

SOUVENIR

by

A. B. Steel

[austinbsteel@yahoo.com](mailto:austinbsteel@yahoo.com)

A COMPUTER SCREEN

A manuscript takes half the page. Soft classical music plays through the speakers. As TOM (40s) types:

TOM (O/S)

Frank waits on the sofa,  
anxiously patting his knees in  
the silence. His high-pitched  
doorbell jolts him to his feet.

INT. FRANK'S APARTMENT - EARLY EVENING

FRANK (24), dressed in his Sunday best, runs to his front door. He peeks through the peephole.

THROUGH THE PEEPHOLE

CAROL (40s) stands in the hall, holding a casserole dish. Her purse hangs on her shoulder.

CAROL

Come on, Frankie, open the door!  
This thing's heavy.

Frank unlocks and opens the door. Carol walks in and hands him the crock pot. They make their way to -

KITCHEN

Frank puts the dish on the clean counter. Carol turns the oven on. Sets the temperature to 350.

CAROL

I'm not late, am I?

FRANK

No. She won't be here for  
another thirty minutes.

CAROL

Good. That gives you enough  
time to get this heated up.

FRANK

Thanks, mom.

Carol pulls out a ring box from her purse and hands it to Frank, who pockets it.

CAROL

You look real nice, Frank.  
She's crazy not to say no.

FRANK

I'd love to stay and chat,  
but you gotta go.

CAROL

You got the wine, right?

FRANK

Yes!

She opens the refrigerator door, revealing leftovers and a bottle of red wine. Carol pulls it out.

CAROL

Chianti - nice!

FRANK

The guy at the grocery store  
said it would go good with  
lasagna.

She puts it back.

CAROL

Call me tomorrow, okay?

FRANK

I will, mom.

They share a quick embrace.

CAROL

Tell Marie I said hi.

FRANK

I will.

Frank pushes her out the door.

FRANK

Bye, mom!

He closes the door on her. Walks back to the kitchen.

INT. TOM'S OFFICE - DAY

We see Tom's back. He's overweight. Balding. He sits in front of the desk. Storm clouds can be seen through the window above the desk.

The office is spotless. The carpet shows lines from a recent vacuuming. The desk is void of any trash.

The MAN and WOMAN'S voices come from next door.

WOMAN (O/S)

I'm going out!

MAN (O/S)

Where?

WOMAN (O/S)

It doesn't matter.

MAN (O/S)

It does if it's my money.

Tom turns the speakers higher and then puts his fingers back on the keyboard.

INT. FRANK'S APARTMENT - DAY

MARIE (23), dressed in a flirty black dress, sits at a small, candle-lit dining table. She rests her chin on her palm. She takes a sip of her wine.

Frank pulls the dish from the oven and puts it on the table, next to a bowl of Caesar salad.

FRANK

Smells good, huh?

MARIE

Smells great. And this wine's good, too.

FRANK

I know.

He takes a drink from his own glass and then sits down.

He cuts out a piece of the lasagna while Marie spoons from salad onto her place.

Frank spoons the slice next to her salad. He offers her the bread bowl.

FRANK

Bread?

MARIE

Please.

She takes a slice of the garlic bread and drops it on her plate. She then takes a bite of her wine.

MARIE

Wow, Frank. I'm impressed.  
Who helped?

She laughs and takes a sip.

FRANK

No one! I did it all by myself.

MARIE

I'm proud of you, baby. To us.

FRANK

To us.

The glasses clink together as they toast. Frank stares at her as he takes his drink.

MARIE

Are you okay?

FRANK

Yeah. Why?

MARIE

You look a little distracted.

FRANK

No, I'm definitely not  
distracted.

MARIE

So what's wrong?

FRANK

Nothing.

MARIE

You haven't told me why you  
did all this.

FRANK

I can't do something nice for  
my girl on our anniversary?

MARIE

Yeah, but I thought we could  
see a movie or somethin'.

FRANK

You'd want to see a movie  
over having this great meal?

MARIE

No, but maybe we can go out  
later. Go dancing?

FRANK

Maybe.

MARIE

So why did you do this?

FRANK

I wanted tonight to be  
special. Something we'll  
remember.

MARIE

It is.

Frank scoots his chair closer.

FRANK

I wanted to ask you this  
later, over dessert, but I  
can't wait.

He pulls the ring box from his pocket and puts it on the  
table. Her eyes grow wide.

FRANK

Marie, will you marry me?

INT. TOM'S APARTMENT - DAY

Tom hunches over his desk. Lightning strikes outside and  
the room goes to black. It's eerily quiet, until -

TOM

Fuckfuckfuck!

Tom pushes buttons, but nothing happens. He shoves the  
keyboard against the monitor. From the desk drawer, he  
takes out his cell phone. He opens it and hits a speed dial  
button. His phone rings.

WOMAN (O/S)

What the hell did you do?

MAN (O/S)

Nothin'! It looks like the  
storm knocked the power out.

WOMAN (O/S)

Fix it!

MAN (O/S)

I can't.

WOMAN (O/S)

You're the electrician!

Tom hears footsteps.

WOMAN (O/S)

Where are you goin'?

MAN (O/S)

Out.

Tom flinches when he hears the neighbor's door slam. BOB (40) picks up.

BOB (V/O)

This is Bob.

TOM

(into phone)

Hey, it's Tom.

BOB (V/O)

How are ya? Is it stormin' up there yet?

TOM

Yeah. I just lost power.

BOB (V/O)

You know I need that manuscript by tomorrow.

TOM

I can't get another day?

BOB (V/O)

No, sir. It's already a month after your deadline.

TOM

I know, but I thought -

BOB

You thought wrong, Tom. I need that tomorrow.

TOM

I can't do it without power.

BOB

Don'tchu have a typewriter?

TOM

No.

BOB

I suggest you buy one.

TOM

Yeah. Sure.

Tom hangs up.

TOM

Jack ass.

TOM'S DESK

The computer's pushed to the edge. Tom drops a thick phone book and opens it.

THE PHONE BOOK

Tom skims through the pages until he finds the antique section. There's a large ad on one page. Tom dials the number...

INT. TOM'S CAR - DAY

Rain slams down on Tom's windshield. His wipers can't keep up. The sky looks as dark as night.

Tom hunches over the wheel, his face close to the steamed-over window. He wipes the glass off with his hand. His cell phone's pressed to his ear.

OLD MAN (V/O)

Yeah, it looks like I have some.

The torn ad sits in the front seat.

TOM

I'll be there in a few minutes.

Tom hangs up.

EXT. STOREFRONTS - DAY

A deserted street. Tom squeals around the corner in his junker, and almost hits a streetlamp.

INT. TOM'S CAR - DAY

Tom's eyes scan the building numbers. He sees it, at the end of the street.

The lit sign is a faded yellow. BIZARRE ANTIQUES is written in a Persian font in the glass.

EXT. BIZARRE ANTIQUES - DAY

Tom slams his car door and makes a mad dash for the dry spot under the awning. He checks himself out. A bell rings when he opens the door and walks in.

INT. BIZARRE ANTIQUES - DAY

It's cluttered and dusty. There's a stack of moldy newspapers on the floor.

Stained Styrofoam cups litter the counter near the antique cash register.

TOM

Hello?

OLD MAN (O/S)

Are you the man that called about the typewriters?

TOM

Yes, sir.

A stooped OLD MAN appears from the shadows. His white hair fans out from his head.

OLD MAN

I found some in the back.

He turns around and shuffles back. Tom follow.

BETWEEN THE SHELVES

Overhead lights cast shadows onto the worn floor. Tom scans the shelves.

There are books, odd trinkets, unusual knickknacks.

The Old Man stops at a closed, windowless door.

OLD MAN

I put the ones I have in here.

He swings the door open and reaches his hand in. A flip is thrown and a bare bulb illuminates the room.

ROOM

Empty shelves and bookcases. In the center is a table with a few old, worn out typewriters and a stack of paper.

OLD MAN

Take your time.

He moves away from the doorway and Tom walks in. He watches the old man walk away. Tom then takes a seat.

Out of the five typewriters, one is too heavy, and Tom moves it to the side. Another one doesn't have a spacebar. He puts that aside too.

On the other side of the table is a 70s style typewriter. Maroon. Tom slides it forward. He picks up a sheet of paper and slips it into the machine.

The keys click as he types MY NAME IS TOM

The ink looks fresh and every letter works.

The page, as MY is typed.

TOM (O/S)

(faintly)

What?

OLD MAN (O/S)

I wasn't sure that one would work.

Tom looks over his shoulder and the Old Man stands in the doorway.

TOM

What do you mean?

OLD MAN

(stepping forward)

I played with it some earlier and nothing happened.

TOM

It looks like it works fine now.

OLD MAN

Sure does.

Tom grabs the machine, pulls a wadded bill from his pocket and throws it on the table. He runs from the room.

The Old Man unfolds the bill. It's a twenty.

OLD MAN

I would've given it to you  
for five...

INT. TOM'S CAR - DAY

The storm clouds are thick and black. The dashboard clock reads 4:25. Streetlamps are lit. Windshield wipers try their hardest to wipe away the rain.

The machine is in the passenger seat, the page still in the roller. Tom drives fast, running through stop signs and red lights.

EXT. TOM'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

A plumber's truck is parked in front. Tom speeds down the street. He slams on his breaks and turns into the parking space next to the truck.

He picks the typewriter off the seat, throws the jacket over his head and jumps from the car.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - MANAGER'S OFFICE- DAY

NATE, the manager, sits at his desk. BARNEY sits on the edge of the desk. The power hasn't turned back on.

NATE

What the hell?

They watch as Tom, with the jacket over his head, runs up the lawn and into the building.

NATE

Hey, Tom.

BARNEY

Whatcha got there?

Tom doesn't look at them. He heads up the stairs.

BARNEY

He is such a freak.

INT. SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

With the lights out, it's dark. Tom stops at apartment 2B. He pulls his keychain out of his pocket and fumbles with the keys.

He hear heavy footsteps behind him. He sticks his key in and turns the knob.

BARNEY (O/S)

What is that?

TOM

Nothing.

Tom opens his door and walks in. Barney walks into the apartment next to Tom's.

INT. TOM'S APARTMENT - DAY

His living and dining room areas are cluttered. Each surface is covered with magazines, newspapers, scraps of paper. It's the complete opposite of the office.

Tom drops his keys in a bowl by the door. He steps into the room and drops the machine on a paper-covered table.

KITCHEN

It's as cluttered as the rest of the space. Dirty dishes stack on the counter and spill into the sink.

Tom rifles through the drawers, pulling out candles. Some are used. Some are not. He doesn't care. He takes them all and stuffs them in his pockets.

## LIVING AND DINING AREA

Tom digs through the drawers there and pulls a few more out. He adds those to his pocket and then picks up the machine. He takes it to a door marked PRIVATE.

## INT. OFFICE - DAY

Tom opens the door and walks in. He shuts it behind him. Rain hits the windows. He moves to the desk and with the sweep of his hand, he knocks the computer onto the floor. He sits the typewriter in the middle.

He pulls the candles from his pocket and puts them around the desk. From the top drawer, he pulls out his lighter and lights the candles. There's now enough light to see the paper. It still says MY NAME IS TOMMY.

Tom pulls out a new package of paper from the bottom drawer and drops it next to the machine.

Finally, he sits down. Leans back in the chair. The black keys sparkle in the candlelight. He runs his finger over them and then puts his fingers on the keys.

WOMAN (O/S)

All you ever do is drink!

BARNEY (O/S)

Better than what you do!

WOMAN (O/S)

And what's that?

BARNEY (O/S)

Spend my money and bug the  
shit outta me.

WOMAN (O/S)

You are so mean!

Tom rips the page out and inserts a new one.

INT. FRANK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A full moon shines through the open window. Marie faces it on her side, covered by a thin sheet. She holds the ring to the window and the moderately sized diamond sparkles.

Marie shouts over the running water in the next room.

MARIE

You've been in there forever.  
What are you doing?

The water shuts off. Marie props herself on her hand, facing the bathroom door, and tosses her hair back. She makes she the ring's in view.

The door opens, showing Frank's silhouette as he stands in the doorway. He flips off the light and lies next to her on the bed.

His breathing's shallow. She reaches out and touches his chest. He lightly touches her thigh.

MARIE

Are you nervous?

FRANK

Kinda.

MARIE

Why are you acting like it's  
our first time?

FRANK

It is, isn't it?

MARIE

Frank, we're engaged. Not  
married.

He takes his hand and leads it under the sheet. With her other hand, she grabs his head and pulls him on top of her.

INT. TOM'S OFFICE - DAY

A glass bottle breaks next door. Tom jumps.

BARNEY (O/S)

Why the fuck did you do that?

Melted wax pools at the base of the candles. A falling sun shines through the dwindling storm clouds outside.

WOMAN (O/S)

You don't need anymore beer!

BARNEY (O/S)

That don't mean you had to break it.

WOMAN (O/S)

Dontchu have a job to do?

BARNEY (O/S)

I can't work when it's like this, Vicky! You know that.

WOMAN (O/S)

You're so full of excuses.

Barney pushes himself away from the desk.

INT. OUTSIDE BARNEY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Tom bangs on apartment 2D. Barney opens the door.

BARNEY

What do you want?

TOM

I was wondering if you could keep it down. I'm trying to work.

BARNEY

Yeah? Work on this.

He slams the in Tom's face.

INT. TOM'S OFFICE - DAY

Tom sits down. He lights some new candles and then puts his fingers on the keys.

SERIES OF SHOTS - TOM WORKS AT THE TYPEWRITER

-- Tom bangs the keys. A stack of pages pile up and the candles burn.

BLACK

Banging on a door.

Eyes open. We're on the floor. It's too blurry to see clearly, but bright sunlight shines through a window.

Eyes blink. The vision clears, revealing the office. Beer cans litter the floor and desk. The candles have burned to stubs, each laying in a dried wax.

MAN (O/S)

(faintly)

Mister Barrett!

Tom pushes himself off the floor. He looks down and wipes the ash off his shirt. Then he looks at the desk. Paper is neatly stacked next to the machine.

More knocking.

DINING AND LIVING AREA - DAY

Tom stumbles through the office door and across the carpet. There's another knock.

TOM

I'm coming...

He stops at the door and looks through the peephole.

THROUGH THE PEEPHOLE

A Detective, GREEN, stand outside. He knocks and holds his gold badge to the peephole.

GREEN

It's the police. You need to open the door.

Tom unbolts the door and opens it.

TOM

How can I help you?

GREEN

I'm Detective Green. May I  
come in?

TOM

Why?

Green glances to his right. Tom's eyes follow.

Two PARAMEDICS wheel out a gurney. The shape of a body lies  
under the sheet.

TOM

Oh, my God!

GREEN

May I come in now?

TOM

Uh, yeah.

He moves away from the door and the two Detectives walk in.  
Tom shuts the door behind them.

TOM

So what happened?

BRISCOE

You didn't hear anything last  
night?

TOM

No. Nothing. I got drunk and  
passed out. I don't remember  
anything. Are they both...?

GREEN

Yeah.

TOM

Damn. I wish I could help, but  
I don't think I can.

GREEN

All right.

(pulls out a business card)

If you remember anything, give  
me a call.

TOM

Thanks.

Tom lets Green out. Once the door's closed, he falls  
against it and exhales.

His eyes open wide and his mouth drops open. He runs to his  
office.

OFFICE

Tom looks over the room. The typewriter sits in the middle  
of the desk, next to a stack of papers. He picks up a  
crumpled beer can off the floor.

TOM

How much did I drink?

He lets go. He falls into the chair and picks up the stack.

THE FIRST PAGE

SOUVENIR

BY

TOMMY BARRETT

TOM (O/S)

Tommy?

He flips to the next page.

TOM'S EYES

as they move across the page.

INT. FRANK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Frank and Marie rock back and forth on the bed.

MARIE

Harder, Frank.

FRANK

I love you, baby.

They hear the bedroom door slam open. Light from the next room spills onto the carpet, revealing the shadow of a large MAN.

Marie screams and backs against the wall. Frank jumps to his feet. The Man stomps forward.

FRANK

What the fuck do you want?

The man pulls a long chef's knife from his black coat and with a swoosh, runs it over Frank's neck. Blood squirts onto the man's chest. Frank falls to the floor.

Marie screams louder. She cowers in the corner and looks out the window. She's two floors up.

The man steps over Frank. Marie swallows and jumps out the window, but the man grabs her ankle. He pulls her back in and she's still screaming.

He holds up the bloody knife.

MARIE

Please, don't. Don't. Please.

The man pulls her to the edge of the bed. She tries to cover herself with the blanket, but he keeps on pulling it. Finally, he throws it on the floor.

He puts the tip of the blade on one of her nipples. Twirls it around, but doesn't cut her. Her screams turn into groans. He moves the blade down her stomach and stops at her navel. The twirl becomes a jab.

She screams. Blood pours from the cut. She kicks, but nothing hurts him. He pulls the blade out and stabs her again. She screams louder. Kicks harder. Another stab. Blood oozes from the cut and runs down her side.

He pulls the blade out and brings it down. All six inches of the blade is in her gut. She's stopped breathing. Blood bubbles around the cut.

Man steps back, but doesn't lose his gaze. Before he turns to go, a sparkle catches his eye. He walks to the bed and grabs Marie's left hand. He picks it up. he wipes off the diamond with his leather glove.

He tries pulling it off, but there's too much blood. His finger keep slipping. He pulls off the gloves with his teeth and spits them on the floor.

With his bare hands, he tries pulling the ring off, but it still won't budge. He grabs the knife and cuts the skin around the ring, which loosens the grip, but not enough.

He throws the knife on the floor. With one hand, he grabs the finger, and with the other, he grabs her hand. He twists the finger. Pulls it back. It finally SNAPS off.

INT. TOM'S OFFICE - DAY

Tom holds the last page in his hands. The rest pile around his feet. He lets go of that page and it floats to the floor.

Tom swallows. Pats his pockets. He sticks his hand in one of them and pulls out a woman's finger, with bright red fingernail polish. There's also a diamond ring at the sawed off base.

His eyes widen, but he doesn't let go. He brings it up to his eye and inspects it closely.

With his other hand, he pulls out his cell phone. Speed dials. He puts the phone to his ear.

BOB (V/O)

This is Bob.

TOM

(into phone)

Hey, Bob. It's Tom. I think gonna go in a new direction.

SMASH CUT TO BLACK.