

DEATH'S BROTHER

Written by

Julian Martin

EXT. SUBURBS - EVENING

A Honda Pilot cruises down Birch Lane in an upscale suburb community near Silicon Valley.

SIMON GLASS, 35, a gentle giant, sporting a pro-wrestler-sized body bedecked in the accoutrements of a civilized man with a buttoned shirt, khakis and loafers. His phone rings. He taps the Airpod in his right ear twice to take the call.

SIMON

Simon Glass. Yes, Ethel, I expected your call. Why, thank you, I'm glad you enjoy my column. No, I really appreciate the compliment, seriously. I know, people always assume I've done a TED Talk, but you can see me present at the Techspress Techxpo next month. Yes, of course, I'll count on you to do a good write-up for me!

(pauses to listen)

Well, I've got to keep some suspense, but yes, I will be speaking about online hate groups. Thanks, you too, take care.

EXT. SIMON GLASS RESIDENCE - EVENING

Simon pulls into the driveway and gets out of his car holding his briefcase. He walks to his front door.

His home looks mid-size, though from the look of the community and location it probably cost near a million dollars.

Over the white picket fence, his neighbor JANICE RISTENBERG, an elderly lady whose face has aged into a permanent scowl, is eyeing Simon's car.

SIMON

Did I park okay, Mrs. Ristenberg?

She gives a look that says, "Just wait until I catch you," and goes back into her home.

Simon goes through his door.

## INSIDE

Simon sets down his briefcase, takes off his tweed jacket, kicks off his shoes. He smiles excitedly, looking for his family.

SIMON  
Sam? Girls? Anyone home?

Simon scans his home, sees signs of life. Toys are out, candles are lit.

The oven is on. Simon looks inside and sees cookies baking.

His eyes brighten. Out the sliding glass door, Simon sees his daughters, WILHELMINA (WILLIE), 9, and PENELOPE (PENNY), 6. Simon opens the door.

SIMON (CONT'D)  
Willie! Penny! Hey girls!

WILLIE  
Hi, Daddy!

PENNY  
Hi, Daddy!

SIMON  
Mommy's making cookies?

WILLIE  
For us.

PENNY  
Not for you!

SIMON  
Aw, poor Daddy. Where's Mommy?  
Cookies are gonna burn.

The girls shrug.

Simon walks down the hallway.

A knife is missing from the rack.

## BEDROOM

Simon stands in his bedroom, confused.

SAMANTHA GLASS, 33, is lying on the floor between the bed and the closet. Blood seeps through her blouse from a stab wound in her chest.

SIMON

I'm sorry.

Simon holds the missing kitchen knife.

He hears the sliding glass door. Simon hurls open the closet door, throws the knife in and drags his dead wife into the closet. He pulls bedsheets onto the floor.

LIVING ROOM

Simon has changed his clothes, sitting in his chair with the TV on mute.

Willie and Penny stand in front of him, talking at him. He strains to listen, faintly makes out their words.

WILLIE

Where's Mommy?

PENNY

Daddy, where did Mommy go?

SIMON

I don't know? Hush girls.

WILLIE

Where's Mommy!

PENNY

I want Mommy!

SIMON

She's around here somewhere. You ate all the cookies, be nice to Daddy and go to bed.

PENNY

Is Mommy sleeping?

WILLIE

She doesn't take naps, dummy.

PENNY

(starts to cry)  
Mommy, Willie's being mean!

Penny runs to the bedroom. Willie follows.

Simon turns his head in horror as they turn the doorknob.

DAYTIME

Simon sits in his chair looking at the clock. The house is silent, except for the tick of the clock.

SIMON (V.O.)  
I'll stay right here forever.

NIGHT

Simon gets up. His home has several police officers milling about. He goes to the

BEDROOM

The blood stains are still in the carpet, and now on the bed.

A DETECTIVE opens the closet.

Simon tackles him and wrenches him away from the door.

Suddenly Simon grapples with three officers as they're trying to pull him away from the door.

Simon's massive size and strength makes it an even fight.

An officer pulls open the closet door.

Simon shoves down all the officers, dives into the closet and pulls the bedsheets down around a mound composed of three bloody bodies, his wife and daughters.

Their hands and feet protrude at odd angles while hands grab onto Simon and pull him away, pull him away-

INT. GLASS BEDROOM - MORNING

Simon snaps awake, drenched in sweat. It was just a dream, but the kind that feels real, that fucks you up for half a minute after you wake while you try to figure out what's true.

Accordingly, Simon's eyes move around crazily until he steadies and attains calm.

Samantha sleeps next to him.

INT. GLASS GIRLS' BEDROOM - MORNING

The door cracks open, Simon's large head pokes in.

Willie and Penny sleep soundly.

INT. GLASS KITCHEN - MORNING

Simon enters, dressed for work. The girls eat cereal at the table. Samantha brews coffee.

Simon fiddles with his phone, doing a web search. He starts looking through drawers.

SAMANTHA  
Morning, love.

SIMON  
Morning, Sammie-dear.

They kiss the kiss of a married couple that still has sex, familiar and quick but with a squirt of lust.

SAMANTHA  
When's that Techxpo conference?

SIMON  
The conference streamed live worldwide?

SAMANTHA  
(rolls eyes)  
Of course.

SIMON  
Next month.

He opens a drawer and pulls out a post-it note, writing something down from his phone.

SAMANTHA  
Really, though, more like what, eight thousand people will be watching?

SIMON  
Eight thousand awesome people, several influential bloggers and podcasters, and most of all you.

They peck.

SIMON (CONT'D)  
My publisher says my book will get a sales boost of ten thousand.

He slips the post-it note in his pocket.

SAMANTHA

Oooh...but we're not waiting for that boost to go to the cabin, right big fella?

SIMON

We're going to the cabin right after, I promise. I have two weeks blocked out. No conferences, no speeches, no ask-me-anythings, nothing.

SAMANTHA

I'm glad you're so tech smart you don't have to do real work anymore.

SIMON

You're glad because we're not poor.

SAMANTHA

I remember being poor. I borrowed from my grandfather to support ourselves.

(small hitch)

He didn't get to see us back on our feet.

Simon holds Samantha's hands and kisses her on the cheek sweetly. She gazes up at him with a warm, loving smile.

SIMON

You were ready to sign those divorce papers.

SAMANTHA

Damn right.

SIMON

Lucky me.

SAMANTHA

Double damn right.

They laugh and kiss.

SIMON

Okay, bye, I love you.

SAMANTHA

Love you too.

SIMON  
(sweet and silly)  
A daddy ain't nothing without hugs  
and love from his lil' girls, lil'  
heaven-bestowed angels, both of  
you! Kisses, sweet boo-boo heads.

The girls eagerly line up for their kiss-goodbyes. Simon gives each one a peck and a big bear hug. He heads out the door.

EXT. SIMON GLASS RESIDENCE - MORNING

Samantha runs out the door to catch Simon.

SAMANTHA  
Simon!

SIMON  
(turning)  
What's up, Sammie-dear?

SAMANTHA  
What's wrong?

SIMON  
What?

SAMANTHA  
Are you okay?

SIMON  
I'm fine, Sammie, I'm good.

SAMANTHA  
Okay.

SIMON  
Am I not acting okay?

SAMANTHA  
Batshit radar is beeping. Simon's  
about to do something insane.  
Again.

SIMON  
You'll never forgive me for  
quitting my old job, will you?

SAMANTHA  
Not for quitting, for the six  
months afterwards.



SIMON

And now you don't have to work, so  
get to your novel.

SAMANTHA

My novel...which is about?

SIMON

Lots of very neat stuff. Dark,  
right?

SAMANTHA

You never remember.

SIMON

Sorry, I promise I'll read it when  
you're done, dear.

SAMANTHA

So you're okay?

SIMON

Nothing this coffee can't fix.

SAMANTHA

What was the nightmare about?

SIMON

Don't remember! Anyway, gotta jet,  
Sammie-dear. Smooches.

Simon gets in his Pilot and backs out, waving goodbye to  
Samantha.

As he drives away, Samantha has a brief look of concern...  
then she shakes her head like a cartoon dog, making odd goofy  
noises, turning back to the front door.

SAMANTHA

(grumbling to herself)  
Point is I shouldn't have to  
henpeck you to read it.

She enters her home.

WILLIE/PENNY (O.S.)

(silly and dramatic)  
MOM! MOM! MOM! MOM!

WILLIE (O.S.)

How doest thou mother?

PENNY (O.S.)

All bow before the Queen Mommy!

INT. STADIUM HALL - MORNING

The stadium floor is completely taken over by a tech conference.

Signs read: TECHULARITY with various corporate logos hovering over booths. A fourth of the floor is set off by curtains for a stage and folding chairs. The stage has giant screens for a backdrop.

Simon browses booths, trying gizmos, chatting up vendors, reps, start-up tech-CEOs, etc.

A young man, OTTO SPARKS, touches Simon on the shoulder.

OTTO  
Excuse me, Mr. Glass?

SIMON  
Hi, hello, just Simon, please.

They shake hands.

OTTO  
Hey, I just wanted to say I loved you on the Strohan Lindberg podcast, especially that last episode where you guys-

SIMON  
(smiles)  
Yeah!

OTTO  
Yeah, you know, that panel with the Neo-Nazis, those total assholes.

SIMON  
Well, you know, would have sent the thing off the rails had I called them assholes. And I'd like to think we proved online algorithms drive like-minded people together and whip them into a frenzy.

OTTO  
Right.

SIMON  
The secret is to change the algorithms.

OTTO

These haters are talking a lot of  
shit on you on Reddit, I see memes  
about you all the time now.

SIMON

I've seen a few.

OTTO

How do you handle all the trolls?

SIMON

(dryly)  
I befriend them.

OTTO

Be careful! Sign my article copy?

Otto shows Simon his open magazine, with a picture of Simon  
speaking on stage with the caption: HAS SIMON GLASS  
PERFECTED AN ANTI-HATE ALGORITHM?

They do a selfie. Otto says his thanks and blends back into  
the crowd, as does Simon.

INT. SIMON GLASS RESIDENCE - NIGHT

Samantha types her novel, title seen in the header as *One  
Last Shallow Breath, Chapter 25* on a laptop.

She yawns, rubs her eyes, and closes the laptop.

Samantha turns out the light and goes upstairs, the last one  
to bed.

INT. GLASS BEDROOM - NIGHT

Samantha slips under the covers next to a totally passed out  
Simon. She gives him a smooch on his head.

SAMANTHA

Night, big Sweetie.

INT. WILLIE AND PENNY BEDROOM - NIGHT

Willie and Penny sleep peacefully.

INT. GLASS BEDROOM - NIGHT

The alarm clock reads 3:01 AM.

Samantha sleeps in the bed. Simon is not there.

INT. WILLIE AND PENNY BEDROOM - NIGHT

Penny, clad in pink fuzzy jammies suited to her six years, stirs in her sleep, then sits up in bed.

She looks around, as if she's heard something. There it is, a floor CREAKING. Someone is standing in the hallway outside her room, clearly. Penny shrinks under her covers.

The CREAKING continues, as if the person is rocking in place rather than walking.

Penny touches her pink-haired doll.

PENNY

Come with me, Lucky.

Penny slips out of her bed and walks to the door as quietly as she can.

She peeks through the crack of the door. Simon is standing there, mouth slightly ajar, trancelike.

Penny opens the door and rushes into the hallway.

INT. GLASS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Penny runs up and pokes Simon in the gut.

PENNY

Daddy wake up what are you doing?!  
Wake up wake up wake up wake up.

Simon snaps awake and yells in shock. Penny screams.

Simon clears his eyes and looks around, then down at Penny.

SIMON

Penny? What are you doing up?

PENNY

Daddy, why were you sleepwalking?!

Samantha comes out, as well as Willie.

SAMANTHA

Okay, who's having a pow-wow at  
three AM on a school night?

PENNY

Daddy was sleepwalking, Mommy!

SAMANTHA

I can see that. You okay, dear?

SIMON

Yeah, I was just a little shocked waking up in the hallway, but no biggie. Hey, everyone, let's head back to bed, okay?

PENNY

Okay, Daddy, you too, no more sleepwalking or sleep-yelling too.

SIMON

I got it. Alright, you too, Willie. Nothing to worry about, back to our soft beds under those sweet covers. Okay now.

The girls go back into their room. Simon looks at Samantha and shrugs.

SAMANTHA

Whatever were you dreaming about?

SIMON

(shrugs)  
Don't remember.

INT. GLASS BEDROOM - NIGHT

Simon and Samantha get back under the covers. Samantha turns off the night light.

SIMON

Wanna fool around?

SAMANTHA

Oh, you know how to turn a girl on, freaking everyone out like that.

SIMON

Come on.

SAMANTHA

I was asleep, let me go back to sleep.

SIMON  
Goddammit, it's been a week, I'm  
dying.

SAMANTHA  
Stop. Shhhhh.

Simon turns and sits up. He grabs Samantha's mouth and flings up her nightgown. She screams into his hand. He thrusts between her legs as he strangles her. She thrashes.

The girls are at the door knocking.

WILLIE/PENNY  
Mommy! Mommy! Mommy!

Samantha is still, dead. Simon rises and charges at the door.

He flings it open, and his giant hands splay out as they reach for his daughters' throats too.

INT. GLASS BEDROOM - MORNING

Simon snaps awake again. Another one of those horrible, too-real dreams. He's sweating, disheveled, disturbed, looking over to his wife.

Samantha snores charmingly.

Simon lets out a frightful sigh of relief, wiping his forehead sweat off.

The alarm goes off. He begins his morning routine, pulling out two sixty-fifty-pound kettle bells and swinging them with ease.

Samantha wakes up and looks at him, smiling.

SAMANTHA  
Morning, Mr. Sleepy McSleepwalker.

SIMON  
Rest okay after that?

SAMANTHA  
Like I was dead.

SIMON  
Ah.

SAMANTHA  
What?

SIMON  
Not funny, okay?

SAMANTHA  
Aww.

SIMON  
Love you, Sammie.

SAMANTHA  
Love you too. We should fool  
around tonight.

Simon laughs and beams. She beams back. They have a peck and go about their way.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Simon works in the coffee shop, tapping on his laptop. He's working on a slide show, the one for his presentation on online stratification and smarter algorithms.

On the slide are a list of websites, titled "FREQUENT CONGREGATION SITES"

Simon gets a little restless. He switches over to the top site on that list, [www.skullduggerers.net](http://www.skullduggerers.net).

On his monitor, Simon clicks on a link. "BRAZILIAN GANG MEMBER GETS HACKED TO DEATH BY MACHETE"

Simon makes sure he is close enough to the corner and nobody can see his monitor. He watches the video.

LATER

Simon is still watching death videos. His expression is blank, except his eyes lock onto the screen.

ON HIS MONITOR, a customer convinces a cashier at a convenience store to turn around to get cigarettes, then shoots him in the back of the head. There isn't a terrible lot of blood, just a puff in his hair and an immediate collapse.

A customer walks by. Simon partially closes his laptop to mask what he's watching, then opens it back up.

Simon replays it. He looks and sees there are over two hundred comments. He starts reading them.

The comments are mostly despicable, but one strikes him.