

Like a Moth To The Flame

by

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FADE IN:

A LED TV

The nagging HISS of screen static. The random flicker of dots. Chaotic. Hypnotic. Maddening.

NADIA (V.O.)
Why - why - why is it drawn to the
flame? The moth, I mean. You silly,
silly moth.

We are at...

INT. NADIA'S LOFT - NIGHT

The screen GLOWS in darkness, its spectral light casts sensual shadows, silhouetting shapes of modern furniture.

NADIA (V.O.)
Can't you see it? Can't you feel
it? The flame, I mean. It burns so
hot. It burns so bright.

A SMARTPHONE lies over a table, BUZZING intermittently like a wounded fly that can't take flight. Notifications of missed calls and messages behind its CRACKED SCREEN.

NADIA (V.O.)
Yet you fly right into it. Right
into the flame. Silly moth. Why
burn your pretty wings? I don't - I
don't understand. Unless... wait...
could that be it?

NADIA (40s) lies on the floor. Messy hair. Sweaty and pale. Wrinkled shirt, stained sweatpants. Rings under her eyes. Yet she was beautiful once - scratch that, she still is.

NADIA (V.O.)
Yes - yes it must be it!

She stares at the TV with disturbing intensity, her eyes reflecting the STATIC as...

NADIA (V.O.)
It's because the flame drives the
moth insane.

She jumps to her feet, eyes beaming with realization.

NADIA (V.O.)
 And - and - and Jack is like the
 flame. Jack is my flame.

She paces back and forth. The concentrated frown of a mad scientist about to have an epiphany.

NADIA (V.O.)
 That's why I'm drawn to him. That's
 why I miss him. That's why --

She falls to her knees - grabs her stomach - doubles over in PAIN - miserable pain --

NADIA (V.O.)
 That's why it hurts. How can it
 hurt so much when he's gone? How
 can I miss him so much?

She wipes sweat from her brow.

NADIA (V.O.)
 Without the flame there's just
 cold. Painful cold. I need - I need
 to make the cold go away. I need
 to... I need to...

She spots a WALLET under the couch.

NADIA (V.O.)
 That's it! I know!

FLASH TO:

Nadia holds the wallet. Her clumsy hands dig out credit card after credit card after credit card --

NADIA (V.O.)
 Spend it all. Spend it all, bitch.
 Go out and spend it --

She FREEZES. Spots a dozen SHOPPING BAGS lying sprawled on the floor. A black fancy dress spilling out from one of them.

NADIA (V.O.)
 No. That - that didn't work.

BACK TO:

Her hands cup the empty space where the wallet used to be... or maybe never was.

NADIA (V.O.)
 Spending like a rockstar doesn't
 make the pain go away.

Her eyes land on an ice cream BUCKET that lies toppled on the
 tile floor. Its contents melting into a surrounding pool that
 grows like blood around a corpse.

NADIA (V.O.)
 Eating like a pig doesn't make the
 pain go away.

There's a few CUTTING SCARS on her arm.

NADIA (V.O.)
 Even the pain doesn't make the pain
 go away.

She bites her fingernails with disturbing intensity as...

NADIA (V.O.)
 Nothing can make it go away.
 Nothing but the flame. But Jack is
 my flame, and Jack won't come back.
 Wait, wait, there was something
 else I could do.

She closes her eyes and starts to:

NADIA (V.O.)
 Think. Think. Think. Think. Think.
 Think. Think. Think. Think. Think.
 Think. Think. Think. Think. Think.

Her eyes FLASH open --

NADIA (V.O.)
 That's it!

She turns to the kitchen, zeroes in on the FRIDGE.

NADIA (V.O.)
 I could call Mr. K.

There must be a HUNDRED FRIDGE MAGNETS on that door.

NADIA (V.O.)
 Yes - yes I will call Mr. K.

There's a BLACK BUSINESS CARD stuck under a magnet. The
 elegant font spells "Mr. K."

NADIA (V.O.)
 How could I forget Mr. K.?

She slaps slaps slaps her forehead.

NADIA (V.O.)

He can help. That's his job. His job is to -- Wait. What was his job? What was it, what was it. I forget. Oh, that's it! His job is to make you forget. He's like a - like a - like a Shaman that takes pain away.

FLASH TO:

Nadia HURRYING over to the fridge.

NADIA (V.O.)

A Shaman who'll make me forget about Jack.

Her BARE FEET tread across the tile floor, stepping over the spilled ice cream.

NADIA (V.O.)

He'll make the flame go away. The pain go away. The flame go away.

She steps over the fancy dress, staining it with ice cream.

Reaches the fridge, takes the business card and inspects the front: just "Mr. K" - no contact details.

Then the back: same.

NADIA (V.O.)

Where is it? Where's the number?

She manically checks the front the back the front the back the front the back of the card.

NADIA (V.O.)

How can I call him if there's no number? How can I --

She notices the SILHOUETTE OF A MAN outlined against the GLOW of the TV SCREEN. Standing there in silence.

She stares at him for a moment.

NADIA (V.O.)

Is that... is that him...?

The figure NODS solemnly in reply, as if he could hear her thoughts.

She takes a careful STEP forward --

FLASH TO:

Nadia standing right in front of MR. K (40s): African American. Cool haircut. Pimp Armani blazer. Tribal earring. He's a cross between a witch doctor and a fashion model.

NADIA

Please make it go away.

A deep, soothing voice:

MR. K

I deal with the pain of the heart.
Only the pain of the heart. Is that
your pain?

NADIA

Yes - yes - I miss him. I don't
want to miss him anymore. I want to
forget him. And I want to forget I
forgot him. So I don't miss him and
I don't miss missing him. I don't
want to burn like the moth --

MR. K

First... breathe in the incense.

NADIA

Incense? What - what incense?

FLASH TO:

Strands of INCENSE SMOKE hang in the air, floating like
ghosts in front of the pale glow from the TV SCREEN. Mr K.
lights incense sticks as...

MR. K

Try to relax. Breathe.

Nadia, sitting on the couch, takes a deep breath.

MR. K

Good, now I need you to --

FLASH TO:

Mr. K. kneeling in front of her.

MR. K

-- close your eyes.

She does.

He holds up an OPEN PALM right in front of her face. RINGS made of BONE adorn every finger of his well-manicured hand.

MR. K

Clear your mind, so I can link mine with yours.

Her eyes remain CLOSED, yet her head turns to follow his hand... up... down... left... right... as if she was able to see it... or sense it through a telepathic link.

MR. K

Now I need to find him inside your memories. Think about Jack. Think about how you feel when you're with him. Think of --

NADIA

His touch... his taste... his smell... makes everything go away. Everything go away. The bad things, the worse things. The I want to die things. He's the flame. But - but he doesn't give a fuck. I need him so much more than he needs me. And that turns me on even more.

MR. K

Now think about how you feel when he's gone.

She GRIMACES in:

NADIA

Paiiinnn... so much pain. It hurts so much. Like my soul was being ripped away from me. A deep black hole. Cold and burning and empty and full of pain and --

He closes his hand into a FIST - her eyes flash OPEN - the link now severed.

MR. K

I can't help you.

She stares at him. Dread.

NADIA

Why?

MR. K
 Because Jack didn't leave you.
 (then)
 You left Jack.

NADIA
 No, no, no. I would never leave
 Jack --

FLASH TO:

Mr. K. opens the door of a BAR CABINET --

It's choke full of BOTTLES, whisky gleaming inside them like liquid gold.

He pulls out one of the bottles.

MR. K
 It's been long without "Jack"
 hasn't it?

Nadia stares, the realization hitting her hard.

MR. K
 How long?

She knots her jaw, sweating, chest heaving.

MR. K
 How long without a drink?

NADIA
 Three. No, five. No, three. Three
 days. I mean weeks. I mean, help
 me. Please help me.

MR. K
 This is not love. It's an
 addiction. I don't work with
 addictions.

NADIA
 Yes you do - yes you do. What do
 you think love is? Yes you do.

MR. K
 I can't help you with withdrawal
 delirium.

NADIA
 No! I'm not delirious! I'm not --

FLASH TO:

Nadia lying on the floor just like when we met her.

NADIA
-- delirious.

The darkened room is in silence but for the HISSING static from the TV.

Mr. K. is now gone... or probably was never even there.

NADIA
I'm not delirious. I'm just cold.

NADIA (V.O.)
Very cold.

NADIA
Like the moth.

NADIA (V.O.)
Right, like the moth. I just miss
the flame. But Jack is gone and --
Wait - wait.

She zeroes in on the open BAR CABINET. The bottle that Mr. K. took is still MISSING.

NADIA (V.O.)
Jack...

She notices she's holding the bottle in her hand.

NADIA (V.O.)
Jack is back.

Her eyes leer at the bottle with almost sexual desire.

NADIA (V.O.)
And I want him. I want him as much
as - as - as the moth wants the
flame.

FLASH TO:

A steady stream of whisky falls into a glass, the golden waterfall caressing a cluster of ice cubes on its way down.

NADIA (V.O.)
And the moth doesn't give up, even
when burnt. But why is it drawn to
the flame? I don't understand...
unless - unless... wait...
(MORE)

NADIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I think I know...

FLASH TO:

Nadia's trembling lips approach the glass, slowly, with the anticipation of a first kiss.

NADIA (V.O.)
It's because the flame is
beautiful.

FLASH TO:

Silhouetted against the screen's glow: Nadia's figure drinking from a glass, arching her body back as if enjoying a lover's touch.

NADIA (V.O.)
And I must burn my pretty wings
with beauty.

THE LED TV

Screen static. Chaotic. Hypnotic. Maddening.

NADIA (V.O.)
I must be consumed.

The screen SWITCHES OFF as --

CUT TO BLACK.