

LOVE IS THE WOLF'S BANE  
an original screenplay by  
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EXT. NORTH HOLLYWOOD ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

Clouds obscure the night sky.

A howl rings out, echoing around the small neighborhood.

As if motivated by the sound, the clouds scuttle away, revealing a full moon.

The moon's light shines down revealing a greyish white concrete wall, with a red streak splashed across it.

Another howl, a snarl and the wall's surface is distorted by the silhouette of an arched figure, claws striking down -- the scene morphs into

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Shadows dance on an off-white wall. Two figures, locked in a battle. Writhing, rolling back and forth, over and under.

Raw, animalistic sounds echo off the walls.

The taller shadow rises up, pinning the smaller one down, strikes, crashes into it over and over.

An inhuman growl and then a roar.

The figures collapse one atop the other. A moment. Then one figure rolls off of the other.

ON THE BED

Ulf MACINTYRE, early 50s rugged, weathered, but still strikingly handsome, tugs the bedsheet over himself and

ELIZABETH Morgan, late 40s but aging gracefully, just shy of rubenesque, deeply intelligent. She lights a joint and puffs.

Macintyre stretches under the sheet and rolls his neck.

MACINTYRE

Mmm. Remind me why we split up again?

She shoots him a look.

ELIZABETH

You know why.

She offers him the joint, but he waves it off, then leans towards her on his elbow.

MACINTYRE

I'm still in just as much danger every day.

ELIZABETH

Which definitely adds some spice to these special visits. I get the benefits, but not the worry. Or your resentment.

MACINTYRE

Uh huh.

He rolls away, grabs a white t-shirt off the bedside table, revealing a loaded Glock 40.

He tugs the shirt over his head.

Next to the gun, a smart phone buzzes.

ELIZABETH

Leaving so soon?

MACINTYRE

Three times wasn't enough? Besides--

He grabs phone and glances at the screen, then turns it so she can see.

MACINTYRE (CONT'D)

I have a new crime scene.

ELIZABETH

Is it the Moonlight Murderer again?

He scowls, shaking his head.

MACINTYRE

I don't think I ever thanked you for saddling my case with that moniker, by the way.

She grins, mischievously, wrinkling her nose.

ELIZABETH

It's what I do.

MACINTYRE

Yeah.

He slips into a collared shirt and buttons it, then rummages around, coming up with a shoulder holster that he straps on.

MACINTYRE (CONT'D)

You working tonight?

ELIZABETH

No, Avery's covering the anchor desk  
so the suits can ply me with Brie  
and Cabernet.

He pulls on a pair of slacks, zips then up, and secures the  
belt, complete with a gold detective shield.

MACINTYRE

I thought you signed a contract.

ELIZABETH

New ownership - Jed Wargus himself  
wants to meet me.

He goes over and pulls the heavy curtains open - it's broad  
daylight.

MACINTYRE

They'd be fools to lose you. Wargus  
Media, though...

ELIZABETH

Yes, I know. But at my age, I don't  
get to be choosy, regardless of my  
ex-husband's opinion about my new  
boss.

He replies while texting.

MACINTYRE

Leaving in t-ten minutes.  
(he hits send)  
Hates cops and tried to get me  
personally shitcanned isn't an opinion -  
it's fact.

ELIZABETH

You know, your car's only a five  
minute walk from here.

He turns back to see her posing provocatively under the sheet,  
wearing nothing except a silver locket hanging between her  
breasts.

He shakes his head. Then leans down to kiss her.

MACINTYRE

Yeah, but that'll take more than  
five. At least seven or eight minutes.

He ducks as she flings a pillow at him.

EXT. S. BROADWAY, DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES - DAY

Elizabeth, now fully decked out in a silk blouse, cut just low enough, over a dark cinch-waisted skirt, with a matching fitted blazer, strides towards a pair of glass doors.

She pulls the left door open and steps into

INT. CHARTER NEWS ONE BUILDING - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

She nods at the SECURITY GUARD and takes two steps in when

DOGS BARK!

She jerks and stumbles to her left, away from a pair of Bull Mastiffs on leashes in the waiting area.

ELIZABETH

What the hell are dogs doing inside?

JED JR

Whoa, whoa! Hans, Schultz.

JED Wargus JR, late 20's, bespeckled, sadly entitled, stumbles out of the shadows, the dogs still yanking on their leashes.

JED JR (CONT'D)

C'mon, sit, damnit!

The dogs suddenly stop and sit. Jed Jr tries to stop his forward momentum, and face plants on the floor.

The leashes fly out of his hand, past the dogs.

He glances up at Elizabeth and the Security Guard beside her.

JED JR (CONT'D)

Sorry.

He slowly starts to get up,

JED JR (CONT'D)

Their bark is worse--

Then slips on the tile floor, crashing back down.

JED JR (CONT'D)

Yeah.

The security guard gathers the leashes.

SECURITY GUARD

I tried to stop him, but Mr. Wargus said it was okay, cause--

ELIZABETH

(annoyed)

He owns the building now. SO his son gets to do whatever he wants.

JED JR

I wish.

Elizabeth carefully side steps wide around the dogs, then squats down and offers Jed Jr a hand.

He blindly reaches for her hand, slyly trying to check out her cleavage as he pushes his D&G glasses up onto his nose.

His hand clasps her wrist and she starts to pull. He wobbles to his feet, then--

JED JR (CONT'D)

Ow! Shit.

He yanks his hand back, little spots of red blood on the inside of his forearm.

JED JR (CONT'D)

You got sharp nails, lady.

Elizabeth absently looks down at her hand, rotating it and tapping the stiletto manicured nails.

ELIZABETH

I had them done last week. Sorry.

The Security Guard hands Jed Jr the leashes. One of the dogs licks the blood off his arm, then growls low.

Elizabeth jerks back again, then points at Jed Jr.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

From now on, just keep the dogs away from me, okay?

She hurries over to the bank of elevators. Unconsciously, she rubs a spot right below her right knee.

An elevator door springs open and she ducks inside.

INT. CHARTER NEWS ONE BUILDING - CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

Elizabeth walks up to the door, clearly still feeling the last moment. She stops, shakes her head, rubs her locket between two fingers, then steels her resolve and looks in.

At the far end of a large wooden table sits the elder Jed WARGUS, 70s, heavysset, a charming veneer plastered over a carefully concealed darkness.

Pacing next to him, biting his fingernails, is News Director TIM Farkas, 50s, a career newsman, unaccustomed to being agitated by anyone.

Elizabeth pushes in, adopting a 50's newsgirl pose - think Hildy in *His Girl Friday*.

ELIZABETH

Hello, boys!

They both look up at her entrance. Wargus narrow his eyes and runs a tongue over his thin lips.

TIM

Oh, thank god you're here, Liz.

Wargus rises quickly and goes to Elizabeth, clasping her small hand between both of his. His smile doesn't reach his eyes.

WARGUS

Lizzy Morgan. The belle of the ball.  
So glad you could join us.

ELIZABETH

It's Elizabeth or Liz, and I didn't realize - our meeting was at 1pm, correct?

WARGUS

Liz. I expect my reporters to be here early, ready to take on any assignment or meeting at a moment's notice.

ELIZABETH

Ah, but I'm not a reporter, Mr. Wargus.

WARGUS

Has she not seen the memo?

ELIZABETH

(laughs)  
Oh, yes, the *memo*.

TIM

Liz, we're...

ELIZABETH

Wait, there **was** a memo?

TIM

Mr. Wargus wants to bring in some younger, um, energy--

WARGUS

Apologies, Liz. You should have been informed. Effective immediately, we are making some staffing changes.

Tim nods vigorously as Wargus settles back into his chair.

WARGUS (CONT'D)

There's a new generation coming up in this business and I've always felt that it was appropriate for those of us of a more... mature cast to mentor and prepare them.

ELIZABETH

And just who am I supposed to be mentoring?

Wargus looks over to Tim.

WARGUS

Who is the Hispanic-- excuse me, the Latinx reporter.

TIM

Lupe Martinez.

ELIZABETH

Lupe..? The intern shadowing Craig?

WARGUS

Exactly. Craig has decided to head to, er, greener pastures, and I think you can give Ms. Martinez the benefit of your years of experience. I think she will be a fine asset to the team.

ELIZABETH

Which team?

TIM

The I-Team. You'll be the senior member of the investigative team--

WARGUS

This is your opportunity to shape the young journalistic minds of the future, Liz.

TIM

--And Lupe will be the face.

ELIZABETH

The face?



WARGUS

Yes, I think she'll do an excellent job attracting younger viewers to our broadcasts.

ELIZABETH

You mean younger male viewers.

WARGUS

Pardon me?

ELIZABETH

You think I can't see through the bullshit? Sex sells, right, Mr. Wargus? And Lupe, who's never reported anything more than a high school pep rally, just happens to have giant boobs. That's just a coincidence, right?

WARGUS

I have no idea what you're talking about, Liz. But may I suggest a more respectful tone.

He smiles at her again.

WARGUS (CONT'D)

We... seem to have gotten off on the wrong foot here, Liz. I only want what's best for the station. Is it so bad that I want a return on my sizable investment?

TIM

Liz, I've seen the numbers. If we can't bring the ratings up, we'll all be out of a job.

WARGUS

We're not competing with ABC, NBC and CBS anymore - we're fighting with YouTube and BuzzFeed for eyeballs. Or perhaps you'd prefer that we cut the building up into shared workspaces and a Jamba Juice.

TIM

Please, Liz. I know this probably isn't what you expected, but can you be a team player? For me? Please?

EXT. NORTH HOLLYWOOD ALLEYWAY - DAY

Though the nondescript building and alleyway could be anywhere in LA county, this is the same spot the story started.

Crime scene tape stretches from the chain link fence on the left corner to a light plant stationed midway down the canted street, mirrored on the other side.

Black and white cruisers are positioned at either end. A few onlookers linger on the perimeter.

Several polo-shirted Crime TECHS move around the scene, working, supervised by an officer in BDUs and a class C uniform. All of them are wearing gloves and thin blue booties.

A dark green Dodge Charger pulls around the corner and parks opposite the yellow tape. Macintyre climbs out and walks over.

The door on the cruiser closest to him opens and LUIS, a uniform officer, steps out, toting a clipboard. He hands it to Macintyre.

Macintyre signs his name, then scans the sheet, glances up.

MACINTYRE

Video unit still on site?

LUIS

Yeah, Sarge. Lt. Fewell taped the scene and sent Francis to canvas the nearby businesses for tape.

Macintyre nods and hands the clipboard back. Luis lifts the corner of the crime scene tape up for Macintyre to duck under.

Macintyre pauses to slip on a pair of booties, then heads in.

As Macintyre makes his way into the scene, he gets nods of acknowledgement from the various Techs.

He stops next to the supervisor, Lt. Donna FEWELL, late 30s, prematurely gray hair framing a younger appearing, but determined face.

MACINTYRE

L-T.

FEWELL

Mac.

MACINTYRE

Is it?

FEWELL

Moonlight Murderer? Probably. The timeline fits. The body's pretty torn up. And there's... well, I don't want to speculate. Better you come to your own conclusions. I held off calling the body snatchers til you had a chance to take a look.

MACINTYRE

Thanks.

FEWELL

Victim's name is Gary Pace. Low level--

MACINTYRE

Drug dealer and wanna be rap star. I ran him downtown a few times when I was with narcotics. Thought he was the white Ice Cube, Fuk da police and all that.

FEWELL

No big loss then.

MACINTYRE

The canvas?

FEWELL

Nobody saw anything. This area's isolated from the residential area by the fence, the bougainvilleas and the construction.

She waves at a half-built apartment structure on the corner.

FEWELL (CONT'D)

Francis grabbed tapes from the couple of businesses there on Burbank Blvd, but most don't have camera coverage back here. I'll have him go over it all, but I wouldn't get your hopes up.

MACINTYRE

Estimated T.O.D.?

FEWELL

Unofficially? Between 4 and 6 am. Lab results will lock in a tighter range for the final report.

Macintyre nods, then heads towards a grey tarp closer to the concrete wall.