

Until the Last One Falls

Scénario : Gabe Berry



Backpack Pictures

Synopsis

« A boy's elaborate domino formations help him survive in a house filled with abuse. »

Note d'intention de l'auteur

When I was 19, as I was studying for my bachelor's degree in psychology, I worked at a behavioral health institute where I was exposed to individuals who had suffered through domestic abuse. Most commonly, I worked with women who were abused by their husbands and children who were abused by their fathers.

There was one child in particular who I will never forget. I'll call him Armando for this document. He was a terror. He yelled and swore constantly. He threw food. He hit the staff and other children. He even kicked me between the legs and called me a "dumb motherfucker."

One night I was covering the sleep shift where I had to do rounds every 15 minutes to check on the kids. I went to Armando's room but he was nowhere to be found. I panicked. I pulled up the covers, looked under his bed and down the hall, but nothing. Finally, I checked the built-in armoire. I opened its door, and there was Armando sleeping under a pile of dirty clothes. This was the only place that he felt safe enough to fall asleep.

I asked one of the nurses to tell me more about him. She said that his father abused him verbally and physically. He would hit Armando. He put cigarettes out on his chest and back. He would force a pillow over his face to suffocate him, only to pull the pillow off just before Armando would pass out, and then laugh at the "joke".

Armando was violent because his father was, and it's very likely that Armando's grandfather was violent as well. Domestic abuse is often cyclical.

Until the Last One Falls captures this pattern of abuse in a unique and brutal way. I chose to make the abuse subtler than that of Armando's. I believe the audience needs to be exposed to the various forms that abuse comes in. You want to cheer for the protagonist, Roland, as he attempts to free himself from his father. And while he ultimately does, he does not free himself from the cycle.

There are many films that focus on abuse, but there aren't many (that I'm aware of) that end the way this script does to reinforce the prevalence of cyclical abuse. Also, Roland's love for dominoes is a special trait that symbolizes his hope, but in the end the dominoes become a vehicle for abuse. In an abusive household hope is always fleeting.

Sometimes we need to be slapped in the face with the truths that are outside of our comfortable worlds. There's no happy ending in Until the Last One Falls, just as there's no happy ending for Armando. If produced this

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