

WHEN THE CANDLE BURNS OUT

Written by

Donovan Russo

Log line: A mother does not want her daughter to leave the dinner table.

55 Warren Street, Whippany NJ 07981
201-496-9811

A match could be heard sparking.

THE MOTHER (V.O.)
(2 second pause-- awkward,
yet happy)
Oh, I didn't realize you were in
here...

FADE IN:

INT. HOUSE- NIGHT

DINING ROOM

Close up on a white- 6 inch, Bell Top candle. It is lit on the dinner table, and is the only source of light in the house.

THE MOTHER (O.S.)
Would you like something to drink?
Some milk? Maybe even some wine?

THE MOTHER, 55, stands at the head of the table, smiling at someone who is off screen.

THE MOTHER (CONT'D)
Lord knows I drank wine at your
age...

She giggles and walks around the table-- continuing to look at someone who is off screen. Her face then becomes serious.

She eye line match to the THE DAUGHTER, 16, who is dressed in Emo clothing and make up. She sits at the table with a pissed off look, staring off- blankly.

THE MOTHER gestures to the candle.

THE MOTHER (CONT'D)
(hesitant)
Do you like it?

Close up on the candle.

THE MOTHER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
It smells like roses and pine-- if
there ever were such a
combination...

She laughs again.

THE MOTHER (CONT'D)

I was taking a walk through the neighborhood. The Jeffersons were having this garage sale. And well, I just needed to have it...

THE DAUGHTER (O.S.)

(pissed-- stern)

Liar.

THE MOTHER'S face becomes serious again, and she eye line matches to THE DAUGHTER, who sits in the same position.

THE MOTHER continues to look at her-- gulping. After a few seconds, a "ding" can be heard from the kitchen. THE MOTHER turns her head-- looking in the kitchen's direction.

THE MOTHER

(guilty)

That must be the potatoes...

(turns towards her again)

Are you hungry?

THE DAUGHTER sits in the same position as before.

THE MOTHER awkwardly smiles and then heads into the kitchen.

THE DAUGHTER slowly looks at her fork and then picks it up.

Close up of her looking at the fork. She then eye line matches to the candle-- which continues to burn.

THE MOTHER comes back in.

THE MOTHER (CONT'D)

Those darn potatoes...

(nervous smile)

They need more time...

THE DAUGHTER is looking straight ahead again-- the fork is back on the table.

THE MOTHER taps her fingers on the chair that is at the head of the table.

THE MOTHER (CONT'D)

So how was school today?

THE DAUGHTER continues to sit in the same position.

THE MOTHER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Is Jenny still dating Tom?

THE MOTHER has a look of concern on her face.

THE MOTHER (CONT'D)
 (hesitant)
 You getting along with Mr. Bixby?

THE DAUGHTER looks down, still pissed off.

THE MOTHER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 What about that art project?

THE MOTHER breathes heavily-- choked up with tears.

THE MOTHER (CONT'D)
 You know? The one with the vervains
 on that hill... The white wolf
 sniffing them...
 (puts her head down--
 wiping away her tears)
 I'm sorry...
 (she shakes her head with
 disapproval)
 I know. I always do this...

THE DAUGHTER sits in the same position.

THE MOTHER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 I just...

THE MOTHER sighs.

THE MOTHER (CONT'D)
 I just really need to be with you
 right now...

THE DAUGHTER
 (2 second pause-- angry)
 That's what you always say...

THE MOTHER cries more. She runs over to her daughter,
 squatting to her knees, grabbing her daughter's arm-- crying
 on her.

THE DAUGHTER eye line matches to the candle, which continues
 to burn (has almost burned halfway now).

THE MOTHER looks up at her, but THE DAUGHTER still looks
 straight ahead.

THE MOTHER
 (nervous)
 I-- I'm sorry... I truly am...

THE DAUGHTER
 (2 second pause)
 No you're not.

THE MOTHER
 What? You know I am...
 (more hysterical)
 It's all that I think about!

THE DAUGHTER eye line matches to the candle: it has burned halfway now.

THE MOTHER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 (hesitant)
 Do you think, that maybe... you can
 look at me?

THE MOTHER continues to look at her while crying.

THE MOTHER (CONT'D)
 (nervous)
 Just once?

THE DAUGHTER continues to look straight ahead.

THE MOTHER closes her eyes-- clearly in pain. More tears stream down her face.

THE DAUGHTER (O.S.)
 I'm sick of this.

She continues to look straight ahead.

THE DAUGHTER (CONT'D)
 (2 second pause)
 You need to let me go...

THE MOTHER (O.S.)
 You don't think I've tried?

THE MOTHER shakes her head.

THE MOTHER (CONT'D)
 You don't think I want too?
 (lip quivers-- looks down)
 I can't.
 (shuts her eyes and shakes
 her head again)
 I just can't...

THE DAUGHTER squints her eyes more-- now angrier.

THE MOTHER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Why?

THE DAUGHTER eye line matches to the candle: It's burned more than halfway now.

THE MOTHER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Oh why'd you have to do it?

THE MOTHER continues to look at her-- plagued by sadness.

THE MOTHER (CONT'D)
I'm begging you... I need to know!

THE DAUGHTER continues to look straight ahead.

THE DAUGHTER
Your candle... it's going to burn
out.

THE MOTHER
It doesn't matter to me! It never
has!

THE DAUGHTER
You won't be able to see...

The candle is melting faster-- has almost melted completely.

THE MOTHER (O.S.)
But I'll still feel you, right?

THE DAUGHTER
(2 second pause)
We can't keep doing this...

THE MOTHER is shaking her head.

THE MOTHER
Please! Don't!

THE DAUGHTER looks down. Her mother's cries can be heard off
screen.

The candle is on its last speck of life.

The DAUGHTER continues to look down.

THE MOTHER continues to cry-- looking at her.

Close up on the candle. The light begins to die.

FADE TO BLACK.

The MOTHER'S cries slowly become more difficult to hear. And
then, there is pure silence.

THE END