

TOMMY

Written by

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FLASHBACK

EXT. PARK - DAY

The face of a wide-eyed young boy against a rising soundscape of SCREAMS, SIRENS, SHOUTING.

To a crescendo.

Then silence.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. TOWN - DAY

Just before dawn. A large building stands stark against the heavy sky. Bright red postal vans and bicycles sit in meticulously precise lines, fracturing the grey.

INT. SORTING OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

CHATTER and LAUGHTER, RADIO 2 spills Christmas songs into the air. Postal workers sort mail ready for the day ahead.

In contrast, TOMMY (34) stands quiet before his desk. A still life defined against the busy background. Drawn in deep charcoal lines. He reaches for a letter. Old scars run across his arm, silver under the incandescent light. The blur of activity behind him slows then dissipates. He is alone. A last crumpled letter lies on his desk. He pushes it into his heavy bag.

EXT. TOWN - DAY

Postal workers exit the building. VANS depart. BELLS on bicycles ring. Quiet falls again. Tommy appears at the yard gate, weighed heavy by the mailbag on his shoulder. He retrieves a packet of cigarettes from an inside pocket. An office window opens. He quickly drops the cigarettes back into the pocket.

MANAGER

Bloody Hell Tommy, you still here?

Tommy looks himself up and down, then back to his manager.

TOMMY

It appears so, Bill.

MANAGER

(narrows eyes)

Don't get smart lad.
And get a bloody move on, people
expect their post early doors. And
it's Mr Cartwright to you lad. And
no smoking on the round.

The window shuts with a BANG.

Leaving the office behind, Tommy flips open his cigarette
packet and SPARKS his lighter.

EXT. TOWN - DAY

Tommy stands at the foot of a steep hill. The beginning of
his round. Terraced homes disappear to a distant summit.
Without warning his bag handle SNAPS, toppling him
backwards. He lands on his arse on top of the mailbag.
SIGHING, he lights a cigarette. Smoke plumes up as gentle
snow begins to fall.

EXT. THE ESTATE - DAY

Tommy is a shadow on a silent street. A freshly tied knot at
his mailbag handle. He pushes letters and Christmas cards
noisily through a LETTERBOX and moves to the next house. A
Christmas wreath hangs on the door. He is momentarily
transfixed as it swings on the breeze.

A soft voice startles him.

CHEERY LADY

Good morning sweetie pie.

A lady (early thirties) breezes past. Her sky blue dress
cutting through the morning and dancing at her calves. Her
green eyes meet Tommy's as she goes. She offers a smile as
warm as hot chocolate.

Tommy does not return her warmth but instead watches her
moving down the pavement and around a corner.

FLASHBACK

EXT. PARK - DAY

Green eyes lit by sunlight. Now a face, the same woman with the hot chocolate smile sits smiling at a family picnic. Her sky blue dress covers her legs as she sits upon a blanket.

TOMMY'S MUM

Okay, who's for cake?

Nearby sit a man and two young boys.

TOMMY'S DAD

I think I should probably get first slice, being head of the family and all. Right boys?

ANDREW

Enjoy it while it lasts old timer.

Tommy's older brother, Andrew (11) LAUGHS, pleased with his dig at Dad. Tommy (7) stands.

TOMMY

Can we have a kick about first? Dad said he'd go in goal.

DAD

(through a mouthful
of cake)

I'll be along soon boys.

Dad smiles broad, purposefully showing teeth full of sponge cake.

ANDREW

Ugh.

TOMMY

Ugh.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. THE ESTATE - DAY

Quiet again. Tommy noisily pushes more cards through a LETTERBOX.

BEGIN MONTAGE:

- Tommy posts letters through a red front door.
- Tommy posts letters through a brown front door.

- Tommy posts letters through a glass front door. A man in his underpants appears behind the glass, shrieks and ducks out of view.

- Tommy leans against a wall smoking.

- Tommy is greeted by an elderly man on the street.

ELDERLY MAN
No bills please mate.

- Tommy is greeted by an elderly woman on the street.

ELDERLY WOMAN
If you have any bills you can keep
'em.

She laughs too loud as she totters past.

- Tommy is greeted by an elderly couple on the street.

ELDERLY MAN 2	ELDERLY WOMAN 2
No bills please	No bills please

- Tommy grips a lamppost, feet slipping on ice. He comically runs on the spot seeking purchase. He manages to steady himself, SIGHS loudly, then slips again.

END OF MONTAGE.

EXT. RUN-DOWN HOUSE - DAY

Opening a garden gate, Tommy stops. Eyes fixed on the open door before him and the disheveled man in its frame. Dad.

His face carries the passage of time like a lead weight. He is weathered and worn. An open whiskey bottle and stained glass in hands. His face carries thick stubble and his Grateful Dead tee shirt is torn and heavily stained.

TOMMY'S DAD
Alright son, you got time for a
shot of something to warm the
blood? A few minutes company for an
old man? Bloody freezing out here.

Head down, Tommy roots in his bag as he cuts along the crippled paving between overgrown grass.

TOMMY

Nice tee old man. The Grateful Dead.
one of the few reasons I have to be
grateful to Dad.

He finds the crumpled letter that sat upon his desk.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

(looks up)
This is yours...

But the door is closed. The house silent and draped in
darkness.

Tommy stares a moment. Eyes on the flaked paint that clings
to the front door.

He looks at the letter in his hand. Sees the name Tommy in
faded ink and quickly pushes it deep into a pocket.

FLASHBACK

EXT. RUN-DOWN HOUSE - NIGHT

Through the letterbox of the house. Disheveled Dad in all
his ragged glory. He sits before a littered table. An old
family picture of happier times lies within the mess.

He shakily signs a letter, 'Sorry. Dad.' and seals it in an
envelope, writing 'Tommy' on its back.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. THE ESTATE - DAY

A cigarette between fingers, Tommy leans on a post box,
exhaling into frosty air. He goes for another drag but stops
dead mid-movement. His smoke frozen in time, limp in his
fingers.

There is a shape off in the half-light.

A dog.

A bloody big dog.

It's eyes fixed on Tommy's. Red on green.

This is no normal dog. This is a beast. Its shape appears misty, blurred, but huge. No normal dog at all.

Tommy's cigarette falls spinning to the floor.

EXT. THE ESTATE - CONTINUOUS

The beast runs for Tommy. Tommy turns and bolts.

Arms swinging wild, mail spills in his wake. Tommy moves fast, his head a blur above hedgerows, but the beast is faster. It is soon at his heels, a red-eyed mass of massive darkness. Tommy glances back, shrieks and launches himself at a passing garden hedge.

EXT. GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

Tommy crashes to the frozen grass of a front garden.

Flat on his back, shirt torn by snagging branches, mail strewn. There is a tap from the front window that overlooks him.

Tommy looks up into the eyes of his older brother Andrew, watching on from behind glass. Andrew as a child. Andrew as he was all those years ago. Tommy stares, wide-eyed.

Andrew belly laughs and waves.

ANDREW
(voice muffled by
glass)
That was brilliant.

Tommy's eyes narrow, the slightest shiver of a smirk corners his lip. He sticks two fingers up at Andrew, who returns the gesture with both hands before being quickly pulled away to the darkness behind him as a net curtain swings back into its place.

FLASHBACK

EXT. PARK - DAY

Andrew and Tommy kick a ball to one another. A short distance away, Mum and Dad sit and chat in the sunlight.

Mum lies back on Dad's lap, he runs fingers through her hair.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

Tommy pushes himself upright and runs again, crashing over the next fence. The beast gives chase from the pavement.

EXT. GARDEN ONE - CONTINUOUS

Tommy sprints through a flowerbed. A shoe stays put in the mud, he stumbles as though a fall is incoming, but finds his feet and runs on.

EXT. GARDEN TWO - CONTINUOUS

A lady enjoying a crafty cigarette in her dressing gown YELLS at the man dropping into her garden, but Tommy is already scaling the next fence.

EXT. GARDEN THREE - CONTINUOUS

Weaving between garden swings, Tommy ploughs through a sand pit, fails to avoid the temptation to SLAP the swingball as he passes it, before losing his footing and sliding headlong into gathered gnomes. He groans within the scattered fairy folk.

Everything is still. He throws a glance to the metal garden gate just as the beast appears and catches the look. The white of its fangs vivid against its black mass. Tommy leaps back to his feet and hurls himself over the next fence.

EXT. GARDEN FOUR - CONTINUOUS

Dropping feet first into a paddling pool, Tommy's feet slip under him.

He lands with a SPLASH of dirty green water. The WIND races out of his lungs and he GASPS.

EXT. PAVEMENT - CONTINUOUS

The beast appears at the next gate. Red eyes on Tommy lying prone. It leaps.

EXT. GARDEN FOUR - CONTINUOUS

Tommy braces for the worst, all grimaced teeth and tight squeezed eyes.

FLASHBACK

EXT. PARK - DAY

Tommy and Andrew play football. Behind them, a dog runs off its lead and from its owner. The beast. A huge dark shape, never quite in focus.

The owner in the distance YELLS after his dog. But the beast bounds on. On towards Tommy.

Tommy faces it and smiles.

TOMMY

Andy, it's a dog. Hey boy.

The beast crumples Tommy like a stack of cards. It is over him, teeth deep into his arm. He screams.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. GARDEN FOUR - DAY

Tommy is braced, but nothing happens.

He peeks through one eye. The beast has snagged its collar on a metal gate post and writhes to free itself.

Bounding to his feet in a spray of stagnant water, Tommy charges at the next fence and leaps like an acrobat.

EXT. THE LAST GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

Tommy lands in a heap upon the floor. The garden before him holds a small plastic playhouse.

Scrambling on all fours he pushes through its little door.

Sanctuary.

He pauses, listening intently. Silence.

Idle minutes amble by.

He peeks from behind the butterfly decorated curtains of this children's playhouse, but sees nothing.

He rummages through a pocket and retrieves his cigarettes. He lights one. Soft smoke drifts lazily from the plastic chimney.

The beast lands suddenly on the lawn. Tommy freezes, watching it from the little window, cigarette hanging limply at his lips.

The beast sniffs the air, it comes close to the house, Tommy tenses, barely breathing. The beast sits, then lies down.

Tommy's head drops, defeated.

EXT. THE ESTATE - DAY

Houses begin to breathe. Lights flicker on. Doors open as people begin their day. Engines RUMBLE into life. DOGS bark. Police SIRENS wail by.

The beast SNORES.

INT. PLAYHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Tommy sits in a corner. He pulls his legs in close, wrapping arms around them in a desperate search for warmth. He shivers.

He lowers his head and closes his eyes tight.

FLASHBACK

EXT. PARK - DAY

Tommy SCREAMS. Andrew rushes to help. The beast locks eyes with him, and attacks.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Dad cradles a lifeless Andrew.

His shoulders shake. He pulls his boy tight.

Mum screams and pleads, tears streaming across her face. The green grass is stained vivid red. Passers by race to the scene.

Tommy watches, numb.

EXT. TOWN - DAY

Blue lights race under sunlight as a siren screams their journey.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

A solemn doctor enters a waiting room. His mouth moves but we hear no words.

Mum and Dad crumble to dust.

Tommy watches, numb.

INT. TOMMY'S HOME - MANY NIGHTS

A front door carrying a Christmas wreath. In through the letterbox.

Mum and Dad argue against the tumble of calendar days.

Tommy watches as a shadow.

Pottery smashes against a wall, again and again.

Tommy watches as a shadow.

INT. TOMMY'S HOME - NIGHT

TOMMY'S DAD

(through tears)

Enough. This doesn't help.
We can't undo things. Tommy needs
us. He'll hear.

TOMMY'S MUM

(spits)

Andrew needed us.

INT. TOMMY'S HOME - MANY NIGHTS

Whiskey fills a glass, again and again.

Tommy watches as a shadow.

INT. ANDREW'S ROOM - NIGHT

Dad sits alone on Andrew's bed, head in his hands.

TOMMY'S DAD

(broken)

I should have been able to save you.
I should have been...I...I'm
sorry, I'm so sorry. My little man.

He looks up. Eyes raw. The room, empty.

TOMMY'S DAD (CONT'D)

Don't go Andy, not yet.

INT. TOMMY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Mum, Dad and Tommy sit around an electric fire.

A clock TICKS.

Then Dad is gone. Mum and Tommy sit in silence save for the ticking clock.

INT. DAD'S HOUSE - MONTHS LATER - DAY

Tommy's Dad places the letter for Tommy back on the cluttered table.

He pours whiskey, grabs a fistful of pills and washes them down.

Finishing the rest of the glass, he sinks back into his chair and closes his eyes one final time.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - YEARS LATER - NIGHT

Tommy looks older now. Older than his years. Tired.

He sits at the hospital bedside of his ailing Mum. Her eyes are closed. Machines ECHO in the otherwise still room.

Tommy holds Dad's letter in his hand. He runs a finger along the lines that spell 'Tommy' then along the line of its stills sealed face. He quickly pushes it into a pocket and grasps his mother's hand in his own.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

A doctor talks. His mouth moves but we hear no words.

Tommy shakes his head and storms out of the room.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Tommy stands besides a freshly dug grave. Dressed in black as rain falls.

INT. TOMMY'S HOME - MONTHS LATER - NIGHT

Tommy is drunk. His Dad's letter sits still unopened on a coffee table. He presses a cigarette into an overflowing ashtray.

He drifts in and out of sleep.

He sobs.

He howls at the moon, fists meeting walls.

He sits determined into a chair. Back upright. He grabs a bottle of pills, holding them so tight his knuckles whiten.

The clock TICKS until the light of a new day begins to break the darkness.

Tommy sits unmoved, gripping tight. Suddenly he hurls the pill bottle at a wall and falls into his own arms, sobbing.

END FLASHBACK

INT. PLAYHOUSE - DAY

Tommy shakes in the corner of the playhouse. Fists tight at clumps of grass, he rocks back and forth.

Pulling the crumpled envelope from his pocket he tears it open. The old family picture of happier times tumbles to the floor.

Tommy stares at his Dad's suicide note.

'Sorry. Dad.'

Two single words. Tears fill his eyes.

TOMMY
I was your son too.
(shouting)
I was your son too.

He grabs his head in his hands.

FLASHBACK

INT. HOME - DAY

Tommy's Dad sits with his phone, scrolling through family pictures. A movie plays on the TV.

Tommy walks in carrying a steaming mug.

TOMMY
I made you a drink, Dad.

Dad doesn't look up. His expression blank. No acknowledgement of Tommy's presence in the room. Tommy places the steaming mug on a table.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
(smiles)
It's hot chocolate. Your favourite.

Silence.

Tommy's head drops and he turns and leaves.

A clock TICKS. Dad is still.

Credits roll on the TV screen. The steam gone from the still full mug.

Dad is suddenly back in the room.

DAD
Tommy?

END FLASHBACK

INT. PLAYHOUSE - DAY

TOMMY
(roars)
I was your son.

Tommy bursts from the playhouse.

EXT. THE LAST GARDEN - DAY

Immediately skidding along the wet grass, Tommy catches his feet on the sleeping beast and plummets headlong to the floor, faceplanting the mud. Done.

The startled beast stands over him, painting him in shadow.

TOMMY
(yelling)
Just do it you bastard. Do it.

The beast runs a long rough tongue along Tommy's mud-encrusted face. Tommy shrieks.

An uncertain voice further back cuts the air.

LINDA
Are you okay?

The sound makes Tommy recoil.

Opening his eyes a crack, he sees the beast, no longer a beast. Its tail wagging in friendship. No longer the vision of darkness, but a black Labrador full of the joys of being a dog.

Just beyond stands LINDA (40).

LINDA (CONT'D)
Are you okay? It's Tommy isn't it?
Can I help you up? I'm Linda.

Tommy looks up into Linda's concerned eyes.

TOMMY
Hello Linda.

He half smiles through muddied teeth then lets his face fall into the dirt.

EXT. POSTAL SORTING OFFICE - DAY - ONE YEAR LATER

Tommy leaves the sorting office headed for home. He lights a cigarette at the gate. A window opens.

MANAGER
They'll be the death of you those things lad.

TOMMY

(looking curiously
at his smoke)

Why has no-one mentioned this
before. Cheers Bill, you're a good
'un. I'll be sure to mention you in
my memoirs.

MANAGER

Alright smartarse. Just looking out
for my staff. See you tomorrow lad.

The window BANGS shut. Tommy draws deep on his smoke and
exhales long into the air. He looks at the sorting office
behind him, then back to the closed window.

TOMMY

Bye, Bill.

EXT. TOWN - DAY

Tommy walks through rain swept streets, head bowed, cutting
a determined stride.

Reaching the bottom of the hill that marks his round, he
pauses.

FLASHBACK

EXT. TOWN - THE PREVIOUS - DAY

Tommy sits upon his bag at the foot of the hill looking at
the suicide note. He turns it over and over in his fingers.

He pulls his lighter and holds its flame to the envelope.

Embers drift high as snow begins to fall.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. TOWN - DAY

Tommy strides up the hill that marks the start of his round.

EXT - HOME - DAY

At its summit he enters a garden. He walks to the front door. Finding his keys, he opens it.

INT - HOME - DAY

The house is quiet, still and neat. He pops his keys into a bowl that sits beside the old family picture now framed upon a dresser.

Linda suddenly appears from a side room, a smile for Tommy.

LINDA
Afternoon love, good day?

TOMMY
It is now.

A black labrador appears at the end of the hall. The beast that once was but is no more.

It bounds for Tommy. Lowering to his knees he hugs the dog as it launches at him. A huge smile meets Tommy's lips. Linda laughs as the dog licks Tommy's face.

EXT. TOWN - THE NEXT - DAY

Tommy, Linda and the dog sit in a car outside their home.

LINDA
Are you sure about this?

Tommy looks out at the quiet street beyond the window.

Three misty figures stand at the edge of sight. One seems to be sticking two fingers up at him. He smiles.

TOMMY
I'm sure. New beginnings.
(turning to the dog)
You sure, mutt?

The dog licks his hand.

Linda starts the car ENGINE.

EXT. ROAD - DAWN

The car moves along a country road driving straight into the heart of the sunrise.

Light spills across the landscape.

The surroundings melt away until there is only the car and the rising sun.

END.