

EXT - A BLIZZARD - NIGHT

Whiteness and blackness, mingled. Grey. We see the flurries of the individual flakes pass before our eyes, before flying back, further than our light, melding into the indistinct grey of what lays beyond.

Before us are layers of motion: the foremost, individual flakes: scattered, random, erratic. Behind, others; some in groups, some singly, but the deeper we go through the maelstrom the more a pattern seems to emerge. There is a terminus to this, as the light only brings us so far, and beyond that point, the dance of the snow, and the meaning, is lost to us.

INT - A ROARING FIRE - CONTINUING

Inside a small, black, metal stove, wood burns. A small grate on hinges lets us peer into the interior, where flickering flames eat at ashen wood. Thick black pipes lead from this stove, spreading the heat to the rest of the home.

The floors are stone, the wall large logs. Beside the stove we see a poker and pincers, a bellows, and various piles of wood of different sizes. A stack of newspapers is also by.

We hear the crackle as the wood warps. We see a mixture of brown, black, and gray wood, all covered with red, yellow, blue flames. A thin trickle of smoke rises, into the pipes, out of our sight.

INT - A COZY CHAIR BY THE WINDOW - CONTINUING

In one corner of this cabin, we see SHAHRAZAD. She sits in a large, cozy chair, wrapped in a quilt, poring over a book. She uses as light a tall shaded lamp that stands behind her.

On our left, beside her, is a window, displaying the blizzard outside. The snow beats lightly on the window, and we occasionally hear the wind. We also hear the crackling of the fire.

Sharazad is reading intently. As she reads she absently brushes her hair behind her ear, some times shuffling in her seat, pulling the quilt with her feet or over her shoulder to better cover herself.

SHARAZAD

(V.O.)

No one ever writes books any more. The book, it was a good medium while it lasted. Apuleius, Murasaki, Cervantes, Defoe, Austen... Who was the last one to write a book? Hammett? Orwell? Tolkien? Asimov? I guess one can still find people writing books to-day, but by and large, they're not: they're writing movies.

Shahrazad stops reading, closes the book slightly, and continues to think:

SHARAZAD

(V.O.)

Books these days are action-packed, fast-paced. They have triumphant endings, with fanfare and good guys killing, albeit accidentally or with no other choice. They have shallow characters, feeble plots. Books don't take their time any more; it's a race to the end.

Shahrazad places her mark in the book, and puts it down on the table beside her.

INT - THE FIRE - CONTINUING

SHARAZAD

(V.O.)

I don't blame the authors, not really. Some of them, no doubt, do it on purpose. Giving dullard movie producers a helping hand when choosing books to adapt. For some authors, I'm sure, getting your book made into a movie is the point. That's why they do it, that's where the money is.

INT — BACK TO SHAHRAZAD — CONTINUING

SHARAZAD turns from the fire to the window beside her, thinking and staring out into the night.

SHARAZAD

(V.O.)

But most of the authors, I think, don't do it on purpose. In the day when watching a movie is so easy, and reading a book is so hard, it only makes sense. Even the best-read people probably see more films than read books. It takes 90 minutes to watch a movie. You can always fit a movie into your schedule. And so the authors are influenced most by what they see most. They're influenced by film, and so are what books they do read.

EXT — THE BLIZZARD — CONTINUING

Again, we see the erratic flakes flying in the light.

SHARAZAD

(V.O.)

Perhaps we're seeing the end. Perhaps, slowly, all books will become like this, and there'll be nothing new to read, nothing more once one's read all the books. But maybe there's enough in the books that are already here to last us our lifetime. Maybe there's enough in one.

And so, as we stare out into the snow, the white flakes in the foreground, the grey swirls leading into black in the background. Slowly, the light dims, the black begins to consume the flakes, the darkness to approach us, slowly, ever so slowly, until one by one the flakes we see disappear, and we are left with black, and the lonely whistle of the wind.

END