

The Dawn of a Thousand Suns

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INT. HOUSE - EVENING

Soft shadows from a dying fire warm the room.

A **WOMAN (30s)** sits motionless, staring into the embers – breathing shallow, eyes glassy.

She wipes her tear-stained cheeks, rises and heads upstairs – her bare feet gliding through the soft, plush carpets.

Family PHOTOS line the stairway – MOTHER, FATHER and DAUGHTER across the years – growing together, then suddenly, only mother and child.

She stops. Fingers touch a frame – gently. A breath. She continues.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

She pauses outside a door glittered with hearts and stars. A pink plaque reads: *ELLIE*.

She steels herself – enters.

INT. ELLIE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Dim. A night light projecting stars across the walls helps fend off complete darkness.

ELLIE (6) lies awake, eyes bright, taking in the cosmos.

MOTHER

Bedtime, sweetheart.

Ellie studies her face – too aware.

ELLIE

Mommy... you were crying again.

Mother freezes – a thin smile that almost holds.

MOTHER

Just tired, baby. That's all.

Unconvincing, even to herself.

ELLIE

Tell me a story.

MOTHER

It's late – you need to sleep.

ELLIE

Daddy told stories when we cried.

Mother tries to hide the heartbreak, and sits beside her.

MOTHER

Okay. A little one.

She tucks Ellie in gently.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Did I ever tell you the story of
the jealous sun?

Ellie frowns.

ELLIE

Suns can't be jealous.

MOTHER

Why not?

ELLIE

Just... can't.

MOTHER

What if being bright is how it
hides being lonely?

Ellie softens, glances at the spinning stars overhead.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Every night, the stars shine -
countless, beautiful. But when the
sun rises, he hides them all.

ELLIE

Stars are better. They're pretty.
The sun just burns my eyes.

MOTHER

(under breath)

Some lights are too bright to look
at.

ELLIE

Which do you like better?

MOTHER

What do you think?

Ellie thinks, but doesn't reply.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

The sun hides all the stars because it's scared. Scared people will love them more. But they're still there.

ELLIE

The stars are?

MOTHER

Yeah. However the sun cannot shine on the whole earth all at once - that's much too hard. So the sun races around in the sky trying to hide the stars from as many people as it can.

ELLIE

Because it's jealous?

MOTHER

Because it's jealous.

(beat)

Right now the sun is shining on the other side of the world, hiding the stars from all the other children who live there.

Mother begins to stroke and play with Ellie's hair.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

The night is a dawn of a thousand suns, but the morning is the dawn of only one.

Ellie blinks - something clicks.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

And just because we can't see something, doesn't mean they're not there.

Ellie's voice cracks - small, but sharp.

ELLIE

Like daddy?

Mother's eyes well.

MOTHER

(broken honesty)

Yes.

A tear drops from Mother's eyes.

Ellie slips from the sheets.

Mother watches her go - not stopping her - curious where this leads.

Ellie opens the curtains to the glowing night sky - a child staring out into infinity.

ELLIE

If we look for him every night...
we won't forget him.

Mother joins her at the window.

MOTHER

Then we'll look together. Sometimes
darkness helps us see.

They stand together bathed in the universe for a moment.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Now, come on. Bedtime.

Ellie returns to bed. Mother kisses her forehead gently.

ELLIE

Goodnight, Mommy.

MOTHER

Goodnight, my little star.

Mother lingers at the door - watching Ellie stare upward, as if listening to heaven.

FADE OUT.

THE STARS REMAIN.

THE END