

As Long As I Live

written by

Fred Flemming

Portsmouth, Hampshire, UK
07519881577
fred.flemming459@gmail.com

EXT. - LATE EVENING, SUNRISE - THE BENCH

BLACK. We FADE IN on ARTHUR, motionless on the floor next to a BENCH. He is rough in appearance. A bite wound, oozing with a dark substance, is visible on his neck. Blood and dirt covers his hands. Tear streaks are stained across his cheeks.

EXT. - DAY - MIA'S HOUSE

ARTHUR is standing at the front gate to MIA'S garden. He has flowers in his hands, holding them just below the hip as he hesitates crossing to the front door. The gate squeaks open as he reluctantly crosses. He raises his

hand, pauses a moment, and knocks.

SILENCE

The flowers raise to his chest. Deep breath in, deep breath out. The façade of the house stands stoic, the windows, curtains and door all painfully unbothered by the disturbance of the knock. Finally the latch is unlocked and the door is slowly opened, MIA appearing in the hallway behind it.

Her face turns before she can utter a word, shock taking over. ARTHUR'S face tries to form a smile, the corners of his mouth and eyes quivering. He gestures the flowers at his chest gently towards her. MIA'S eyes do not move from his face as she takes a small step back, disgust and anger crawling over her features until she can't bare to look at him anymore, turning away and shutting the door on him. ARTHUR brings the flowers back down slowly, still staring at the door. He brings his hand up to knock again when he notices the curtains to his right moving. GEORGE is peering out at him from behind them. ARTHUR can barely draw a smile across his face before GEORGE is ushered away from the window by MIA. ARTHUR cannot move.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. - DAY - MIA'S HOUSE [MONTHS LATER]

RAIN. ARTHUR is ushering GEORGE down the street, through the gate and into MIA'S house. They are both dressed in BLACK SUITS and GEORGE IS INCONSOLABLE. He closes the door behind them.

INT. - CONTINUOUS - HALLWAY

GEORGE immediately goes up the stairs, taking his jacket off as he climbs. He goes straight to his room. ARTHUR stands at the bottom of the stairs and watches.

2.

His mouth wants to speak but his voice can't find the words. He drops his head and sighs quietly, moving into the next room.

INT. - CONTINUOUS

ARTHUR moves through the house, from room to room he relives his old life.

ARTHUR and MIA are curled up in a blanket on the old couch, light and sounds coming from the TV in front of them. On the small dining table there is a birthday cake. MIA leads him into the room, covering his eyes and singing 'Happy Birthday'. ARTHUR is in the kitchen, cooking. MIA comes up behind him, hugging him from behind before revealing a pregnancy test. His face lights up as he turns towards her, embracing her.

He's on the phone, angry at his BROTHER on the other side. MIA, obviously pregnant, is stood nearby with concern on her face. They argue with each other because he needs to see and help his BROTHER more. He says his BROTHER needs to help himself first. ARTHUR sleeps alone on the sofa.

The crying from upstairs bleeds through.

INT. - CONTINUOUS - GEORGE'S ROOM

GEORGE is curled up on his bed, still mostly dressed in his suit with his shoes left on the floor and the black jacket next to them. His body shakes as he weeps facing the wall, back to the door. ARTHUR stands in the DOORWAY, staring at GEORGE.

ARTHUR, YOUNG, is sat on the edge of his bed in a BLACK SUIT, a framed picture of his brother in his hands. We are seeing him from afar like he is seeing GEORGE.

ARTHUR crosses into the room slowly, approaching the bed and putting a hand on GEORGE'S shoulder as he sits on the edge. He lets him cry, caressing his hand over his back as the tears continue to flow.

ARTHUR
(soothingly)
I'm sorry George. I'm sorry. I'm
sorry.

There is nothing he can say.

ARTHUR (V.O.)
I had a brother once...

INT. - DAY - GEORGE'S ROOM [WEEKS LATER]

GEORGE is on his bed, laying on his stomach with his feet in the air, a colouring book in front of him. The door is slightly ajar as ARTHUR approaches. He stands on the other side, speaking through the crack.

ARTHUR
Hungry, George?
GEORGE ARTHUR

No.

ARTHUR sighs.

You sure? You're still only
running on breakfast.

ARTHUR

Yep.
GEORGE

I'm gonna make you something
anyway, Okay?

George continues colouring.

(CONT'D)

George?

GEORGE

Okay.

ARTHUR

INT. - EVENING - LIVINGROOM [SAME DAY]

ARTHUR is on the sofa. There is a glow from the TV as he watches the news. The reporter is talking about a man who was hospitalised with strange viral symptoms after a rat bite who then became violent towards nurses and staff. He switches it off as GEORGE comes downstairs with his plate and puts it in the kitchen.

ARTHUR
Movie, George?

GEORGE

I don't like movies.

ARTHUR

None?

GEORGE

No.

4.

ARTHUR

You must have never seen a good one.

GEORGE

(reluctantly)

I liked the ones mum liked.

ARTHUR and MIA are cuddled on the sofa under a blanket.

ARTHUR

Those are my favourites as well.

Look.

He crosses to the TV stand and opens a drawer which is filled with DVD's. George peers down at them with his hands in his pockets.

tired.

GEORGE

I'm

ARTHUR hides his disappointment with a smile as GEORGE goes to the stairs.

ARTHUR

Alright, goodnight then. Want me to... tuck you in?

GEORGE

No. Goodnight.

ARTHUR

I'll leave the nightlight on.

INT. - MORNING - GEORGE'S ROOM [NEXT DAY]

GEORGE is still asleep in bed. ARTHUR knocks on the door before entering. He is fully dressed with his coat on and GEORGE'S coat over his arm.

ARTHUR

Hey, George. Come on we're getting up.

GEORGE
(groggily)
Why? What are we doing?

5.

ARTHUR
We're going out. For a walk. In the forest. Come on.

ARTHUR is picking up GEORGE'S clothes and laying them out for him.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
Come on, up up up. We're going now.

INT. - MORNING - CAR

GEORGE is in the passenger seat, eating a hastily-made sandwich in his coat. ARTHUR gets in the driver's seat and turns the car on, He pulls away down the road. As they drive they see POLICE CARS and AMBULANCES. The radio stays off.

EXT. - MORNING - FOREST

They arrive at a quiet, dirt car park in the middle of THE FOREST. ARTHUR gets out and opens the door for GEORGE. Appeased by the lack of other cars, he is no longer rushing GEORGE as they make their way from the car to the start of the FOREST TRAIL.

They stay mostly silent as they follow the TRAIL, GEORGE following behind ARTHUR.

GEORGE
What are we doing out here?

ARTHUR
Well, it's good to get out. You spend so much time in your room now you've probably forgotten what it's like out here.

GEORGE stays quiet.

*ARTHUR, YOUNG, is walking the trail with his BROTHER.
They laugh and joke around a campfire.*

EXT. - AFTERNOON - FOREST

ARTHUR and GEORGE come across a large tree. ARTHUR sits down underneath, taking his backpack off and opening it. He has lunch for them both which they sit and eat. After finishing they sit for a minute. Then -

6.

ARTHUR

I met your mum when I was at
University. She sat next to me
every day.

GEORGE listens, but doesn't respond.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

We both studied English. Funny
because she always hated it, always
wanted to do finance instead.

GEORGE

Why didn't she?

ARTHUR

Well, she did eventually. But I
think she had a bit of a crush on
me.

GEORGE smiles bashfully.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

She liked my writing more than me
really. I asked her out with a
poem.

ARTHUR begins to stand back up and put his backpack back on. He helps GEORGE up and they continue their walk.

GEORGE

(curiously)

Were you in love?

ARTHUR blushes.

ARTHUR

Yes, I loved her. The only thing I loved more than writing was your mum.

GEORGE
What did you write?

ARTHUR
A lot. Too much to count. I spent more time writing than I should have. I'd lock myself away for days to write.

ARTHUR and MIA argue.

7.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
(chuckling)
She was never pleased when I did that.

GEORGE
She didn't like when I would always colour in my room by myself.

ARTHUR
She loved you George, she just wanted to see you more. It was the same with me and my writing.

SILENCE.

GEORGE
Why did you leave mum?

The question startles ARTHUR. He takes a moment to recoil before he answers.

ARTHUR
I had a brother once. We were best friends when we were young. But when I started writing we grew apart.

ARTHUR is alone at a desk, writing with his back to us.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
He made some bad choices. I was angry with him about them. I said I couldn't help him because I was too

busy, and that it was his mess to
clean up.

ARTHUR and MIA are arguing, she is obviously pregnant.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

When he died it made me realise
what I'd lost. I was never too busy
for him, I was just too angry. Then
I started making some bad decisions
myself...

ARTHUR is drinking himself to oblivion.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

...and then...

THE CRASH.

8.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

I did something unforgivable. I
went to prison for it, but no
amount of time can repay what I
took.

The tears are welling in his eyes, forcing him to
stop speaking. He stops and wipes them away with his
hands.

*GEORGE remembers the day ARTHUR came to the door
with flowers.*

GEORGE

I loved her too.

ARTHUR

I know. I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

ARTHUR turns and embraces GEORGE, stamping
their reconciliation.

EXT. - AFTERNOON - LATER

ARTHUR and GEORGE are continuing on their way. They have
been out walking for hours.

GEORGE

I'm tired, when are we going back

to the car?

ARTHUR

I've got a tent George, we're camping. We're gonna spend a few days out here.

GEORGE

What about home?

RUSTLING comes from the foliage off to their right. ARTHUR stops and turns towards the sound. There is a pause, and then a STRANGE BARK.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

What's that?

ARTHUR

(nervously)

Nothing. You keep going George, follow the path. I'll be right behind you.

ARTHUR ushers GEORGE in front of him. A low GROWLING follows after the STRANGE BARK, like a dog protecting a bone.

9.

GEORGE is frozen in place, his eyes wide and fixed in the direction of the sound. After a beat, it CHARGES at GEORGE. ARTHUR steps in the way of its path but is THROWN to the side as the ZOMBIE, scuttling on all fours, barrels past him. GEORGE screams, and sitting up ARTHUR sees the ZOMBIE on top of his son.

ARTHUR

(CONT'D)

GEORGE!

He grabs a ROCK from the ground as he scrambles to his feet and over to GEORGE, who is still screaming. Without hesitation, ARTHUR begins PULVERIZING THE ZOMBIE, aiming each blow at the head. He continues his rage fuelled retaliation until there is nothing left of the ZOMBIE'S head.

GEORGE is crying and holding his arm. As the adrenaline leaves his system, ARTHUR takes a look and sees the BITE MARK on GEORGE'S wrist. The wound is deep and already

bleeding, but a strange PURPLE GOO is also secreting from the bite.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

George! George, are you okay?! Let me look at it. Okay, okay you're okay George, you'll be okay. It's fine just a bit of blood.

GEORGE is wincing and whining as ARTHUR picks him up and puts him on his feet.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

We're gonna go back to the car, we'll get some help. You're gonna be fine George. Can you walk?

ARTHUR helps him along as GEORGE begins trudging back the way they came. His steps are out of rhythm and start to become bigger and bigger stumbles until finally he falls over completely, now crying again.

GEORGE

(through tears)

I can't, dad, I can't. It hurts too much. It's spreading through my body. It hurts!

GEORGE begins coughing and sputtering. ARTHUR can do nothing but watch helplessly.

ARTHUR

(lying)

Come on George, the car isn't much further we're almost there.

(MORE)

10.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

You'll be fine. Have some water and we'll keep going. Come on George.

He takes off his backpack and takes out a bottle of water, unscrewing the lid and gently holding it to GEORGE'S lips. The water barely touches his mouth before he coughs it back up, tinted red with blood. GEORGE begins to convulse, unable to respond to ARTHUR'S cries. After a minute he finally falls still. His eyes stare aimlessly into the sky. ARTHUR stares hopelessly into his, tears rolling down his

cheeks.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

George? George, come on. We have to keep going.

ARTHUR gently shakes him by the shoulders. With no response, he slowly lowers his head to GEORGE'S chest, pressing his ear to his heart. An arrhythmic thumping can be heard from inside GEORGE'S body. GEORGE snaps awake, immediately lunging forwards at ARTHUR.

CUT TO BLACK.

EXT. - NIGHT - THE FOREST

We FADE IN on a FIRE burning over a log pile. The fire roars with life as another log is added to the supply. ARTHUR sits down on the floor next to it. His cheeks are stained with streaks of tears, his hands covered with dried blood and his face masked in dirt. Just beyond the glow of the campfire, GEORGE'S body lays in the shadows next to a tree. ARTHUR pays it no attention as he stares directly into the burning fire, putting a hand to his neck and wincing in pain before pulling it away. It's covered in blood and the same PURPLE GOO from GEORGE'S bite mark. He sighs. Reluctantly, he turns and looks in the direction of GEORGE.

ARTHUR is screaming and crying as he brings the same rock down several times on GEORGE. He hesitates every time he raises it above his head and closes his eyes as he brings it down.

Tears begin to well again in his eyes.

ARTHUR and GEORGE are underneath the tree. GEORGE asks if he and MIA were in love. ARTHUR smiles and says yes. GEORGE says he loved her too. GEORGE is at the window behind the curtains. He's crying on his bed after the funeral while ARTHUR stands in the doorway, watching.

Pain from his neck wound pulses throughout his body. ARTHUR winces uncomfortably as he begins to stand, wiping the tears from his face.

11.

He leaves his backpack and coat next to the still burning

fire as he turns and finds his way back to the trail. He begins walking completely aimlessly, not knowing if this is the way he came from, not caring either way. He trudges along, no destination in mind as he knows the fate that awaits him. The path winds on until it begins to skirt along the edge of a field. Ahead, there is a lone bench sat on top of a hill.

EXT. - EARLY DAYBREAK - THE HILL

ARTHUR'S arms are wrapped around himself, one clutching the bite mark on his neck with the other crossed over clenching his side in pain. He continues to slowly amble until he collapses in agony. He writhes and groans in pain as he picks himself up to his knees, then doubling over again as the pain pulses through his body once more. He lets out an agonising cry.

ARTHUR is at his desk writing. MIA comes to the door and speaks through the crack, asking him to take a break. He doesn't turn around as he answers, "No, I'm busy". She walks away.

ARTHUR retakes control of his breathing, slowly in and slowly out, each one deep and quivering with pain.

ARTHUR is on the phone, listening. After a pause he begins yelling furiously at his BROTHER on the other side. MIA, stood nearby, is startled, shocked, confused. When he puts the phone down she tells him he needs to help him. ARTHUR tells her it's not his mess to clean up and storms off.

His trembling breaths begin to quicken again.

Another phone call. The words from the other side bring him to his knees, his hands to his face. MIA rushes in, coming to the floor and embracing him. ARTHUR is sat on the edge of the bed in a BLACK SUIT, holding the framed picture of him and his brother.

Tears begin to flow again.

ARTHUR

I'm sorry, I'm so sorry. I'm so so sorry.

ARTHUR is alone at his desk, drinking straight from a bottle of Whiskey, surrounded by several other empty

bottles. He gets behind the wheel of his car.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry.

12.

He loses control, swerving and crashing into another car. MIA, heavily pregnant, takes the call. Her hand comes to her mouth as she collapses to the floor, alone. ARTHUR'S mug shot is taken and he is locked up.

ARTHUR has lost complete control again. Writhing with pain and regret at the foot of the hill, he catches a glimpse of the bench at the top. A small figure is sat on it, swinging their legs back and forth as they gaze off into the distance. The sight shocks ARTHUR as the eye of the storm passes over him, providing a moment of clarity despite the pain. He picks himself up again, staring intently at the silhouette as he claws his way up the hill.

MIA is in hospital, the new born baby GEORGE cradled in her arms. GEORGE is in his cot, staring up adorably at MIA as she coos him. He speaks his first words and learns how to walk, then how to ride a bike. He has his eyes covered at the dining table as MIA brings in a cake decorated with candles. ARTHUR is alone in a prison cell.

EXT. - SUNRISE - THE BENCH

ARTHUR drags himself over the brow of the hill, just behind GEORGE sat on the bench.

ARTHUR

George..

GEORGE

. Dad...

ARTHUR has nothing left to give as he lays on his back next to the bench, his trembling breath slowing.

ARTHUR is at MIA'S doors, holding the flowers to his chest as he waits for her to answer.

His breath slows to a stop.

[OUT OF FRAME] MIA answers the door.

*ARTHUR smiles tearfully and gestures the flowers towards her. **END***