHAIR

that faces away from them. A FIGURE can clearly be seen sitting in it.

COLE

Sarah?

He takes a tentative step towards the chair. Uneasy. Cautious.

COLE

Sarah?

A frail, weak VOICE responds.

SARAH

I'm so sorry, Cole.

Utter relief washes over him. He takes another step closer. Lowers his voice to a gentle, caring tone.

COLE

No, baby. I'm sorry. I shouldn't have left you.

She WHIMPERS.

COLE

Hey, it's okay. I'm here for you now. Both of you. I've come to take you home.

The chair slowly turns to face them. Both men baulk at what they see.

Rescuer #2 heaves. Covers his mouth. Turns and runs from the room.

Cole is speechless. Dumbstruck by the sight of --

SARAH

Unrecognizable as the woman he left behind many months ago. Gaunt. Dirty. Her face aged and covered with lesions. Dry blood smeared around her mouth.

COLE

Oh, dear God.

Both of her legs have been severed at the knee. The bloodied, mutilated stumps look grotesque. Sore. Infected.

In her arms, she holds their INFANT CHILD. Wrapped in a dirty, blood-stained towel.

SARAH

We had to survive.

Cole covers his mouth with a trembling hand. His eyes fill with tears.

SARAH

I had to eat.

FADE OUT.