

The Calling of Gabriel's Horn

By

Austin Barrett

EXT. TRAIN STATION - EARLY MORNING

The sky is overcast and a light drizzle has just finished, leaving the black and gray coats with a sheen.

A train pulls away from the station, screen left to right. Elsa hurriedly walks across the platform. We only see her legs in motion, then her hand holding a large briefcase.

The briefcase: rectangular and large, it holds Elsa's typewriter. It has two clasps which release when given the correct code. On it, in gold letters: "Property of Elsa Endwell"

We finally see Elsa's face: Dolly left to right following Elsa hurriedly running now down the platform. She is in mid-ground often obscured by various faces in foreground. She looks worried and flustered: hair unkempt and wet because she was not prepared for the rain. In background, a train pulls up. Steam crawls across the station as the train loudly comes to a halt.

CUT TO:

Close on Elsa's face. Panic turns to joy as she realizes she will make the train on time. She turns to get on just as -

A man in a suit bumps into her. Both briefcases, identical besides for the "Property of . . ." go flying. The man, in a very dark blue suit so that he stands out slightly, runs over and picks up a briefcase (Elsa's). He runs off into the distance, clutching it to his chest.

Elsa runs and grabs the other suitcase just as the train is pulling away. Steam rushes onto the platform and she picks up the suitcase only to slip back to the ground in her high heels. She gets up but it is too late, the train has pulled away. Across the tracks are many advertisements, including one for the alcohol "Caput".

Elsa stands alone on the train platform.

INT. NEWSPAPER OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Background: Men at their desks typing, smoking, lounging. Most with their heads bent down. Lights hang from the ceiling.

Foreground: The suitcase

(CONTINUED)

Dolly to the right: An office comes to fill the foreground. Elsa's back faces the camera. She leaves the office, slamming the door. The boss seated behind the desk in the office rubs his hand over his forehead.

Dolly to the left: Elsa rushes out of the office and grabs her suitcase (foreground) and walks off with it (into background) out of the office.

EXT. TRAIN STATION - AFTERNOON

Elsa is silhouetted against the overcast sky, which begins to rain. The train pulls up, from screen right. The steam consumes her, leaving only a dark mass where she is standing. The smoke and Elsa disappear. The train departs.

CUT TO:

Close: The train rushes past. All windows dark except one with Elsa in it. We can just make out her face, which quickly fades leaving behind an indistinct and foggy image of a skull (Extremely quick shot).

INT. HOME - NIGHT

The room is dark, only illuminated by some moonlight coming in through a window. We can make out a table at most.

A door opens and a light (waist high) switches on casting long shadows. The room is illuminated only a little better, light barely makes it into the corner of the room. Elsa walks into frame. She puts the suitcase down on the table, fitting into a perfect spot with papers surrounding it. She walks over and turns a tv on. And then walks over to refrigerator.

Jump cut: TV show has changed, cowboys maybe. She returns to the couch by the coffee table carrying a pot with some food in it. She sits down at a 45 degree angle to camera and sets the pot down, eating from it.

She goes to open the suitcase but it doesn't unlock when she puts the code in. She pauses and tugs the little tabs again. And again frustrated. She turns it over - no "Property of . . ."

ELSA
Oh, come on!

(CONTINUED)

She sets the suitcase down. She picks up the pot and lets it rest on a pillow near her. She eats a forkful and stares at the TV. Her eyes are drawn back to the suitcase, TV, suitcase. She gets up.

Elsa now has one tab open and is twisting a dirty knife behind the other tab. It pops open and the suitcase opens a little. Elsa's curiosity gets the better of her and she opens it slowly.

She jumps back in shock. In the suitcase is a head.

Freeze Frame: Head in suitcase. Title: "The Calling of Gabriel's Horn"

Elsa is disgusted, but curious. She picks up the head. Its eyes and mouth are closed and the neck is cleanly severed. There is no blood or gore. It's a real, human head but strangely clean.

She pokes its cheek *squish*. She pulls her rotary phone over to the table and dials. She stares at the head as the phone rings.

ELSA
Coroner please. - Thank you.

CUT TO:

Split screen: Elsa is in the left section. The coroner, Arthur Schmitt, fills the right space. He is close to the camera, leaning against a wall with a phone to his ear. In the background, an operating table with various tools on it and on the left side is the freezers for the bodies.

ARTHUR SCHMITT
Coroner speaking.

ELSA
Arthur, I might have caught wind of something and I was hoping you could lend your perspective.

ARTHUR SCHMITT
Thing is, perspective doesn't come cheap.

ELSA
Give me what I want and maybe there's something in it for you.

(CONTINUED)

ARTHUR SCHMITT
Word is your out of a job.

ELSA
You know how these things are -
temporary. So speaking of -

ARTHUR SCHMITT
Fine.

ELSA
Well, got any headless bodies?

ARTHUR SCHMITT
Well - hmhhh.

Arthur goes into the background and opens up a freezer. He pulls off the cover of a black, male body. Clearly, there is no head. He looks at the tag on the toe. In the meantime, Elsa has picked up the (white male) head by the hair to examine it again. It twists.

Arthur returns.

ARTHUR SCHMITT
Whatya know, we got one in a week
ago. Haven't been able to identify
it for obvious reasons, but here it
remains.

ELSA
Where was it found?

ARTHUR SCHMITT
Somewhere along the wharf. A drunk
stumbled over it and nearly fell
into the water. Cops only responded
to keep him from drowning.

ELSA
Is that the only one?

ARTHUR SCHMITT
Yeah, say you don't happen to know
where I could find the missing
piece?

ELSA
No idea, Art. You're on your own
there.

Arthur continues to say something, but Elsa hangs up. She scribbles something down and turns her lights off. She gets into bed, only her face illuminated by the light seeping in from her window. Noise from the city outside bleeds in.

CUT TO:

EXT. STORE FRONTS - EVENING

Heels click on the ground rapidly. They stop in front of a store and enter. In the store window are various writing implements, including typewriters. A fancy one is snatched up. Money changes hands and the store's door closes shut.

CUT TO:

INT. HOME - NIGHT

A hand lights a cigarette. The cigarette is placed between a set of lips, we get the faintest hint of a bruise.

Paper is placed in the typewriter. Everything is set into place. The ding of the typewriter, the shuffle of papers, the cracking of knuckles, and then a moments silence which we have not gotten at all during these past two scenes.

Elsa looks down. Her face is beaten and bruised, but determined. She inhales and begins typing rapidly.

FADE TO:

EXT. WHARF - NIGHT

Waves crash against the wharf. The mist has risen into the air, so thick that even the giant lights attached to the myriad buildings can barely cut through and instead leave a ghostly halo everywhere.

Out of the mist walks Elsa. She's wearing a sandy colored trench coat, the collar popped up around her neck. She walks past the camera to the end of the wharf. Her face is unscathed.

CUT TO:

Camera is now in front and she walks towards it. The background is engulfed by the mist. She walks over to the edge and stares down. Waves lap at the sides, spraying water up at her.

(CONTINUED)

She sees a small dumpster and walks over to it. It's coated in seagull poop and rust. She looks around her and starts rummaging through it, looking for clues.

CUT TO:

A nice suit that has been dirtied is laid out on the ground, in the shape of a man. Elsa goes through the pockets and finds a wallet. It's still full of money, which she takes, but she also looks for the ID. It's a black man. She tosses it aside and sits up against the dumpster in the shadows.

Clack, clack, clack. Heels on the wet ceiling of the building which the dumpster is against. Elsa tucks herself closer into the shadows, when another shadow appears on the ground in front of her.

The shadow twists and turns to look around. And then it leaves. Elsa peers around, letting her face into the light. But the shadows quickly reappears tossing something heavy into the water below.

Elsa stays hidden and another mass drops down into the dumpster. The heels go away. Elsa leaves the shadows and runs over to the water, just in time to see a headless body sink into the water. She runs back to the dumpster, more clothes. She rummages through them, no wallet.

Elsa climbs on top of the dumpster and cautiously looks over the edge of the roof. It is flat with some crates and she climbs up to investigate. She sees nothing but walks over to the stairs at the other side of the roof.

In the distance, there is a small bar lit with neon. This is The Gift Horse. On the outside, it is weathered and worn by the salt water that has sprayed it for years.

INT. THE GIFT HORSE - NIGHT

Elsa enters. She looks around, camera pans with her gaze. The inside of the bar is dimly lit and smokey. Tables are placed along the perimeter and the bar with stools around it is in the center. Suspicious sorts that are just as weathered as the building fill some of the seats.

Elsa walks to the bar still looking around, and notices many women are wearing heels. She takes a seat by the bar.

A well built and tough looking bartender approaches her.

(CONTINUED)

ROSCOE
Can I get you anything?

ELSA
A whiskey with water and two extra glasses.

Roscoe gives her a looks and walks off. A man approaches Elsa.

ELSA
Buzz off.

He walks away. The bartender returns with her request. She downs the whiskey and places the three glasses around her in a haphazard way.

ELSA
I'm looking for someone. White guy,
-(Describes the head). You seen him around?

ROSCOE
Yeah, sounds familiar. This the guy who wore a bright blue suit?

ELSA
That's the one. He's my brother.
Owes me some money.

ROSCOE
Me too. I saw him in here a week ago. He was talking to one of our regulars, but I haven't seen him in here since a day or so again.

ELSA
Got any other regulars that might know something?

ROSCOE
Half the people here are regulars! The rest are just passing through. That's the nature of the business, doll. People come and go as they please. I'm not their babysitter.

ELSA
You could have fooled me.

Elsa's getting louder and more aggressively, as if she were drunk.

ROSCOE
Do we have a problem here?

ELSA
I don't know. You tell me, buddy!

She smashes a glass on the ground. Roscoe reaches under the bar for something, but just then a sensually dressed woman leans against the bar near Elsa. The entire bar is looking at them.

BRIGID
Don't have a conniption, Roscoe.
This one's on me.

Roscoe smiles.

ROSCOE
Of course. Want the usual?

BRIGID
You always know just what I need.

Roscoe exits to another room. Brigid lights a cigarette and turns her attention to Elsa.

BRIGID
You look a little out of place.
Couldn't find your breadcrumb
trail?

ELSA
You the witch?

BRIGID
Well, you certainly do look
delicious.

ELSA
Is that what you tell everyone?

BRIGID
Only the ones who pique my
interest.

ELSA
So when do I get my member's
jacket.

BRIGID
Don't get ahead of yourself. We'll
call this a trial run.

Just then Roscoe returns with a whiskey for Brigid and a shot glass for Elsa. The shot glass is half full of a milky-pink fluid. Roscoe goes to the other side of the bar, out of focus but still angled to see the two of them.

Elsa raises the shot glass to look right into it.

ELSA

What is this?

BRIGID

It's caput. Now drink up.

Brigid clinks glasses with her and only takes a small sip of her whiskey as she watches Elsa throw back the shot. A great big smile creeps across Elsa's face. Her eyes look as if she's staring at something just out of focus. Roscoe moves out of frame, done with his business.

ELSA

What was that?

BRIGID

Caput, darling. It's new. Keep up.

ELSA

I plan on it.

Elsa motions to the bartender, but turns back to Brigid.

ELSA

Your tab?

BRIGID

It's on me tonight.

To the bartender

ELSA

Keep 'em coming, big boy!

CUT TO:

A glass is set down on the bar by Brigid's well-manicured hand. There is still some whiskey in the glass. Elsa's hand sets down another shot glass, rather drunkenly. There are now three shot glasses, one glass with whiskey, and the three glasses from earlier on the bar.

Outside of the bar looking in through a window, we see the bar is much emptier now. Brigid stands up and grabs Elsa's arm. Elsa stands, for the first time in quite a while, and tries to compose herself and fails. Roscoe cleans the bar as

the two exit through the door that is in frame, walking past the camera.

EXT. WHARF - NIGHT

Brigid has led Elsa onto the roof top.

Close-ups: Elsa's look of drunken recognition, she looks around her, Brigid's look of devious happiness, Brigid's hands.

Brigid leads Elsa to the side of the roof, looking into the waves and ocean in the distance. They are backlit from the bar lights and the like.

ELSA

I bet you're not cheap.

BRIGID

Is that what you tell everyone?

ELSA

Only the ones I like.

BRIGID

Well, I'm flattered. Why don't we get things started. I have somewhere to be.

Brigid's hand wraps around Elsa's neck and pulls her close.

INT. HOME - NIGHT

Elsa, bruised, pauses in her typing. She looks at her scratch pad. Next to it lies a pen that has seen better days.

EXT. WHARF - NIGHT

Brigid and Elsa's bodies are pressed together. Brigid pulls something from out of her coat, metallic and shining. Elsa looks down and realizes what is happening.

Elsa pushes Brigid away and she almost falls over the roof, but regains her composure.

She runs at Elsa with the blade, but Elsa trips her, and falls to the ground herself. Brigid climbs ontop but Elsa holds her hand with the blade to the ground.

Brigid relentlessly beats Elsa's face.

INT. HOME - NIGHT

Elsa looks around her home, spartan and crumbling. The furniture is old and we can hear the faucet dripping. She glances to the side, the old head still remains staring at her.

EXT. WHARF - NIGHT

The blade draws closer to Elsa's neck. Brigid holds down Elsa's face with her other hand.

Elsa flails with her free hand, only being able to brush against Brigid's face uselessly. She digs into her pocket and pulls out her pens. With a quick thrust, she pierces Brigid's neck and pulls the pen back out.

Brigid collapses to the side, holding her neck and trying to breathe.

INT. HOME - NIGHT

Elsa leaves the room, turning off the lights. She holds a briefcase in her hand, the typewriter still on the table but the head missing.

EXT. WHARF - NIGHT

Elsa - bloodied, bruised, and breathing heavily - walks over to Brigid's body. She pulls out ID for Deborah Sturges.

She pulls out a business card. It's for the liquor, Caput. On the back is only an address.

CUT TO:

Elsa walks up to the roof, now with two suitcases. Brigid's dead body still lays on the roof. Elsa grabs the blade out of her hands and presses down on the body with it.

EXT. FACTORY - EARLY DAWN

Elsa is far from the factory watching. A group is gathered outside the door, all with some kind of briefcase or covered box. The man with the blue suit is in the crowd.

Elsa watches as someone opens the door from the inside and ushers everyone in.

(CONTINUED)

Elsa approaches the door and slowly twists the handle. She enters.

She holds herself against a wall until a strip of light crosses over her eyes. She pulls out her bloodied pen, which she wipes against herself, and her scratchpad. She begins writing rapidly, but slows as her eyes realize something. Her mouth drops open. She looks sick and runs out of frame.

CUT TO:

EXT. FACTORY - NIGHT

Elsa's legs pump furiously, a briefcase on either side.

We see her, from behind, approach the factory door. She hesitantly knocks. The door opens and she enters.

INT. FACTORY - NIGHT

She lets down the briefcases, which two dirty hands pick up and take away. Another figure, better dressed (although we only see his legs) remains. He reaches into his pockets.

Elsa leaves the factory, practically running, a great wad of money in her hands.

The camera dollies, left to right: The dirty man opens the briefcases, emptying out the original head and Brigid's head onto a conveyor belt. The heads follow the belt and pass through a series of machines. Grinding and crushing noises are heard. Finally, a strange fluid is piped into a great, big container. A man comes and wheels the container off into some room.

Still dolling, another man leaves the room from a different door and puts an older looking container in a machine and then attaches a hose to it. The fluid, milky looking, is piped into more machines and then filtered into a glass bottle.

The bottles, many but not a staggering amount, follow the conveyor belt. A label is eventually slapped onto them. "Caput" it says.

A bottle ends up right in front of the camera. The camera rests now, holding. Hands appear and lift the bottle out of frame. But then another bottle appears. In the background, a man takes away a crate of bottles.

FADE OUT:

Roll Credits