

RED SWEETHEART (THIRD DRAFT)

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. CLEARING - DUSK

TWO SETS OF SMALL ARMS INTERTWINE. They wrap further around each other in an embrace. On each of their left wrists are two BLUE-STUDDERED BRACELETS.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

We move across an antiquated space. The furniture, appliances, and other knickknacks, are all WORN, yet also WELL-MAINTAINED.

On one of the tables is a FRAMED PORTRAIT OF A MAN (30s). The man--long-haired, chiseled, with a perfectly trimmed stubble--beams a toothy grin. Suddenly--

--a WRINKLED LEFT HAND slides onto the table. On the wrist is the BLUE-STUDDERED BRACELET.

We move to the forearm which has a rectangular patch of discolored skin, separated by scars: likely from a SKIN GRAFT.

We move up to the SHAVEN HEAD, and we faintly hear...

VOICE (O.S.)  
Jackie?! Your hair, what did  
you...?

CUT TO a GLASS VIAL reading: JAMES SOUTHSKAW, TESTOSTERONE  
CYPIONATE.

VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
*Jackie?!*

A NEEDLEPOINT punctures the top of the vial and retracts the medicine.

We finally get a clear look at JAMES SOUTHSKAW (70s) as he jams the needle into his thigh. Despite his old age, his stocky build wouldn't show it. He's hardly concentrated on pushing the plunger.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM, DINING ROOM, KITCHEN - LATER

James makes his way out of the LIVING ROOM, across the DINING ROOM, turning into the KITCHEN, and entering another door at the end of the room. The furniture and silverware in the latter two rooms match the vibes of living room: worthy of the Antique Pawn Shop.

INT. OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

James moves to a FULL-LENGTH BOOKSHELF and immediately slides it to the side, *revealing a hidden door.*

EXT. LOG CABIN - CONTINUOUS

We get a voyeuristic glance through the window of James entering the hidden door.

INT. SECRET BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

James stands at the top of the stairs and closes his eyes.

MASCULINE VOICE (O.S.)  
I got a girl here. Says her name  
is...

BUTCH VOICE (O.S.)  
(nervous)  
Phil.

MASCULINE VOICE (O.S.)  
Right. Wanna take her?

YOUNG TENOR VOICE (O.S.)  
I don't usually train women.  
(pause)  
But maybe I could--

James sporadically shakes his head as if to get rid of the voices.

He moves down the stairs. From what we can see of the secret basement is a collection of antiques exercise equipment.

James reaches the bottom of the stairs and jumps on a pull-up bar. He immediately knocks out several reps when--

*KNOCK! KNOCK! KNOCK!* from the front door.

James immediately drops from the bar and scampers up the stairs.

INT. OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

James silently opens the hidden entrance, steps through, shuts it...

EXT. LOG CABIN - CONTINUOUS

...and through our voyeuristic perspective, we see James slowly roll the bookshelf back into place.

INT. KITCHEN, DINING ROOM, LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

We follow James back through the route from which he came.

*KNOCK! KNOCK! KNOCK!*

JAMES  
I'm coming, Phil.

We get another glimpse at the portrait of the Chiseled Guy as James reaches the front door.

He pulls open the door to see a mailman, PHIL (60s). He's a short dude, not bad-looking, though he certainly hasn't aged as gracefully as James. And he's *definitely* not the Chiseled Guy in the photo.

PHIL  
Heya Jim!

JAMES  
Heya Ball-Buster.

Phil chuckles.

PHIL  
Am I interrupting something?

JAMES  
Only my ninety-seventh rep. You got anything for me today?

PHIL  
Just your shots!

He hands a few PRESCRIPTION BOXES to James, who frowns at them.

JAMES  
I'm not due for more 'till next week. What gives?

PHIL  
I just wanted to give ya a nice  
hello before tonight!

JAMES  
(smiling)  
Oh Phil. You know buttering me up  
ain't gonna keep me from busting up  
your ass again.

PHIL  
We'll see, James. We'll see.

JAMES  
I'll see you at six, Phil.

Phil turns around.

EXT. LOG CABIN - CONTINUOUS

The seemingly one-story cabin is completely isolated in the  
ENORMOUS FOREST, say for Phil strolling to his brand-new  
ELECTRIC SEDAN.

Our view of this is wide, and also a bit voyeuristic...

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

James closes the door. His arm relaxes, his smile fades, and  
he sighs.

JAMES  
Shit.

He grabs a COAT off its hanger and waits.

A *VROOM!* and the sedan drives away.

On cue, James steps outside.

EXT. WOODS - DUSK

James trudges along the natural path. Nothing but thickets of  
trees.

James stares at the ground until a warm light catches his  
face.

In front of him is a HUGE CLEARING.

Back to James... who's now a BOYISH-LOOKING KID with a PIXIE CUT, no older than 12. The blue-studded bracelet is still on his wrist.

He beams pure euphoria. He turns to another kid next him.

JAMES

Joshua...

SOFT AND STRONG VOICE

Our seventy years ain't--!

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

A left hand *wearing a blue-studded bracelet* smacks a couple-years-younger James across his face.

SOFT AND STRONG VOICE

--*shit!*

EXT. WOODS - DUSK

Nothing but the thicket lies ahead of the present-day James.

His face is empty.

He turns and sees the sun setting through the tiny crevices of light shining through the massive forest.

EXT. LOG CABIN - NIGHT

We're in our voyeuristic view of the cabin once again. We inch closer.

INT. GAME ROOM - CONTINUOUS

SCRABBLE BOARD: A hand places "C" and "K" on the board, spelling "DICK."

James pulls his hand away from the board. The room is mostly vacant, say for James and Phil at a table lit up like billiard ball.

Phil rolls his eyes, but grins.

PHIL

Of all the words you could've gone with.

James give a faux look of offense.

JAMES

What do you mean? That doubled my score, yeah?

PHIL

Just wanna rub it in, yeah?

James drops the pretense.

JAMES

You'll get yours soon enough.

PHIL

How is ten months soon enough?

JAMES

I managed sixty-five years without one. Still longer than you.

PHIL

And you spent the last ten learning to be a fucking prick about it?

JAMES

Hey, ain't my fault I got one.

PHIL

Hey, ain't my fault I don't.

(grinning)

I swear, you and your damn sweetheart! Always rubbing it in any chance you get!

At "sweetheart," James sharply SNAPS his head up at Phil.

JAMES

Phil.

PHIL

Just said "sweetheart," not actually bringing him up--

JAMES

But you are.

PHIL

Hey, I'm sorry. Don't mean to trigger anything with--

JAMES

Don't fuck me with that trigger shit.

PHIL  
Jim, I'll drop it.

JAMES (CONT'D)  
You know damn well I ain't  
spending whatever time I got  
left indulging you.

PHIL (CONT'D)  
Exactly, James. I'm not the one you  
should indulge.

James's face darkens.

JAMES  
No, Phil.

PHIL  
Just visit him once!

JAMES  
Every fucking week, you bring this  
shit up.

PHIL  
'Cause you need to hear it!

JAMES  
Keep your shit out my shit.

PHIL  
IT AIN'T JUST YOUR SHIT!

As sharp as his head, James snaps up out of his chair.

Phil gives him a deathly look, but calms down. He rises.

PHIL (CONT'D)  
After a couple years of nil, you  
think I might deserve at least a  
hint? But I guess it's none of my  
business. Forty years ain't nothing  
when you got seventy on him, right?

James can barely contain his look of fuming rage.

JAMES  
You really wanna do this?

His stocky figure towers over Phil.

PHIL  
You ain't pushing me out. I'm  
helping, one way or another.



JAMES  
You gonna smack me upside the head  
with the knapsack you can barely  
lift?

Phil stares hard at James. He eventually just shakes his head.

PHIL  
Don't let yourself lose, Jim.

JAMES  
Like you know loss.

*KNOCK! KNOCK! KNOCK!* at the front door.

James looks across the living room toward the door.

PHIL  
Don't trouble yourself. I got it.

JAMES  
Don't. I'm not expecting anyone.

PHIL  
You're never expecting anyone. Sit  
down.

James watches Phil step into the darkly lit living room. His fuming seems to spend all his energy and he PLOPS back into his chair.

Guilt grows on his face. He looks down at his left wrist.

His finger runs up the scar on his forearm, landing on the blue-studded bracelet. He circles it.

PHIL (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Joshua?!

BLOOD-CURDLING SCREAM--

JAMES--

BOLTS UP--

INTO THE LIVING ROOM--

PHIL--

SLUMPING OVER--

BODY CRACKS ON THE FLOOR--

BLOOD SEEPING INTO THE FLOOR--

Phil's blood.

Phil's blood is seeping into the floorboards.

Above him... a dark figure.

A red-drenched object at their side.

James is frozen.

SOFT AND STRONG VOICE

James...

The figure steps toward the light.

On his left wrist: a blue-studded bracelet.

SOFT AND STRONG VOICE (CONT'D)

Say my name, James.

His voice is ice cold. He steps further into the light.

*We catch one more glimpse at the portrait of the Chiseled Guy.*

In the light is a man, much longer hair, more disheveled facial hair, but those chiseled features...

SOFT AND STRONG VOICE (CONT'D)

Say it, James.

A white-faced James:

JAMES

Joshua.

James's sweetheart gives a pained and broken toothy grin.

JOSHUA

I think I'm ready now, babe.

CUT TO BLACK.