She Wakes Up to Darkness

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a snapshot of a woman's dark, unfullfilling life.

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She wakes up to darkness. Where is the light that she used to face every morning? Regardless of the time she wakes up, it's always the same. She rolls over to see the back of another. Michael? Martin? It didn't matter. Names didn't seem to stick when they only spend a few hours together. She hates this part. It's when she can reflect on her bad judgement from the night before and be disgusted in herself even more. She reaches for a cigarette and tries to leave the room without waking him.

Sunglasses on, she heads out to the balcony. It's 10:00 AM on a Thursday. The only people out on the streets are mothers pushing babies in prams, old people watching their days pass and bums picking up anything they can find. Where does she fit in now? Sure she works, if you count four hours scanning groceries three days a week as work. She once had a place in society, a purpose. Now she fills her days with day time television and her nights by drinking anything to make her numb enough to justify taking someone home for the night, if the opportunity presents itself. It's not always the same bar and it's not always for sex.

Today is not a working day for her so she has nowhere to be. Sure, she has friends but they're living the dream. The ones who aren't married with a few kids are career driven executives who seems to be in a different country every other week. She can muster a smile and conversation when she's with them but always leaves feeling more inadequate then before. Family aren't much better for her. With her dad leaving her and her mom when she was a preteen, it's no wonder why she has abandonment issues. Not one phone call or visit since the day he flew to Thailand to be with his dream woman. Her mom believes her when she says on the phone that she's happy and things are fine. The rest of the phone call is about the two of them sharing highlights from Dr. Phil so far this week. She hears him stirring. 10:18 AM. She decides that today, she'll make this one a cup of coffee. She's not usually so hospitable in the mornings but chooses to make an exception.

Over coffee, they share the usual awkward chitchat. It's harder to do when sober. She remembers this is why she rarely does the coffee thing. He asks for her number if not only because he thinks it's the polite thing to do. She gives it to him, knowing he won't call and is content with that. She doesn't want a relationship. Not with any of the men she meets, anyway. If Blake was to offer, she'd be his in a heartbeat. Their relationship ending is the result of why she lives the way she does. They had it all. High school sweethearts, he offered her all the love and affection she hadn't been shown from any male in a long time. First drunken night, prom, losing their virginity - they shared everything together. He always said they'd be together forever. Forever ended when he broke things off in their second year of college after his mother had convinced him that she wasn't good enough for her son and arranged for a more suitable partner for him. Heartbroken was an understatement. After four years, she suddenly had no direction in life. She had it all mapped out in her head; they'll finish college together, get married and start a family. He had shared the same dream until then. She dropped out of college. She didn't see the point anymore.

She tried to move away but felt even more out of place. She had no safe space anymore; no-one she felt that could help her. She tried having another boyfriend but no-one compared to Blake. Through Facebook , she sees that he's married now, which causes a deep, gut wrenching pain with each photo she sees. She doesn't know if she can ever feel that same happiness she once felt several years before. The same happiness she sees in his eyes now.

Night time approaches. She doesn't put herself on show, just wears jeans and a simple tee. It's time to go out and be a part of the world again. She walks down to her local bar and takes a seat at the back. She sees a few regular faces who share the same emptiness. Sometimes groups sit around her and she eventually becomes dragged in their conversation and becomes one of them for the night. She doesn't mind, she actually enjoys

pretending to be someone else for a little while. There isn't a big crowd out tonight. She orders the Thursday special of battered fish and starts with two glasses of red. An hour later, she's sitting at the bar listening to two men babble about baseball while knowing that they're really scouting out for women.

Midnight approaches and she's finished the bottle of white she ordered whilst watching the weekday band. She knows all the members of the band have day jobs because they came to the realisation that they'll never make it to the big time. They only do covers now and a lot of Billy Joel, she realised. Rhett, the bar manager, asks if she wants another drink. She decides to decline and start the walk home.

It's only a fifteen minute walk and she's not worried about walking by herself. Her day went past in a blur with nothing achieved as normal. She hopes to find direction soon but in the meantime, she's accepted this as her routine. She walks into her apartment and climbs into bed. Alone. She looks in her calendar to see what tomorrow holds. "*Work at midday and pay rent*". Nothing more, nothing less. With the usual unfulfilled feeling in her heart, she turns out her light and falls asleep to darkness.

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