

SIGN ON THE DOTTED LINE

Rosie Drabble

INT. CAFE - EVENING

The cafe is seedy and dismal. The faded orange and white decor is painful to look at. It is empty apart from the bored looking waitress hovering behind the counter, and a woman sat by herself.

This woman is ANNIE, 41, staring at her mobile phone impatiently. A cooling cup of coffee sits in front of her untouched.

ANNIE

Late again. Typical.

The bored waitress looks up for a moment, gives Annie a strange look, then gets back to doing...nothing.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

I said seven. Simple enough. He's doing this on purpose, I swear.

It isn't clear if she's talking to herself or the waitress.

A shrill bell rings out. The cafe door opens. SEBASTIAN, 52, strides in. He is dressed in a heavy overcoat, hood covering his face.

He takes a seat opposite Annie and makes a point of not taking his hood down. He leans in close so that he is able to speak in a hushed whisper.

SEBASTIAN

I came as soon as I could.

ANNIE

I said seven.

SEBASTIAN

I know. I got held up. I'm sorry.

He tries to reach out to take her hand. She pulls away.

ANNIE

No. You don't get to do that.
Sorry isn't going to fix this.

SEBASTIAN

Fix what?

Annie reaches inside her coat pocket. She pulls out a pile of papers. She chucks them onto the table.

(CONTINUED)

ANNIE

I want a divorce, Seb.

SEBASTIAN

Somehow I doubt this has anything to do with my timekeeping.

ANNIE

It's more than that. I thought that leaving the job would make things better. It isn't enough.

SEBASTIAN

So what? You're leaving me instead?

ANNIE

I'm sorry. I just...what you did...with that young girl. I can't do this anymore.

Annie gets up and leaves, not looking back once. Sebastian is left to contemplate the divorce papers.

EXT. COTTAGE GARDEN - DAY

Annie is dressed in haggard gardening clothes, her appearance unkempt and scruffy. She is bent over a bed of roses, busily clipping them.

The ground behind her crunches. A shadow looms over her. She is unfazed and continues to clip the flower stems.

SEBASTIAN

So this is what you do with yourself these days then?

She turns to face the cause of the shadow blocking out the morning light. Sebastian is watching her closely.

ANNIE

You're early.

Unlike the last time Annie saw him his hood his down. He is roguishly handsome apart from the ugly moon shaped scar that runs across his right eye.

An overstuffed duffel bag has been dumped by his feet. He clutches his left shoulder tight.

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SEBASTIAN

She was an easy one. It didn't
take long.

Annie freezes and stands up so that she is eye level with
Sebastian.

ANNIE

She?

SEBASTIAN

Now, now, don't be like that.

ANNIE

I'm not being like anything.

SEBASTIAN

If you say so.

ANNIE

I'm not! It's just, you said
'she', didn't you? I thought-

Sebastian sighs impatiently.

SEBASTIAN

Look, I haven't got time for
this.

ANNIE

Course you haven't. You never do.
You're not exactly what you would
call a man of words.

SEBASTIAN

Is that why you're leaving me?

ANNIE

You know why, Seb.

SEBASTIAN

Do I?

The hand that clutches the shoulder tightens its grip.

ANNIE

Hurt?

SEBASTIAN

Just a few scratches. I said she was easy. Didn't say she wasn't a struggler.

ANNIE

You probably deserved them.

SEBASTIAN

Probably.

He strides over to the bed of roses and hovers his foot near one of the most delicate flowers there. He toys with it, pretends to almost crush it.

ANNIE

Don't! Don't you dare!

She shadows his movements and desperately tries to get him to steer away from the flowerbed. It looks like they are trapped in a bizarre dance ritual.

SEBASTIAN

Do you think you can lend your hands to something a little less pretty?

ANNIE

Why? You're perfectly capable of cleaning up a few scratches.

SEBASTIAN

Perhaps you're right.

He peels the hand away from his shoulder with a hiss. It's slick with his blood.

ANNIE

A few scratches, you said.

She stares at the long streaks of blood running down his shoulder. Bewildered.

SEBASTIAN

A slight understatement, I must admit.

ANNIE

Slight- no. I'm not having this conversation whilst you're bleeding all over my prize roses.

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SEBASTIAN

Blooming' lovely. Flowers taking
prestige over me.

ANNIE

Careful, Seb. Anyone would think
you're jealous.

Annie removes her gardening gloves and carefully places
them on the ground next to her pliers. She lifts his bag
up and just about manages to carry it.

ANNIE

Thought of taking up a new hobby?

Sebastian grins at her as they both walk down the winding
garden path towards their cottage.

SEBASTIAN

Never could.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Sebastian is sat on a kitchen stool. he has stripped out
of his coat and shirt. Annie, armed with a medical kit,
is patching up his injured shoulder.

SEBASTIAN

Do you mind?

ANNIE

It's a bullet. It's not exactly
going to be a walk in the park.

SEBASTIAN

Yeh, well, be careful. Treat me
like one of your flowers. Softly,
softly.

She pulls the bullet out of his flesh with a pair of
tweezers. She seems to gain satisfaction from his pained
gasp.

ANNIE

You said she.

SEBASTIAN

Not this again. How many times,
Annie-

(CONTINUED)

ANNIE

You said she, Seb. She shot you.
It's never been a woman before.
It's new.

SEBASTIAN

Amazing.

ANNIE

What is?

SEBASTIAN

Your observation skills. You must
be the next Sherlock Holmes.

ANNIE

I'm no detective.

SEBASTIAN

Could be one though, couldn't
you?

ANNIE

With my track record? Not exactly
C.V material, am I?

SEBASTIAN

Do you ever think about it?

Annie begins to clean and stitch his injured shoulder.
She briefly makes eye contact with him.

ANNIE

Think about what?

SEBASTIAN

You know.

ANNIE

I really don't know. God help me.
I'm married to a cryptic.

SEBASTIAN

Yeh, well. Once we're divorced
that won't be a problem.

ANNIE

I guess so.

She averts her gaze as she pours all of her focus into

(CONTINUED)

finishing off the stitching of the wound. He sits there. Occasionally lets out a grumble of complaint.

Once she finishes the job he tries to force her to look at him.

SEBASTIAN

Annie.

ANNIE

Hmmm?

SEBASTIAN

Annie, for god sake! I'm trying to ask you if you ever think about going back.

ANNIE

Back where?

SEBASTIAN

God, you're stupid today. You inhale some dirt or something?

ANNIE

Get off your high horse, Seb. We're done here. You can go now.

Sebastian gradually lets go of her and she moves to clear away the medical supplies scattered on the kitchen surfaces.

SEBASTIAN

Go? Why would I do that? I only just got here.

ANNIE

Seb, things aren't like how they were. We can't go back to that place. You should go.

Sebastian moves forwards and places a hand over Annie's mouth.

SEBASTIAN

Shh, now. I'm not going anywhere.

Annie mumbles against his hand incoherently. Sebastian gradually allows her to speak.

SEBASTIAN

I didn't quite catch that.

ANNIE

I'm going to ask you again.

SEBASTIAN

Ask me wha-oh. For god sake. Drop it, would you?

He buries his face in his hands. He sighs.

ANNIE

It's important.

SEBASTIAN

I said she. Yes. She was a woman. I don't see the problem.

ANNIE

Did she struggle?

SEBASTIAN

Yes.

ANNIE

Scream?

SEBASTIAN

Yes.

ANNIE

Beg for you to stop?

SEBASTIAN

Yes.

ANNIE

And you didn't stop?

SEBASTIAN

God no.

ANNIE

Was it necessary?

SEBASTIAN

To kill her? Probably not.

(CONTINUED)

ANNIE

Then why did you do it? We've
discussed-

SEBASTIAN

You're not in the game
anymore.you've gone soft.
forgotten what it's like. Why
people like you and me do what we
do.

ANNIE

Is that all I am now? Soft?

SEBASTIAN

Do you think I enjoy this?

ANNIE

Yes.

SEBASTIAN

Get satisfaction from this?

ANNIE

Yes.

Annie moves swiftly and with a surprising amount of
strength manages to pin Sebastian against one of the
countertops. He shifts uncomfortably beneath her.

SEBASTIAN

Somebody's happy to see me.

ANNIE

That would be rusty.

SEBASTIAN

She hasn't seen action in years.

Annie gradually lifts her coat. Strapped to her thigh is
a revolver. She removes it from its holster and points it
directly at Sebastian's skull.

ANNIE

You're a bastard.

SEBASTIAN

Some would say so, yes.

(CONTINUED)

ANNIE

You killed that woman. You watched as she cried, and she screamed, and she begged.

SEBASTIAN

You make me sound so cruel.

ANNIE

I'm not getting through to you, am I?

She clicks the safety on her revolver off.

SEBASTIAN

Something about being a bastard?

ANNIE

This is why I quit, Seb. I couldn't take it. You don't treat the job right.

SEBASTIAN

And you did?

ANNIE

I tried, didn't I?

SEBASTIAN

Fucking moral compass.

ANNIE

You don't know what it's like to feel scared.

The pressure of the gun against his head tightens.

SEBASTIAN

Bullshit.

ANNIE

You think I won't do it?

SEBASTIAN

You wouldn't.

ANNIE

Shut it, Seb.

(CONTINUED)

SEBASTIAN

Make me.

ANNIE

You're a child.

SEBASTIAN

Go on then. Do it. Put a bullet through my skull. Old Annie would do it.

ANNIE

Old Annie was selfish. She saw you kill innocent people. She let it happen. You've gone too far this time.

SEBASTIAN

So what's it to be then? Kill me and you're no better than me. Let me go and you're old Annie.

ANNIE

Have you signed the papers?

SEBASTIAN

Why would I do that? You're my wife, Annie. We can make this work. Just...lower the gun.

ANNIE

You always say that. You make our marriage sound so easy. Nothing has ever been easy with you.

Annie has tears in her eyes now but her grip on her revolver is even more determined than before.

SEBASTIAN

I love you. Doesn't that count for something?

ANNIE

Will 'I love you' bring back that girl?

Sebastian looks like he is about to say something but Annie raises her hand and stops him.

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ANNIE

You won't stop. No matter how many promises you make. Nothing is ever going to change you.

SEBASTIAN

Annie, I -

ANNIE

Seb, turn around.

SEBASTIAN

What? No? I-

ANNIE

Turn.

Sebastian turns on the spot reluctantly. Annie repositions herself so that her revolver is pointing against the back of his skull.

She pulls the trigger.

FADE TO BLACK.