

Sinking In

by

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INT. TATTOO PARLOUR - NIGHT

The buzzing of the tattoo needle. We see framed tattoo art.

We see a taxidermy raven.

Tattoo ink bottles. Sugar skulls.

Piercings. Vinyl gloves.

A WOMAN is lay with her head back, grimacing.

She's being tattooed by a hip, beanie-wearing ARTIST.

His face crinkles with concentration as the needle enters the skin again.

NOTE: WE DO NOT SEE THE TATTOO UNTIL SPECIFIED OTHERWISE.

ARTIST

So, how old's your daughter?

WOMAN

She, ah. She died about three months ago. SIDS.

The artist keeps working.

ARTIST

Shit. I'm so sorry. That's horrible.

WOMAN

You heard of SIDS?

ARTIST

No, sorry.

WOMAN

Sudden infant death syndrome. Nothing can be done. Ten weeks old, and...

The woman makes a 'poofft' gesture. He stops tattooing. The sudden lack of buzzing hits us.

ARTIST

I, uh.

The artist watches a tear roll down her cheek, empathising.

The moment breathes.

WOMAN

Ahem. Sorry to...

ARTIST

No, no, it's okay. So did you design this yourself?

WOMAN

I did. I know she wasn't old enough to understand, but each afternoon I used to put BBC children's shows on the TV for her. Just to get her used to them. I'd lie back as far as I could on the sofa, and she'd fall asleep on my chest. Sometimes for hours on end. She'd just pin me there, like she knew I needed a break.

This is a fond memory. Tears run.

WOMAN

This is, y'know. This way I keep her with me.

The artist resumes.

ARTIST

That's beautiful.

He tattoos for a moment longer.

But then stops, grabs a tissue and wipes his eyes.

ARTIST

I'm really sorry, but if I tear up too bad I won't finish this. I wanna do the best job I can. For her.

She also wipes hers.

WOMAN

That's okay. It's alright.

EXT. WOMAN'S STREET - NIGHT

The moon.

Dim, bluish streetlights.

The woman walks up her suburban driveway and unlocks her door.

INT. WOMAN'S FRONT HALL - NIGHT

She unloads her things by the door and jogs straight upstairs.

INT. WOMAN'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

She turns her shower on.

She tests the water, gets it as hot as she can take it.

She removes her top, revealing the clingfilm wrapping her torso beneath.

She unwraps the clingfilm, and we see the tattoo from the front - but it's bloody and we can't tell what it is.

In the shower, she tips her head back, biting her lip, to expose her chest to the water.

WOMAN
(pained)
Fuck fuck fuck fuck.

EXT. BLOCK OF FLATS - NIGHT

The moon.

Warm, inner city brightness colours the tower block.

The artist presses a buzzer, and after a beat, the door clicks unlocked.

INT. BLOCK OF FLATS - NIGHT

The lift button doesn't work. The artist sighs.

The artist's trainers pound the stairs.

The stairwell is tall, there's a few flights to climb.

INT. ARTIST'S FLAT - NIGHT

We hear keys enter the heavy wooden door, and a second later, the artist steps through. The lights are on.

He drops his coat.

A young girl 9 (3) turns from the TV to look at him.

GIRL
Daddy!

ARTIST
Baba!

The artist kneels with open arms as the toddler waddles towards him.

INT. WOMAN'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Lit by the shifting tones of cartoons on the TV, the woman lies back deep into the sofa.

Her eyes slowly close.

Shifting down, we finally see the tattoo. It's her daughter, lay on her chest between her breasts, fast asleep, little head turned to the right.

She reaches her arms around and places them just beneath the tattoo, cradling it.

INT. ARTIST'S FLAT - NIGHT

The artist holds his smiling little girl close, her head tucked to the right.

We watch his face as he squeezes her, knowing he could lose all of this.

INT. WOMAN'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

One last shot of the woman cradling her tattoo.

INT. ARTIST'S FLAT - NIGHT

The artists' daughter cranes her neck, and kisses her dad on the cheek.