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*A few days later. Late afternoon. Rain. James is watching a horror movie like Friday the 13th while taking notes on his laptop. Sarah, camera bags in hand, comes in from the rain.*

JAMES: Hey!

SARAH: Hey.

*(He turns off the TV.)*

JAMES: Why didn't your little intern help you up with this?

SARAH: I sent her home.

JAMES: You should've buzzed me; I would have come down.

SARAH: I could manage.

JAMES: How'd it go?

SARAH: Fine.

JAMES: You get some good stuff?

SARAH: Yeah.

JAMES: So . . . ?

SARAH: Let me catch my breath.

JAMES: Want something? Tea or uh . . .

SARAH: Something harder would be great.

JAMES: Got it. *(He pours glasses of scotch. As he hands one to her)* So tell me!

SARAH: It's not such a big deal.

JAMES: It *is* a big deal. Your first assignment in six months?

That's a very big deal.

SARAH: How was *your* day?

JAMES: You're looking at it.

SARAH: What're you cooking?

JAMES: That chicken-black olive thing.

SARAH: Again?

JAMES: Thought I'd try not to make it rare this time.

SARAH *(Regarding his laptop)*: What are you working on?

JAMES: My horror movie book.

SARAH: What about the pages for Richard? You promised he'd have it on Friday.

JAMES: I know; he will.

SARAH: You can't blow it off; you've got to do it.

JAMES: I am! I worked on it all day. Now I'm working on *this*.

SARAH: When can I read it?

JAMES: Soon. *(A beat)* You okay? You seem wrecked.

SARAH: Long day.

JAMES: It was too much for you wasn't it? I knew it would be too much.

SARAH: It wasn't that.

JAMES: Didn't I say you weren't ready?

SARAH: Physically I held up just fine. *(Pause)* I had a flashback.

*(Pause.)*

JAMES: At the prison? *(She nods)* What was it?

SARAH: Market bombing. Mosul. Couple of years ago.

JAMES: What happened today? What was the trigger?

*(Pause.)*

SARAH (*A deep breath*): Today . . . I'm shooting these women. The inmates. With the babies they'd had in prison.

JAMES: Yeah . . .

SARAH: And some of these ladies are *seriously* bad. I mean: homicide, drug dealing, trying to kill their grandmother for her ATM card, that kind of thing . . . Anyway I'm shooting . . . sort of getting in the zone and this one woman . . . big . . . heavily tattooed with Hell's Angels' kind of skulls with fire coming out of the eye sockets, comes up to me, gets right in my face . . . and looks at me with such . . . contempt . . . (*British voice*) "What you want to take my picture for? Huh?" And . . . I was back in Mosul.

JAMES: Was I with you?

SARAH: You were off doing a story in the south; it was when I was there for the AP.

JAMES: What happened that day? I don't remember.

SARAH: That's because I never told you. I never told anybody.

JAMES: Tell me now. (*She shakes her head. Gently*) Come on. Tell me.

(*Pause.*)

SARAH: The light that day was gorgeous, I remember. (*Pause*) I was sitting in a café with the Reuters guys . . . And a car bomb went off, a block or two away, in this market. And I just ran to it, took off. Without even thinking.

(*A beat.*)

The carnage was . . . ridiculous. Exploded produce. Body parts. Eggplants. Women keening. They were digging in the rubble for their children. I started shooting. And suddenly this woman burst out from the smoke . . . covered in blood . . . her skin was raw and red and charred, and her hair was singed—she got so close

I could smell it—and her clothes, her top had melted into her, and she was screaming at me. (*Shouts*) "Go way, go way! No picture, no picture!" And she started pushing me, pushing my camera with her hand on the lens . . .

JAMES: What did you do?

SARAH: Nothing. I kept on shooting. Then, somehow, I ran the hell out of there. I stopped to catch my breath . . . and check out my cameras . . . (*Pause*) There was blood on my lens. (*Moved*) Her blood was smeared on my lens. (*She breaks down*) I feel so ashamed . . .

JAMES: No! Why?

SARAH: It was wrong . . . What I did was so wrong.

JAMES: It wasn't wrong.

SARAH: It was indecent.

JAMES: You were doing your job.

SARAH: They didn't want me there! They didn't want me taking pictures! They lost *children* in that mess! To them it was a sacred place. But there I was, like a, like a *ghoul* with a camera, shooting away. No wonder they wanted to kill me; I would've wanted to kill me, too.

JAMES (*Soothing*): No . . .

SARAH: I live off the suffering of strangers. I built a *career* on the sorrows of people I don't know and will never see again.

JAMES: That's not true. You've helped them. In ways you can't see.

SARAH: Have I? Have I really? (*Pause*) I'm such a fraud.

(*Long pause.*)

JAMES: Hey. (*She looks at him. Pause*) We don't have to do this anymore, you know.

SARAH: What do you mean?

JAMES: We don't have to *do* this. We can stay home. We can *make* a home.