

ELIJAH

Written by

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INT. TELEVISION ROOM. MIDDAY.

A young boy named ELIJAH (8) is sitting in front of a somewhat old and rather mistreated television set, watching a movie about a MAGICAL VIGILANTE. He is totally mesmerised by the film, unable to look away or even blink as he drinks it all in.

The television room is dilapidated and dirty, littered with large unlit candles and ashtrays that are stacked high with cigarette butts, some of them lying on the vinyl floor. Elijah absentmindedly picks at a cigarette-shaped burn scar on his upper left arm while he watches the film.

The film finishes with the MAGICAL VIGILANTE surrounded by fire, his enemies lie dead around him while he poses in a cliché superhero stance. The boy's eyes widen in amazement at this. The credits start to roll and he dashes out of the room, excited; leaving the television on.

INT. PANTRY. MIDDAY.

Elijah zooms into frame and comes to a halt in front of a padlocked pantry door. He picks the key out from a bookshelf standing close by and opens the door. He looks around the pantry shelves filled with tons of nonperishable items, a few large candles and alcohol and spots what he is after. He climbs onto one of the many shelves, peeks down to the back of one and reaches out to grab a smaller candle.

The sound of keys unlocking the front door startle him. He jumps down and quickly exits the pantry, hastily, yet quietly trying to lock the door again. He slips the key into his pocket and makes a run for his bedroom as a woman's voice calls out to him angrily.

EDITH : (O.S.)

ELIJAH!

INT. ELIJAH'S ROOM. MIDDAY.

Elijah bolts into his room, ducks under his bed and hides the candle against the wall underneath it.

EDITH: (O.S.)

ELIJAH! WHERE ARE YOU, BOY? GET
OVER HERE! NOW!

He hesitantly leaves his room and follows the voice of the (now mumbling) stormy woman.

INT. TELEVISION ROOM. MIDDAY.

Elijah enters the television room, his eyes meeting the furious gaze of his mother, EDITH (43) while the television blares. She is extremely skinny but her muscles are very well defined, dressed in bland clothing and wearing a large faux-pearl necklace. He immediately looks down, terrified. Edith steps forward and smacks Elijah over the head with her open hand. He holds his head, still looking down. He wants to cry but he holds it in.

EDITH:

HOW many times have I told you that you are NOT allowed to watch my television?!

He looks up at her, still holding his head. He does not answer.

EDITH: (CONT'D)

And then you leave the room and let it run up *my* electricity bill?!

She smacks him again. This time he tries to run away but she grabs onto him and just keeps beating him for a few seconds until she pushes him away. He stumbles to the ground but gets up immediately and runs back to his room.

She leaves him be, switches off the television and plops down onto the couch. She lights a cigarette and let's it dangle from her mouth.

EDITH: (CONT'D)

Now hard-working Edith is the bad guy again. Little shit.

She pulls in a long breath of the cigarette, looking smug.

INT. ELIJAH'S ROOM. SUNSET.

The sun is setting and under the bed lies a quietly crying Elijah on his back, unknowingly picking at his cigarette-shaped scar again. He looks over to the wall where the candle is. He stares at it for a while before shimmying closer to pick it up. He flips onto his stomach and holds the candle upright. His eyes bore into the wick, as if trying to light the candle with his eyes. His eyes are tired and puffy from all the crying, his hair a mess. His mother's voice rings out to him and he drops the candle in a panic.

EDITH : (O.S.)

Elijah! Come light the candles!

He lays under the bed, frightened. He does not move.

EDITH: (O.S.)
ELIJAH! DON'T MAKE ME COME GET YOU,
BOY!

This motivates him to get out underneath the bed. He creeps out toward the television room.

INT. TELEVISION ROOM. SUNSET.

Elijah snakes into the room to meet his mother half-sitting, half-lying in the couch with an empty bottle of spirits, another cigarette in her mouth, drunk. He looks at her and she just stares at the television. The room is getting dark. She recognises his presence by simply smacking a box of matches off a steel side table onto the floor.

He hesitantly inches forward and picks it up. He strikes a match to light one of the large candles. The match dies before it reaches the candle. He peeks over at his mother who looks back at him like she might kill him. His head jerks back and he guiltily takes another match. Holding it close to the candle this time, he carefully lights it.

EDITH:
Give those back before you waste
any more. You think I'm made of
money?

He hands the matches back to her but stands there looking uncertain of what to do next. She breaks her gaze from the television and glares at him.

EDITH: (CONT'D)
Well? Light the rest then!

He stares, hands behind his back now.

EDITH: (CONT'D)
Use the other candle to light the
rest you little idiot.

He finds enough strength to speak.

ELIJAH:
(nervous) They're really heavy.

His mother looks at him like he had just cursed her. It's clearly not worth arguing, because he immediately turns around, laboriously lifts the large candle and attempts to light another but accidentally knocks it over.

Before he could do anything to rectify this situation, his mother flies to him (shouting how useless he is, like his runaway deadbeat father), picks up the fallen candle, takes the one he's holding and lights up the others. He cowers away from her while she goes on a rant.

After lighting all of the candles, she storms to the couch to pick up her empty bottle of spirits off the steel side table and stomps to the pantry. After a few seconds she stampedes into the doorway. She is fuming, cigarette still dangling from her mouth.

EDITH:
Where is it?!

He looks at her, clueless.

EDITH: (CONT'D)
Where. Is. The. Key?

His face falls as he realises the pantry key is still in his pocket. His mother refuses to break her furious gaze. He slowly reaches into his pocket and pulls out the key. This sends her over the edge. She smashes toward him and grabs him by the collar, the key flies across the room. She pulls him to the couch as she sits down.

EDITH: (CONT'D)
I have had *enough*!

She spins him around and starts lifting his shirt while she holds on to his collar. He starts pleading with her.

ELIJAH:
Mummy, I'm so sorry! I won't do it
again! Please don't! Please don't!

She manages to lift his shirt all the way up whilst muttering about her limits being pushed, and we see about seven cigarette burn shaped scars on his back. She struggles to grab hold of her cigarette as he wrestles against her.

ELIJAH: (CONT'D)
Mummy please don't! Please don-

She sticks the lit cigarette into his back and he screams blue-murder before passing out.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. ELIJAH'S ROOM. MORNING.

Elijah awakes the following morning in the same clothes that he has worn the previous day. The house is very quiet. His mother has left again for the day. He gets out of bed.

INT. HOUSE. MONTAGE.

We follow Elijah through the house as he cleans himself up, tries to treat his fresh burn, looks into an almost barren fridge, eating a small bowl of cereal and attempting to clean some of the house. After he finishes with this seemingly usual routine, he glances over to the television and stares at it for a few seconds. He shakes his head and leaves for his bedroom.

INT. ELIJAH'S ROOM. LATE MORNING.

He excitedly crawls underneath his bed and takes the candle from under it. He sits at a small school desk that has nothing on it except a broken pencil and a few attempted drawings of superheroes. He props the candle up and stares at it intently again. He spends the rest of the day trying to light the candle with his mind, until his mother comes home.

He quickly hides the candle under his bed and sits at his little desk, drawing superheroes. His mother leaves him alone for the rest of day and he continues to draw. As the sun is starting to set she calls out.

EDITH : (O.S.)

Elijah!

He puts down his pencil and leaves for the television room.

INT. TELEVISION ROOM. SUNSET.

He enters to the usual sight of his mother sitting with a bottle of spirits on the couch watching television.

ELIJAH:

Yes mummy?

She does not look at him and chucks a box of matches to his feet this time. He understands, picks them up and successfully lights a candle on his first try. He lights all of the other candles, effortful but successfully. He places the matchbox on his mother's steel side table and turns to leave the room. As he exits, she speaks to him.

EDITH:

A little punishment goes a long way, eh?

He turns to look at her. She takes a long drag of her cigarette and blows the smoke in his direction. A smirk creeps onto her face and she looks back at the television. He leaves, livid.

INT. ELIJAH'S ROOM. SUNSET.

He quietly storms into his room. He is exceptionally enraged. He flails his arms wildly and throws up a middle finger in the general direction of where his mother is sitting, like a furious mime.

He falls onto his bed and beats his pillow but stops after a few seconds. He smells something... something burning. He checks underneath his bed. There he sees the candle, unlit, but with a smouldering wick.

Unable to take his eyes off the candle, he props it up on his windowsill. He stares at it unbelievably. After a few beats he looks out the window and a smile cracks onto his face.

INT. HOUSE. MONTAGE.

Day 1 - Elijah wakes up excited, hurriedly washing his face in the shower then WIPES THE KITCHEN COUNTERS. His mother comes home and interrupts him; "Elijah!". He SIGHS and walks off. He sits down in front of the candle and glares, LOOKING NORMAL. Nothing happens with the candle.

Day 2 - Elijah wakes up excited again, quickly washes his armpits in the shower then DUSTS A SHELF IN THE DINING ROOM. His mother comes home and interrupts him; "Elijah!". He ROLLS HIS EYES and walks off. He sits down in front of the candle and glares, HAIR A MESS. Nothing happens with the candle.

Day 3 - Elijah wakes up a little less excited, stands in the shower then TRIES TO FOLD A SHIRT ON THE DINING ROOM TABLE. His mother comes home and interrupts him; "Elijah!". He THROWS HIS HEAD BACK and walks off. He sits down in front of the candle, saddened, A RED HAND-PRINT ON HIS CHEEK. Nothing happens with the candle.

Day 4. Elijah wakes up slowly, expressionless, his cheek normal again. He PAINSTAKINGLY VACUUMS THE HALLWAY. His mother comes home and interrupts him; "Elijah!". His HEAD DROPS and he SKULKS OFF. He sits down in front of the candle, LOOKING DEPRESSED, SCRATCH MARKS ON HIS NECK.

He touches the area lightly as he looks at the wick. Nothing happens with the candle.

Day 5 - Elijah lies in bed, his eyes red from being awake the whole night, in the same clothes he wore the previous day. The marks in his neck, scarlet and lightly inflamed. His mother comes home and shouts "Elijah!". He lays there for a moment before she calls him again, louder and more serious "ELIJAH!". He gets up at his own pace. We see him again as he plops down in front of the candle, his face glistening with tears that have been wiped off. His lip is cut and his brow is bruised. He looks at it for a moment before going to his bedroom window and staring out of it instead.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. DREAM SEQUENCE. NIGHT.

We see only blackness, but hear the sound of a lighter being flicked on and someone dragging on a cigarette. Out of the blackness, Edith's horrible face appears as if she's peeking in from it, from Elijah's POV.

EDITH:
Little shit.

She disappears again. A very large hand suddenly appears from the blackness, holding a lit cigarette. The cigarette stamps down on skin we cannot see but we hear it sizzle. Elijah screams, the hand disappears again and laughter ensues.

We crash zoom out and we see Elijah standing in total blackness, only he is lit. We hear his mother's voice again, she shouts "Elijah!". At that moment, she appears behind him, holding handfuls of lit cigarettes. He starts to run but he cannot get anywhere. He sprints in one spot, his mother grows in the background, becoming the size of a monster.

EDITH: (CONT'D)
YOU WILL NEVER LEAVE THIS HOUSE!
COME HERE BOY!

He keeps running. Her gigantic hand tries to squash him with a lit cigarette, while she screams; "You're just like your father!", "Useless boy!", "I should have aborted you!" "Do I look like I'm made of money?!". He dodges every move, embers shoot everywhere, but nothing illuminates in the darkness around him.

She narrowly misses him with another gigantic cigarette but it explodes next to him and he shoots in another direction, falling onto his stomach. He spots a candle lying very far away. He tries to crawl over to it.

She shouts again "Where are you?!", He is still crawling. She spots him crawling away from her. "COME HERE BOY!" She slowly stomps toward him, even more gigantic than before. He gains on the candle, but she is gaining on him too. He reaches out to the candle and just as he is about to grab onto it (touching it with one finger), she drags him off and picks him up by the leg, causing the candle to spin wildly and stops pointing to the monstrous Edith.

She lights another cigarette, still dangling Elijah by the leg, she presses it down on him. He screams and she laughs. Again and again and then once more. She stops to look at Elijah.

EDITH: (CONT'D)
A little punishment goes a long way, eh?!

This infuriates Elijah. He screams out of anger this time. The candle below lights up and shoots a jet of fire, burning through Edith's feet. She drops him as she wails in pain.

He falls with a thud, but it does not phase him. He scurries over to the candle and picks it up. Pointing it like a magic wand, he aims it at Edith's legs. Concentrating very hard, he shouts again and fire shoots out of the candle. He severs Edith's legs.

EDITH: (CONT'D)
(While falling) ELIJAH!

She starts to crawl toward him, dragging her torso with her hands. Her wailing sounds demonic now. Elijah lifts the candle again and aims it directly at her face.

EDITH: (CONT'D)
YOU LITTLE SHIT!!!

Another beam of fire shoots out, hitting the demonic Edith square in the face. A hole burns right through her skull.

EDITH: (CONT'D)
ELIJAH!!!

He does not put out the fire. She begins to glow, her skin cracking, revealing light underneath it. She wails louder and Elijah screams back, trying to match her screeches, the flame glowing brighter.

EDITH: (CONT'D)
ELIIIIJAAAAHHH!!!

She explodes, the force sends him flying to a window but he hits the black wall next to it. THUD!

CUT TO:

INT. ELIJAH'S ROOM. NIGHT.

Elijah lies on his bed, lit by the moonlight only, he jolts awake as he hears his mother shouting for him while slamming a door.

EDITH : (O.S.)

ELIJAH!

Without missing a beat, he shouts back.

ELIJAH:

(Livid) WHAT?!

At that very moment, the candle on his little desk lights up. He hears his mother stomping towards his bedroom shouting "Don't you *WHAT* me!".

He bolts to the candle and starts to panic as she comes closer. He blows it out and scurries about his room, looking for a hiding spot when his mother bursts into his room and flicks on the light, catching him with the candle in his hand as he fails to stuff it under his pillow.

This is the angriest he has ever seen her. She looks at him with pure hatred.

EDITH:

Where did you get that?!

He stammers on his words.

EDITH: (CONT'D)

Are you *stealing* from me?!

Before he could say anything, she pulls him by the collar again and pushes him out of his room.

INT. TELEVISION ROOM. NIGHT.

She kicks him into the television room, he flies onto the floor. It is lit in a dangerous red by candles and the television itself. She picks him up and starts to beat him savagely.

EDITH:
 How! (Slap) Dare you! (Kick) STEAL!
 (Punch) From ME?! (Scratch)

She pushes him to the cold vinyl floor again, and he lies there on his stomach, barely conscious. She steps over him to her steel side table where she picks up her cigarettes and lighter and lights one.

ELIJAH:
 (Croaking) Mummy...

She spins around.

EDITH:
 (Mocking) Mummy!

She bends down and presses the lit cigarette into him, burning through his clothes. He screams.

EDITH: (CONT'D)
 How many lessons must *mummy* teach you?!

She burns him again. He screams again, but this time the candles in the room burn much brighter. She definitely takes notice of this and looks around. She shrugs it off and readies to burn him again.

EDITH: (CONT'D)
 How can useless little Elijah steal from hard-working old Edith?!
 (lowering the cigarette to Elijah)
 Little SHIT!

As she presses her hand down to burn Elijah again, the cigarette disintegrates in flames as it moves toward his skin until the butt catches fire and explodes like a firecracker in Edith's hand. She jumps up and looks at him in terror.

Elijah slowly gets up. She stares at him, horrified. The flames on the candles are now pulsating brighter and brighter. He walks toward her, not breaking his gaze on her, eyes piercing.

EDITH: (CONT'D)
 Get away from me!

She goes to him to push him down, but he is cemented to his spot and stands his ground; she burns her hands as she touches him. She cowers backwards over to her couch as he walks closer to her. The candles' surroundings have now caught fire.

EDITH: (CONT'D)
I SAID GET AWAY FROM ME!

She attempts a kick but instead is blasted backwards onto her couch and Elijah is blasted back too. Objects shatter around the room including her spirits bottle. The alcohol lights up. Edith falls onto her couch, her clothes in tatters, her skin red and covered in soot, her eyebrows burnt off and her hair singed. The entire television room is catching fire. She attempts to throw a cushion at him but he blasts it away. She then picks up one of the ash trays, but it catches fire before she can lift it.

He walks to her again, leaving a trail of flaming footprints behind him. He struggles to walk faster as his feet get somewhat stuck on the melting vinyl floor. Edith freaks out and starts to throw anything she can lift in his direction. Every single one of the items shoot away, engulfed in flame. He inches closer.

Her stringy arms manage to pick up the steel side table and lunges it at him. The table is too heavy for him to blast away and it hits him in the face. It knocks him out and at that, all the flames in the living room instantly die out too. He lies there on his back, nose bleeding, unconscious.

His mother looks around the devastated, moonlit television room. She is shaking. She finds her lighter on the floor and feels around the couch for her cigarettes. She locates them and pops one into her mouth. She tries the lighter, but it is broken so she lets the cigarette dangle from her mouth unlit as she creeps toward Elijah.

She sees that he is unconscious, she moves in slowly to check for a pulse in his neck. She flinches as she feels a faint throbbing in his neck. She looks around the room and scurries to the broken neck of her spirits bottle. She picks it up and considers it before glancing over to the unconscious Elijah.

She tiptoes closer to him, the sharp, broken bottle ready. The sound of sirens in the distance startle her and she stops. Her head jerks in the direction of the increasing sirens and at that moment, her cigarette lights up on its own. It drops from her mouth and she drops the broken bottle in fear. She looks over at Elijah and he is standing bolt upright.

She falls backwards and begins to sob whilst crawling away. She lets out a big yelp as her hand cuts on the broken bottle.

EDITH: (CONT'D)
Get away from me! PLEASE!

Elijah looks at her in disgust and mockingly mumbles "Get away from me". He lifts up his palm to her, slowly turns his hand around, slowly folds the rest of his fingers away leaving only the middle finger.

ELIJAH:
Little shit.

Edith immediately catches fire. We see her as she flops on the ground, her skin falling away. She screeches as she burns and everything around her catches fire. Elijah looks on as his mother burns to death. One of the beams in the ceiling collapses onto Edith and she is silenced immediately. The entire house lights up and Elijah turns to leave. The sirens louder than ever.

EXT. ELIJAH'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

We see the entire house in flames. The surrounding area is lit up by the fire and the lights from emergency services. We hear sirens and concerned neighbours coming into the street. The front door to the house bursts open and there we see Elijah emerging from the fire, totally untouched by it. He stands in the exact same way as the Magical Vigilante in the movie he was watching a few days prior.

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END