

Eel and Omen

written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. PAVED RURAL ROUTE - NIGHT

A black luxury car surges along a backwoods road.

INT. LUXURY CAR - NIGHT

The dashboard speedometer glows: 100 miles per hour.

CARLTON WADE, 20s, a man of wiry strength, bleeds from his knuckles, nose, and forehead as he drives.

Carlton fumbles around the dashboard. He turns dials and flicks buttons--completely unfamiliar with the car.

The windshield wipers swoop into motion. A shot of washer fluid sprays the glass.

A glob of blood on the windshield smears along the path of the wet wiper blades.

Color is mostly indistinguishable in this darkness, but the dashboard lights tease it out. Red streaks of blood turn a runny pink.

Carlton pushes more buttons. The radio spurts: Pure static.

He whirls the dial in search of a station. Digital numbers speed by--

Static, static, and more static.

He finds something. A voice preaches in monotone.

RADIO PREACHER (O.S.)

It would be dreadful to suffer this
fierceness, but you must suffer it
to all eternity. There will be no--

Carlton scowls/hits the radio hard, turning it off.

A long stretch of silence crawls by. Darkness. Woods. Road.

Carlton wipes blood from his nose and raw knuckles. He mutters. Only one word makes any sense--

CARLTON

...Forget.

A check of the rear-view mirror: no cars coming from behind.

A sudden break. The headlight beams illuminate a PERSON on the roadside.

The car rushes past so fast that the figure in question is just a faceless, freakish blur.

Carlton looks back, alarmed, scared.

Whoever it was is far back and out of sight.

CARLTON
That was nobody.

He checks the rear-view mirror nervously.

CARLTON
Nobody.

Carlton burns rubber in the car for a long stretch.

He shifts. Shakes his head. Yawns.

The headlights once again illuminate a figure on the roadside. This view is less fleeting. It's a woman--APRIL ALLEN, 20s.

CARLTON
Can't be.

Carlton looks back, astonished.

CARLTON
Can't be.

EXT. PAVED RURAL ROUTE - NIGHT

Carlton's car screeches to a stop and reverses at high speed to April.

She's silhouetted by the car's red tail lights.

Carlton pulls up alongside April--dark hair, black T-shirt, dangerously beautiful.

Carlton stares. The car's motor purrs.

APRIL
Holy shit, Carlton, it's you.

Carlton gazes at her in stupid shock, but April whirls.

APRIL

I knew it. I knew we'd find each other. I knew.

Carlton looks in disbelief as April laughs and stomps joyously.

After several moments of this, she realizes that Carlton hasn't moved.

APRIL

C'mon outta that car, baby.

After a second, Carlton obliges. He approaches her slowly.

She bear hugs him, nearly sending him head over heels. She plants kisses all over his face, even the bloody parts.

APRIL

Oh God, you're gross, but....

CARLTON

(finally finds words)
Christ, April.

He puts his arms around her like she's porcelain. Then he truly embraces her. He buries his face into her shoulder.

APRIL

Oh, baby. Oh, Carlton. I know. I know. Let's just get in the car. Let's just split. Nightmare's over.

INT. LUXURY CAR - NIGHT

Carlton drives and casts nervous glances at April.

APRIL

Yeah, I feel the same way. Stunned.

CARLTON

Yeah, stunned.

APRIL

You got out.

Carlton nods.

CARLTON

I fought my way out. A massacre.

April nods.

CARLTON
Same thing for you? How'd you get
away?

APRIL
Charm.

CARLTON
I believe it.

APRIL
How bad you hurt, baby?

He struggles for an answer.

CARLTON
(finally)
Can't feel anything.

APRIL
God damn them.

CARLTON
They're comin' after us, you know.
They're not much behind. Right up
our asses. They won't stop.

APRIL
Enoch and his cult of fuckers.

April looks out the back window.

CARLTON
Are you one of them, April? Are you
with them?

APRIL
You wanna say that again?

CARLTON
Just funny how you happen to be
here on the night I break out.
Feels too good to be true.

APRIL
You think Enoch converted me? Sent
me out to bring you back?

CARLTON
Don't know what to think.

APRIL
I got away just ahead of you--two
nights ago.

(MORE)

APRIL (CONT'D)

I hung low during the day and moved
at night. I'm no dummy.

CARLTON

Am I one?

APRIL

Gimme your hand.

CARLTON

Why?

She takes his hand. Puts it on her face.

APRIL

'Cause this is me. Your girl.

She moves his hand along her face.

APRIL

See. It's me.

Carlton nods. Blinks his eyes.

CARLTON

Yeah. You.

April playfully bites his finger.

CARLTON

Hey.

APRIL

Told you it's me. Still the same.
Still bite.

Carlton nods.

His car headlights shine upon a tall man on the side of the
road--ENOCH ELDER, 40s. He wears half a monster mask. The
bottom part's been cut out to reveal his mouth and chin.

Carlton's eye's widen as he zooms past Enoch.

He looks over at April, who gives no indication she saw
Enoch.

He pulls his hand away from her. No sign of Enoch in the rear
view mirrors.

APRIL

I missed you so much, baby. I
couldn't stop thinking 'bout you.
Worrying. Hoping to see your face.

She searches.

APRIL

I'm never leaving you again, you hear me? And you're never leaving me. Do you promise?

Carlton considers/checks his mirrors.

CARLTON

Promise.

APRIL

How'd you get this car, anyway?

CARLTON

It's their car. I took it.

APRIL

Well, you look sexy driving it.

CARLTON

Don't care how I look.

APRIL

It's our car now.

CARLTON

Not ours. I'll ditch it as soon as we get through.

APRIL

We're like Bonnie and Clyde.

She whoops, turns on the radio, and instantly finds music--garage rock from some distant college station. The car reverberates with loud, fast music.

April pumps her arms in the air, turns back toward the back window.

APRIL

Come and get us, you cocksuckers.

CARLTON

Watch what you say, April. They're probably listening.

Carlton listens to the music for a while, but turns it off.

CARLTON

April?

APRIL

Yeah.

CARLTON

April, they broke me. I'm not the same.

APRIL

We'll make you right again. We'll ride motorcycles and surf and go skinny dipping and eat shrimp tacos, just like we used to.

CARLTON

They did stuff to me. Took me apart. Pulled me inside out. Hallucinations maybe.

APRIL

I know about that. The other women and me drank this slushy stuff that was a super buzz, a giant rush. Sweet. Some sort of shit-face juice. I thought antlers were growing out of my head. Felt like I had powers, like ESP.

She puts her hand on his neck.

APRIL

I'm so sorry, that I got us mixed up with Enoch. I thought it was gonna be a party. So stupid. Do you forgive me?

The headlights fall once again upon Enoch on the roadside. Carlton gasps.

CARLTON

He's out there. Did you see him?

APRIL

Who?

CARLTON

Enoch. We're in trouble. He's out there.

APRIL

You're scaring me, baby.

She slides over to him, embraces him.

APRIL
You need to relax.

Carlton gulps air in panic.

APRIL
I love you.

Carlton suddenly pushes her back to her seat. It's not a violent shove, but it is just enough to give himself a little breathing room.

CARLTON
I need a little space here, April,
to concentrate.

April falls back into her seat. She rubs her cheek.

APRIL
Ah, that hurt.

CARLTON
I'm sorry, I didn't mean...

APRIL
Think I cracked a tooth.

She shoves two fingers in her mouth, shudders, and pulls out a molar, root and all. A glut of blood and tissue is attached.

APRIL
Whoa.

Carlton's eyes widen.

CARLTON
Crap.

April laughs nervously as she holds up the gory tooth.

APRIL
Man, that's nasty.

She giggles--a nervous reaction. Carlton winces.

APRIL
What should I do with it?

CARLTON
Hold on. We'll find help.

APRIL
What'd you do to me?

CARLTON
Nothing. Just stay cool.

APRIL
Ah, wait. Another one.

She reaches into her mouth again and snatches out another full molar.

Startled Carlton swerves the steering wheel back and forth. All sense of equilibrium has been lost.

APRIL
Oh.

Now she holds two grisly teeth, one in each hand. She brings them together.

She snorts and starts to giggle-cry.

APRIL
Twins.

She laughs some more, but it's more panicked than natural.

Carlton reaches an assisting hand to her. He awkwardly touches the side of her face. A couple of his fingers graze her ear.

The ear sags.

Then it detaches and dangles.

Then it drops completely off her head.

APRIL
Oh.

She looks desperately at Carlton. She tries to speak.

APRIL
I luv...

Then it garbles. She slumps down and recedes. An ugly hiss and haze fills the space.

Carlton slams on the brakes. The car fishtails across the road. The horn blares.

He grasps at the seat, but April's residue burns him. He pulls back.

He whirls. His eyes dart. They glance to the rear-view mirror.

Staring from the back seat is Enoch. The half-mask covers his face. He's half monster.

ENOCH

My regrets for your loss.

Carlton doesn't stick around for the rest. He's out the door.

EXT. PAVED RURAL ROUTE - NIGHT

Carlton dashes from the car.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Carlton plows through the branches and bushes.

He looks back for Enoch. No sign.

He splashes into a stream. A small slip puts him into a muddy bank. He's smeared.

Back up. More running. He's fast.

Carlton stops and picks up a sharp fallen branch. He swings it once. A makeshift weapon.

He mutters.

CARLTON

Not going back there.

Moves forward.

CARLTON

Have to kill me first.

Shadows move ominously. Big oblong shapes shift. Something is coming.

Carlton ducks behind a tree.

Several moments pass.

Then Enoch's voice cuts through the night.

ENOCH

This is unreasonable, Carlton.

Carlton slaps himself in the forehead. Then he grips the branch.

A blur--Enoch steps alongside Carlton.

Carlton swings his stick at Enoch's head--

--and the stick shatters against the tree. Enoch is gone.

Carlton flees.

LATER

Fatigue slows Carlton, but he doesn't look back at all as he gets deeper into the woods.

Up ahead is a dim light.

After a few more steps, Carlton sees the source--a gas lantern shines from a small backwoods cabin. Someone camps here.

Carlton's eyes widen. He quickens his pace toward the cabin.

And then Enoch steps before him, thrusting his half-masked face right into Carlton's

ENOCH

Off limits.

Carlton scurries back and falls.

Enoch steps close.

ENOCH

Let's do this the easy way, friend.

Carlton looks past Enoch and shouts toward the cabin.

CARLTON

Hey. Help. There's trouble out here. My name's Carlton Wade.

Enoch snarls.

CARLTON

A woman's been killed. Enoch got her. He's got a place straight down this road. Come out...

ENOCH

Stop talking, Carlton.

Carlton goes mum.

A shadow appears in the cabin's window. The CABIN DWELLER has heard Carlton's cries.

Carlton reaches a desperate hand toward the figure in the window, but no words come to his lips.

Enoch sees the dweller's shadow, too. He speaks slowly to Carlton.

ENOCH
He heard you.

The chirping crickets go momentarily silent.

ENOCH
That won't do.

A curtain in the cabin window is pulled back. The Cabin Dweller is still silhouetted as he peers out the window.

ENOCH
I can't intervene. This'll be
between you...

He points to the cabin.

ENOCH
...and him.

His lips curl as he addresses Carlton.

ENOCH
Go in there. Take his life. Seek
forgiveness when it's over.

Carlton closes his eyes and stands.

He takes three obedient steps toward the cabin, but then goes wayward--like a man fighting his own legs. He sidesteps and shakes his head defiantly: no.

ENOCH
I'll cut you down. Now go, you
goat.

A few more steps from Carlton, but he balks again.

Enraged Enoch rips off his half-mask and pulls it violently over Carlton's face.

Carlton spasms and gasps.

ENOCH
Death is distasteful, I agree,
but...

Enoch sneers.

ENOCH
 ...Take. His. Life.

No more protests from masked Carlton. He strides toward the cabin.

Enoch moves out of view.

Masked Carlton pushes on the cabin door. The Dweller shouts-- all muffled. Carlton pounds. Wood cracks. Carlton storms in.

The silhouettes of both men show in the window, back-lit by the wavering lantern light. Muffled shouts.

The two darkened figures hammer it out. Fists fly. A chair is launched.

Still silhouetted in the window, the Dweller draws a shotgun. He pumps it and aims. Carlton rushes.

The lantern light dies. Toppled over.

Blam. The shotgun roars.

The room goes still. Total darkness.

Moments pass before Carlton emerges through the door.

He calls out with genuine regret:

CARLTON
 Forgive me.

He makes the slow, tired walk back to where Enoch gave the orders. Enoch is back in view again.

Enoch slips the half-mask off of Carlton and places it back over his own face.

ENOCH
 Now accompany me to the car.

Without a single gesture, Carlton walks.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Enoch and Carlton trudge through the brush.

ENOCH
 Lord, hear our prayer for the
 deceased. May you shepard all souls
 into your kingdom.

Carlton walks.

ENOCH
You can speak freely now.

Carlton's voice instantly cuts through the air.

CARLTON
Gonna burn in hell for this.

ENOCH
You're absolved.

CARLTON
Says who?

ENOCH
I gave you no choice.

CARLTON
Wish it was you I'd killed.

ENOCH
You can't. I'm not even here.

Enoch disappears momentarily and returns to form.

CARLTON
You're in my mind.

ENOCH
At your side.

Carlton knocks himself in the head.

ENOCH
You'll drive back to the compound
now. No more fleeing. You'll go
back to where you belong.

They walk several more feet and come to the car that Carlton abandoned on the roadside. The front door is still open.

CARLTON
Not a chance in hell am I going
back. You'll have to kill me.

Enoch gets close and hisses into Carlton's ear.

ENOCH
No need for more blood and
sacrifice. Come back to the flock,
wayward sheep. Now.

All Carlton can do is nod in agreement. The gets back into the car and starts driving the way he came. His escape is over.

INT. LUXURY CAR - NIGHT

Carlton drives. His jaw knots tightly, but he is compelled to drive. Enoch sits in the back seat, pleased to be chauffeured by Carlton.

Carlton glances at the empty passenger seat--the place where April sat.

There is no sign that she was ever there. The seat is immaculate.

CARLTON

I loved her.

ENOCH

And our lord loves you. You should be always mindful.

CARLTON

You're not a prophet, you're a killer.

ENOCH

You don't understand. That woman-- Sister April--she was never really in the car with you.

Carlton grips the wheel tightly.

ENOCH

I put her into your thoughts. I commanded you to see her, just as a shepard commands his flock. All of your thoughts have been opened up to me. All of your training has led up to this point.

Tears well up in Carlton's eyes.

CARLTON

What?

The car's headlights beam upon April, standing on the side of the road. Carlton's mouth drops open as he speeds by.

ENOCH

Did you see her?

Carlton shudders.

April appears again in the headlights, this time she is distorted. A pair of antlers protrudes from her head.

ENOCH

There she is again.

Carlton screams.

ENOCH

Should I conjure her again for you?

More screams.

ENOCH

Enough of that. Stop.

Carlton falls silent. A tear rolls down his cheek.

ENOCH

Now drive in silence. Not another peep.

Carlton drives.

ENOCH

You should rejoice, Brother Carlton. You are a special instrument of our lord. You are a warrior for righteousness, and he will call upon you when the time is right.

(smiles)

Be mindful of the verses. It would be dreadful to suffer this fierceness, but you must suffer it to all eternity...

EXT. ENOCH'S COMPOUND - NIGHT

The luxury car drives through the gates.

INT. LUXURY CAR - NIGHT

ENOCH

Now, you will park this car and go quietly to your quarters. I will call upon you in the morning.

Carlton nods, parks, and leaves the car.

INT. CARLTON'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

Carlton sits on a cot in a small cell. He is completely still.

A hand falls upon his shoulder. He looks up. It is April.

APRIL

I'm sorry, baby. He played a dirty trick on you tonight. That wasn't really me in the car with you, was it?

Carlton shakes his head in disbelief.

APRIL

But don't you worry, I'll break us out of here really soon.

CARLTON

No. You're not really here.

APRIL

Oh, baby. I'm learning his tricks, and I'm going to start using them against him.

Carlton closes his eyes.

APRIL

He's not the only one who can get into someone's head.

She laughs.

APRIL

We'll be together soon. You and me. In the flesh. You just have to stay strong until the time is right.

He looks at her.

APRIL

Because I love you. I'm never gonna leave your side.

FADE OUT:

The End.