

The hourglass sat on the kitchen bench, marking the passing of time. It would end in a few minutes. She fell back and slid down the wall. Blood all around her. Warm and thick, she felt it under her hand as she reached the floor. It felt like syrup, the kind you use to make milkshake. An odd thought, an odd moment to think of it.

He was there, stood in front of her. The knife in his hand still dripping blood on the floor. The floor that was cleaned just an hour ago. His eyes burned into her soul, light blue, almost white like a husky's, pupils wide as if trying to soak in the entire room in one glance. A husky? The laugh exploded from her mouth, her chest filled with a burning pain. She thought, in that moment he was more like a wolf. A predator.

She glanced at the hourglass, the uppermost bulb almost empty now. 30 seconds was all that remained. And she cried.

He had broken into her house, her home, while she was cooking. A snood covered his face so only his eyes could be seen. His voice, deep and full of gravel. He was big, not just tall, but large, much larger than her and stronger. She knew she couldn't fight him. She knew it was hopeless, but she had to try. What was the alternative? No, she had to stand against him. It didn't last long, no more than a couple of breaths, and it was done. It was done, and she fell back, her feet sliding in the blood.

She felt the tears in her eyes, the hard, stone like lump in her throat making it hard to breathe to swallow, causing her pain. Her stomach felt like a wet towel being rung out. Squeezed and tied, making her feel sick. Making her bend in pain. No air, no sound. Only spittle could pass her lips, bubbling and mixing with the tears and snot of her crying.

She looked up and only a grain or two remained. Only a second or two. She knew this was it. This was the end.

The knife fell to the floor, bouncing off the lino once before settling in the pool of blood. The toast she was making popped from the toaster with a clatter that echoed the sound of the falling knife. And then he fell. His hand on his stomach. He fell to his knees first before toppling over to the side. Blood seeping through his fingers. His eyes, wide, seeing nothing. The water boiled over, hissing on the metal plate of her hob. But she couldn't move, not yet.

She sat, a second or so longer. It was over; it was done. There was only one thing left.

Another moment, another breath. She turned her head to the left and looked up.

The director smiled at her and shouted, "CUT - That's a wrap, everybody. Well done!" The studio erupted in a round of applause. She got up and reached out her hand, helping the man to his feet. It had been a long shoot, but she was sure it was worth it. How often do you get to work with a legend, after all?

She walked to the counter and picked up the hourglass. "Can I keep this?" She asked as she slid it into her pocket and left the stage. She would not return. It was done.