

LAST LIFE

By V C Morrison

FADE-IN. EXT: Outside in the countryside. Sheep.

SFX: Footsteps on gravel approach.

001

DURAND

There you are, Fournier. A sheep farmer? Really? I thought you'd outgrown these...peasant habits.

002

FOURNIER

One does not outgrow simplicity, Durand. Indeed, simplicity becomes more appealing later in life.

003

DURAND

I prefer the simplicity of a private jet and a credit card. [beat] You know why I'm here.

004

FOURNIER

Of course.

005

DURAND

Cutting it close this time. Unless....you're trying to bail. [beat] Dammit, Fournier! Say something!

006

FOURNIER

I'm thinking about it.

007

DURAND

[sigh] How can I rid you of this foolish notion?

008

FOURNIER

Haven't you lived long enough, Durand? Have you not tasted all that life has to offer these past 1500 years?

009

DURAND

I daresay I have not. Mankind's getting to the point where space travel will become a reality. Don't you want to walk on Mars one day? Or be part of a colony on some other planet somewhere in the universe.

010

FOURNIER

[snort] And what happens to our cabal then, hmm? Being scattered across the cosmos would certainly make it hard to renew the ritual every 50 years.

011

DURAND

Oh, I'm sure we'll manage. [chuckles] Remember the time Haggard died climbing Mount Kilimanjaro and was reborn 200 miles away in some backwards village? We had to hire mercenaries to comb that village and find the baby with the correct scar on his arm.

012

FOURNIER

None of us expected the baby to be a girl.

013

DURAND

Which is why it took so long! He...then she...was the first of us to change sexes in rebirth! [laughs] The point is, we were able to find her quickly and perform the ritual when it was time so all of us could keep living. Technology... keeps advancing.

014

FOURNIER

And yet, the human soul does not.

[BEAT]

015

DURAND

Is that it? You're tired of humanity?

016

FOURNIER

They will never change, Durand. We've seen war after war. Humanity making the same mistakes again and again.

017

DURAND

Why do you care? Just live your life.

018

FOURNIER

And *that* is why we've lived too long.

019

DURAND

What are you saying?

020

FOURNIER

We are human, Durand! Despite the dark forces to which we've given our souls we are still a part of this species!

021 DURAND
And yet, we watch them grow and die around us, while we live on.

022 FOURNIER
We age as well.

023 DURAND
Oh, but not in the same way. And not terminally. Come! Let us get out of this stinking field and have a drink. I passed a pub about a mile back. My treat.

024 FOURNIER
You are avoiding my point. The mistakes of humanity are our mistakes as well. [sigh] I thought, when we began this journey, that we would mature, evolve. Become as gods with the knowledge and experience we collect.

025 DURAND
And haven't we? All seven of us, save you, are masters in their field, or were at some point before retiring for a life of luxury.

026 FOURNIER
Luxury. That is the end goal for you, for the others.

027 DURAND
Is it not humanity's end goal? To live a life free of drudgery and boredom? To have endless entertainment? It is what we've seen cultures evolve to. We all have information and entertainment at our fingertips at all times.

028 FOURNIER
No, not all. You, with the wealth you've accumulated over centuries can't imagine life without privilege. You can't imagine hunger.

029 DURAND
What happened to you, Fournier? You weren't always like this.

030 FOURNIER
[thoughtful] In 1861 I was hunting big game in India and was killed. I was reborn as a Harijan. Do you remember that?

031 DURAND
Indeed. We had a devil of a time finding you before the ritual. No one bothered to keep track of Untouchables.

032 Fournier
For 30 years I lived a life of poverty and ostracization. I knew what it meant to be human but not be treated as such.

033 Durand
Please...you forget I was reborn as a slave in the Americas.

034 Fournier
And you were found by us when you were still but a child and immediately brought into a world of wealth. Do you remember any of your time as a slave?

035 Durand
I...have a single memory. My mother had dropped a dish and was struck across the face. I felt great anger but was powerless. Years later I hunted down the man who had owned my mother and had him strung up by his ankles and whipped to death.

036 Fournier
So for you lack of power was temporary. A...minor inconvenience in the grand scheme.

037 Durand
Your point?

038 Fournier
The majority of humanity does not have the option to live in poverty or wealth.

039 Durand
And that is a shame. But it is not our problem.

040 Fournier
It will be.

041 Durand
Whatever can you mean by that?

042 Fournier
We're on the verge of another Dark Age.

043 Durand
Bullshit. Conspiracist thinking.

044 Fournier
We do not learn, Durand. For all our knowledge and technology, humanity is trapped in its own cycle. We grow, we flower, we wither. And between...chaos.

045 Durand
And you think we're withering? Really?

046 Fournier
Those at the top do not notice the water rising.

047 Durand
You're bringing climate change into this?

048 Fournier
The time of chaos will be upon us soon. I thought at one point we could do something about it.

049 Durand
[laughs] Do what? We are but seven. Did you fancy us some sort of superheroes? That we could right wrongs with the pummeling of a "bad guy?"

050 Fournier
I believed our accumulated knowledge and wisdom could be used for the betterment of our species.

051 Durand
And now?

052 Fournier
I believe only in the futility of the effort.

053 Durand
To borrow a term in the current vernacular, "Sad story, bro." I feel your pain, Fournier, but--

054 Fournier
You were ever the bad liar, Durand.

055 Durand
Fine. I think this mode of thinking is absurd. You're depressed! I get it! But that's no reason to deprive the rest of us of our immortality!

056

FOURNIER

Where does it end, Durand? How far will we go? Will we watch humanity die out around us? Will we gaze in horror as a new sentient species rises? Will we eat popcorn as we watch them make the same mistakes as humanity, over and over?

057

DURAND

[beat] If you really feel this way, we could put you in a coma. Let you live your life asleep, only waking you to take part in the ritual.

058

FOURNIER

That seems...excessive.

059

DURAND

Do you have another solution that does not end in the termination of our group?

060

FOURNIER

[sigh] I wish we had never created that pact.

061

DURAND

I remind you that you had the option of backing out all those years ago. We were very explicit that there would be no turning back. All of us made a choice.

062

FOURNIER

A gruesome one. Eating the still-beating hearts of seven children on the night of the new moon. [beat] Do you ever dream about them, Durand? I do. I see their mournful faces staring up at me. I cannot hear them but I see them mouthing, "Why? Why? Why would you do this to us?"

063

DURAND

Oh, I've had enough.

SFX: THUMP as DURAND hits FOUNIER over the head with a cudgel. FOUNIER drops.

064

FOURNIER

[grunts as he's knocked out]

065

DURAND

For goodness' sake. Such drama! Guess I'll have to drag you--what's that next to you, old friend? Why were you holding a pinecone? Where'd you even--that's not a pinecone. Oh shit!

SFX: DURAND runs!

SFX: EXPLOSION as a grenade goes off!

066

DURAND

[grunts as he drops to the ground]

067

DURAND

[out of breath] Son of a bitch! He was holding a grenade the whole time! [laughs]
Oh, that's a good one!

SFX: DURAND pulls out his cell phone and dials.

068

DURAND

Yes, it's me. Yes, he went through with it. Dead man's switch. [pause] I know!
Well played, I say! Do we have the teams ready? Yes, a 200 mile radius. That
seems to be the maximum distance. Every child born within the next few hours
must be checked.

SFX: DURAND gets up and starts walking.

069

DURAND

And send a helicopter, would you? I don't feel like walking all the way back to
town. [pause] No, no, I'll call the others, make sure they're ready for tomorrow
night. [pause] Oh, we'll find him. Don't fret. And we'll feed that chicken heart to
his infant self kicking and screaming.

070

DURAND

[laugh] Yes, it is a bit of fun, isn't it? He may be a pain in the ass, but FOURNIER
does make immortality interesting! See you soon.

SFX: DURAND ends call. He continues to walk and fades out whistling.

071

DURAND

[whistles a jaunty tune as he walks]

END