

BUTTERFLY

Written by

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INT. RANCH HOME - NIGHT

A muted television plays reruns of a late night show.

SLOWLY MOVING ACROSS a simple living room with bachelor sensibilities ...

Past a near empty glass of whiskey, ice cubes melted ..

Finally landing on CLAYTON, a sturdy man passed out on a recliner.

On a side table a CELL PHONE VIBRATES and lights up, from someone calling. Clayton's out cold.

A LOW RUMBLE builds.

It's not the cell phone .. It's coming from all around.

SUDDENLY, an eerie shaft of white light cuts across the room, traveling across the floor, the table, Clayton's legs.

Then another light, and another! As if something or someone is traveling past the windows from above.

Clayton's still oblivious. A DOG starts BARKING FIERCELY, stirring Clayton, just as the final shafts of light pass by the interior of the house.

CLAYTON

Jack ... ? ... You good boy?

BRIGHT LIGHT FLOODS THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR BLINDING THEM BOTH!!

Clayton, can't help but stare at it... drawn in...

The DOG BARKS INCESSANTLY!

Clayton, finally, grabs his shotgun and scrambles out --

EXT. RANCH HOME - NIGHT

Clayton posts up underneath the awning to see --

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WHAT LOOKS LIKE A WELL LIT OBJECT disappearing into the fields beyond.

Just as it leaves his line of sight, the LIGHTS ABRUPTLY GONE.

Jake circles his legs. Clayton bends down to pet him.

CLAYTON

Hey buddy.

Clayton looks off to the horizon, intrepid. He's about to head back in when something catches his eye.

CLAYTON (CONT'D)

Hello ... ?

A FIGURE off in the distance.

CLAYTON (CONT'D)

Hey.

But then he lowers his rifle as the figure gets closer. It's just a GIRL, twiggy and no more than 12. Probably from the neighborhood.

CLAYTON (CONT'D)

You lost?

As she closes in, bathed by the porch light, he can see her clothes are ragged, dirty. A look of confusion on her face.

CLAYTON (CONT'D)

Okay?

She stands still a few metres away.

CLAYTON (CONT'D)

..You wana use my phone, call you parents or?

She takes a step forward and hesitates. He doesn't want to scare her.

CLAYTON (CONT'D)

He won't bite.

(then)

Don't worry, I'll just go get it...

She takes another step.

CLAYTON (CONT'D)

Yeah?

She keeps walking towards him instead, so he holds the door open for her.

INT. RANCH HOME - NIGHT

Clayton clears the whiskey glass and heads to sink.

CLAYTON

They usually don't fly this late...
restricted hours... maybe I dunno
islands or something...

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Clayton dumps the whiskey and fills up a glass of water.

CLAYTON (CONT'D)

You want water or anything?

Nothing from her. As he chugs some water.

CLAYTON (CONT'D)

Oh, my phone, yeah ... We used to
hide out in the fields all night.
Make up stories, smoke stalks of
wheat if you can believe it ...

He realizes he's maybe making her uncomfortable. Holds out
his phone instead.

CLAYTON (CONT'D)

Here, I unlocked it.

She doesn't take it.

CLAYTON (CONT'D)

Somebody's gotta be worried. You
should call your parents.

GIRL

I don't... well they're not
around...

CLAYTON

(ashamed)

I'm sorry. You... Um, live with
relatives or...

GIRL

Don't be sorry. They're not like
dead or anything.

*

*

CLAYTON

Okay. Look I'm sorry, well not
sorry, but having trouble
understanding what to do exactly.

GIRL

I know.

Clayton breaks a little smile, he starts to like her.

CLAYTON

Well how bout' a ride or something,
you can sneak in?

GIRL

No thanks.

Clayton's mystified, so he tries something else.

CLAYTON

Start with your name? I'm Clayton.

GIRL

Butterfly.

Clayton relaxes takes a seat.

CLAYTON

Huh. That's making a statement.
Well, judging by the length of your
legs, and the lack of preparedness
of your attire, I'd say you either
live in Mustange, or Wallace, no
further.

BUTTERFLY

Nope. And I think these clothes
would suffice in the night.

CLAYTON

Do ya? Kids always making their
your own rules.

BUTTERFLY

I'm just saying I didn't come from
any of those towns, and I'm not
cold, unless you're saying that you
know how I feel, better than I do,
which is apparently what parents
think.

CLAYTON

Okay. You win. Then if you're not
from one of these small towns.
Where then, butterfly, did you fly
from?

SLOW PUSH IN ON GIRL...

BUTTERFLY

Here. Kind of... Well, not yet.

*

CLAYTON

Not yet?

*

*

BUTTERFLY

Yeah.

*

CLAYTON

There isn't much to do. Just to warn you.

*

BUTTERFLY

Not like I have a choice. You're born where you're born.

CLAYTON

You're born where you're born.

BUTTERFLY

Yeah.

Nods his head to that. What an odd thing to say.

CLAYTON

Well ain't that the truth.

She shrugs her shoulders, I guess.

CLAYTON (CONT'D)

But you said not yet.

BUTTERFLY

That's right.

CLAYTON

Well that doesn't add up does it.
Some born again thing, one plus one equals three?

BUTTERFLY

(thinks it's funny)
Religion? No.

CLAYTON

Okay...

He poses up across from her on a chair.

CLAYTON (CONT'D)

Yet to be born. Like in the future.

She looks at him, surprised.

BUTTERFLY

You got it.

CLAYTON

Are you asking me?

BUTTERFLY

No. You did, you guessed it.

CLAYTON

Well, whoever raised you, they must be funny.

*

BUTTERFLY

They said you'd have a hard time believing.

*

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CLAYTON

Well, I believe it's amusing whatever you're doing.

BUTTERFLY

Humor's one of the ways of deflecting what you don't understand. There's others. Anger. Judgement. Apathy.

CLAYTON

Smart parents too.

BUTTERFLY

Well, it's not all them.

He CHUCKLES.

CLAYTON

I see sense a' humour's still alive and well.

She returns the SMILE.

*

CLAYTON (CONT'D)

So how can I help you?

*

*

BUTTERFLY

Go ahead ask me anything.

He stares at her, like an enigma, what hell is she all about, this prankster. He decides to play along and have fun with it.

CLAYTON

Okay ... when? How far in the future?

BUTTERFLY

Eight hundred and thirty seven years.

CLAYTON

Wow... What's it like?

BUTTERFLY

What do you want to know?

CLAYTON

I dunno, what do people do for fun?

BUTTERFLY

Because we can choose our experiences pretty well instantaneously. What we would consider fun, isn't really on the spectrum of what you'd ever think about.

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Clayton rolls his eyes.

BUTTERFLY (CONT'D)

It's like if you could live forever, and be and do anything, you'd spend years, decades even, living out all your fantasies, I mean anything and everything, until you get so tired of it all, you'd come the conclusion, that in order to even feel anything, you may as well just live a boring ordinary life of an ordinary person... So that's a lot of what we do for fun.

CLAYTON

Well, I'd say that's a non-answer.

BUTTERFLY

It's the truth. Anything else?

CLAYTON

How did you travel here?

She thinks hard, how to explain this one.

BUTTERFLY

Here.

She shoves A MAGAZINE off the side table.

CLAYTON

Hey. I get it... I'm messy...

BUTTERFLY

Gravity.

He puts the magazine back on the table.

BUTTERFLY (CONT'D)

Well, gravitational propulsion. It was -- will be -- invented in the twenty-third century. Which gave us the ability to, in simple terms, hyper jump, to other places in the universe. Like you see in movies.

CLAYTON

Right.

BUTTERFLY

But that's just part of the equation.

She picks up the magazine and rolls it into a TUBE.

BUTTERFLY (CONT'D)

The Hecate Vessel, after decades of failed attempts, thousands of lost pilots, successfully solved the other half of the equation...

She peers through the tube.

BUTTERFLY (CONT'D)

Breaking the dimension of time.
Literally the edge of the big bang.

CLAYTON

Cute.

Clayton smiles at her creativity.

BUTTERFLY

It was perfected about thirty years before I was born, and this...

(MORE)

BUTTERFLY (CONT'D)
what you're seeing... is our first
collective mission.

CLAYTON
Wow. I mean ... That's big. Even
for you. Congratulations.

BUTTERFLY
Thanks.

She smiles.

CLAYTON
... With all these advancements,
greatest achievement in the
universe, your life work -- you
decide - this ranch, Salano Texas.

*

She nods her head. Clayton still plays along.

CLAYTON (CONT'D)
Okay. Wow, now I feel important.

BUTTERFLY
You have no idea.

CLAYTON
(having fun)
Oh yeah? Why me?

BUTTERFLY
You've heard of the butterfly
effect?

CLAYTON
(chuckles at irony)
Waking someone up in the middle of
the night?

BUTTERFLY
All the information, data, that
exists in your world today, lives
in something the size of one of
your beard hairs in my time.

He doesn't have a beard, just hasn't shaved in a few.

BUTTERFLY (CONT'D)

With the incomprehensibly vast amounts of organic data in the future, we're able to run an analysis to see, what change in the past would have the greatest positive repercussions, while at the same time, minimal impact to the overall reality as we know it. Our lives, jobs, who's born or not, history in general. And at the end of the analysis, we discovered that it would be...

(pause)

You.

For the first time, he starts to feel a slight sense of disease. ***Why is this girl is messing with him.*** She slows down and talks more deliberate.

BUTTERFLY (CONT'D)

Or should I say, the absence of you.

(then)

See, we've predicted that if you were to kill yourself, billions of people would live a better life.

CLAYTON

What ... ?

He looks at her sideways.

BUTTERFLY

I mean you watch those videos on aliens and the creation of the world universe, conspiracies, it's kind of like that.

CLAYTON

Okay, who put you up to this? And who taught you to talk like that? I mean .. I'm no liberal. If that's what you're gettin' at. I'm no, anything, I don't have any beef with your parents or anyone. I live a simple, quiet life, so I'm sure if I offended someone it was a mistake.

BUTTERFLY

It's nothing personal. I promise.
It's nothing about your convictions
or anything bad you do in your
lifetime, because you don't. You're
a good man. A good person.

(then)

It's just a mathematical truth.

A long eerie beat, as Clayton, stands confused, irritated...

CLAYTON

Okay. I'm just gonna call the local
sheriff station. I'm sure
someone's looking for you -- it's
what - two in the morning?

BUTTERFLY

I can prove it.

He pauses with the phone in his hand.

BUTTERFLY (CONT'D)

Don't you want to know?

CLAYTON

(reluctant pause)

Jesus. Fine...

BUTTERFLY

Your sister, Sarah, she's pregnant.
She doesn't know yet, but it's
gonna be a boy, and her and Dan,
her fiance, they're gonna name him
Jacob... after much deliberation.

A sense of uneasiness in his stomach.

CLAYTON

Bullshit. No she's not.

BUTTERFLY

She left you a message at eleven
forty one while you were passed
out.

Clayton looks to put the password in his phone. Slowly ...
slowly .. Dread coming over him .. Until, unlocked, he sees -

"One New Voicemail 11:41pm, Friday"

BUTTERFLY (CONT'D)

Put it on speaker.

In a trancelike state, he slowly presses play on his phone. We hear SARAH, in her Southern accent. She's chipper but also a little hesitant, like her brother may not be the most responsible or responsive.

SARAH (V.O)

Hey there, Clay. Hope you're doin' well. The weekend and all. Out there by yourself. I mean I don't know how you don't go crazy. We'd love to see you sometime so... yeah...

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*
*

Sarah hesitates on the phone, like she's hanging up then --

SARAH (V.O.)

And if we don't... Just wanted to -- well -- let ya know, Dan and I finally did it. Just found out... So ya better get used to bein' called Uncle Clay.

(beat)

Talk soon, okay? Don't be stranger. Uncle.

*
*
*
*
*

Clayton, ghostlike, clutches the phone. Staring at it ...

CLAYTON

No .. No .. How'd you ..

BUTTERFLY

I know.

CLAYTON

My Dad's middle name's Jacob.

BUTTERFLY

There you go.

Clayton getting angrier and more confused.

CLAYTON

No, NO, NO! You can't!

BUTTERFLY

It's a lot I know --

CLAYTON

How did you -- ?!

BUTTERFLY

I know everything. We know everything. After the singularity.

(MORE)

BUTTERFLY (CONT'D)
Everything that's ever been
recorded is accessible by even a
child. A two year old knows more
than anyone who's ever lived... in
an instant.

He takes a drink. This time, he reaches for the whiskey.

BUTTERFLY (CONT'D)
Do you want to know what happens if
you don't?

CLAYTON
... Why you? Why are you here?

BUTTERFLY
I know, it's difficult...
(beat)
We thought it'd be the most
convincing.
(she takes a breath)
Because, I...will also become a
casualty, if you don't take your
own life.

*
*

CLAYTON
This is insane. How can you ask me
to ... ? I mean why wouldn't you
just kill me, this is-

BUTTERFLY
That's an entirely different chain
of reactions. It doesn't take much
for a tiny ripple to grow into
something incomprehensibly
consequential.

The Girl starts to WHEEZE and look more frail.

BUTTERFLY (CONT'D)
It's starting.

The Girl gets emotional and comes closer.

CLAYTON
Wh-what ... ?

BUTTERFLY
If you don't ... my family and
everyone I know, and the lineage of
everyone you've ever known will
die, billions of people will
suffer.

She WHEEZES. Clayton, pacing now, keeps looking back at her until he puts his foot down.

CLAYTON

NO. I just can't. Look I'm sorry,
we'll get you help ... call a
doctor ...

ZAP!

All of a sudden his TV changes dramatically, capturing Clayton's attention. He looks at it sideways .. Is it? Could it be ... ?

CLAYTON (CONT'D)

W--what's...?

The two of them drawn in...

Clayton falls to his knees in front of the screen.

CLAYTON (CONT'D)

Sarah? That's my sister's...

We can see on the television, BEAMS OF LIGHTS SEARCHING, something DESCENDING ONTO THE HOME... a few yards away.

CLAYTON (CONT'D)

What's going on?

BUTTERFLY

I'm sorry.

CLAYTON

What is this?!

BUTTERFLY

(wheezing)

We don't have much time.

CLAYTON

Don't hurt her!

BUTTERFLY

We need you ...

Clayton, frantic now, reaches for his phone. He looks at it confused, like it's broken, it's not doing anything.

Tearing up now face-to-face with the girl conflicted, sad, devastated that his life's changed in a moment.

CLAYTON

I ... I'm afraid. I can't.

BUTTERFLY

Don't be. It's wonderful. With your
creator, in the void.

Clayton conflicted and teared up.

BUTTERFLY (CONT'D)

(last gasp)

Pleaaase....

The SOUNDS, SCORE, EVERYTHING SWELLS as Butterfly, collapses
to the floor, wheezing. Clayton stares at his sisters home on
the television as they descend onto it.

Butterfly, on the floor, motionless, dead. The whole world
collapsing down on him.

We TRACK off of the two of them to a wall in the living room,
where a beautiful painting of nature hangs.

Long beat until ...

BLAM!

SILENCE, stillness ...

We TRACK back to see the two of them dead on the floor.

CLOSE ON the Television, is off.

CLOSE ON Clayton, dead from a self inflicted gunshot wound.

CLOSE ON the Girl, laying motionless ... closer still on her
face until .. She GASPS A BREATH OF AIR, MIRACULOUSLY.

She rises to her feet.

Then ...

A LOW RUMBLE AGAIN. A shaft of light cuts through the living
room. The dog starts BARKING AGAIN.

The Girl stands and observes Clayton laid out on the floor.
Finally, the girl GLITCHES, she's an AI Projection!

SCORE SWELLS TO --

EXT. RANCH HOME - NIGHT

The Girl stands on the porch and gazes off the porch. She GLITCHES again and disappears.

REVERSE

In the distance objects travel across the rural landscape.
Shafts of light bathing each of the small homes, some close,
some far.

They're everywhere.

From the trees comes a cacophony of SOUNDS ... ALIEN and GROWLING ... creatures coming in fast .. invading the planet.

The End