

OVERNIGHT ON ROUTE 111

Written by

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EXT. DISUSED CONVENIENCE STORE - HIGH NOON

The bright sun over an isolated, empty road. A parking lot that rests barren. A nearly rusted-out ice machine attached to the desolate building's dingy brick wall. This place has been empty for ages.

The REVVING of a DISTANT ENGINE approaches, followed by the pulse of an EIGHTIES NEW WAVE BEAT. A dark hatchback speeds across the parking lot. The TIRES SCREECH as it comes to an abrupt stop at the ice machine.

The driver kills the engine, and the music dies with it. The car's door opens. Garrett, 33, dusty, dressed for survival and carrying a satchel at his side, exits the vehicle.

He quickly checks his surroundings. He opens one of the doors of the ice machine. Inside there is a crudely-built wooden box, and a handwritten sign that reads:

WALKIE STATION - DON'T BE AN ASSHOLE - PUT IT BACK!!!

Garrett opens the box, and removes a Walkie-Talkie. He tests a button - there's no response. He shakes it. He flips it over and opens the battery compartment. It's empty.

GARRETT

At least they only stole the
batteries this time.

He opens his satchel. Past several nondescript bottles of medicine, he finds a pack of batteries. He opens the package and loads them into the Walkie.

Garrett holds down the call button and brings the Walkie up to his face.

GARRETT (CONT'D)

Littleton HQ, this is Garrett
Lapointe, do you copy?

STATIC. Garrett gives look at the sun's placement in the sky - it still hangs high. He breathes a relieved sigh, then turns back to the Walkie.

GARRETT (CONT'D)

This is Garrett calling Littleton
HQ, do you read?

More STATIC.

GARRETT (CONT'D)

Littleton HQ do you co--

DISPATCH (O.S.)
 Yeah, yeah, yeah, calm your ass
 down. I just went to take a piss.
 What the hell do you want? Over.

GARRETT
 Is Claire right there? Over.

DISPATCH (O.S.)
 Uhhhhh, that's a negative, hoss. Do
 you want me to relay a message?
 Over.

Garrett looks at the medicine in his satchel.

GARRETT
 Yeah. Just tell her we're good.
 Like, *really* good. Over.

DISPATCH (O.S.)
 Yeah sure, chief. Whatever. Just
 get your ass back home before dark.
 Over. And out.

GARRETT
 Yeah, gotcha. Over and out.

He clicks the Walkie off and carelessly tosses it back in the
 box.

Garrett clambers back into the car and turns the key. The
 engine sputters and hesitates. He turns the key again. The
 engine starts, and the NEW WAVE MUSIC with it. He cheers as
 he puts the car in gear and speeds away down the:

EXT. LONELY ROAD - MOMENTS LATER

The hatchback races along. Garrett jams along to the beat of
 his NEW WAVE MUSIC. Waves of dust kick up from the tires.

Without warning, the car BACKFIRES. The MUSIC STOPS. The
 ENGINE SPUTTERS. Thick, black smoke billows from the hood.

Garrett glides the car to a shaky stop. He kicks the door
 open and storms out of the car.

GARRETT
 No no no...

He runs to the hood and opens it - a plume of smoke and steam
 escape. Garrett shields himself.

GARRETT (CONT'D)

Damn it!

Garrett backs away, throwing his hands into the air. He looks around, then at the sky - the sun is lower. He nervously looks down at his satchel, then at the road ahead.

EXT. ABANDONED FARMHOUSE - DAY

Garrett laboriously pushes his car along the road. He stops at the disheveled building before him. He squints to get a better look.

Inside, barely seen things scuttle about. A muffled SCREECH echoes from within the building. Garrett gasps, then checks the sky again. It is darker now; the sun is hanging low.

Garrett pushes the car harder and more desperately than before.

EXT. GAS STATION - EVENING

The sun dips into the horizon. The hatchback plods along the road. Garrett pants in exhaustion as he pushes it onward. He turns the vehicle and guides it into the station parking lot.

He braces himself against the car's frame, wiping sweat from his brow. He startles as a GUN COCKS behind him.

DOUGLAS (O.S.)

Car trouble?

Garrett dives behind the vehicle for cover. He pulls his satchel close. He draws a pistol from his jacket. He leans around the car, seeing...

DOUGLAS, 42, unkempt and unkind, with a shotgun trained in Garrett's direction. With him is RYAN, 31, a wiry and ill-fed parasite, also brandishing a firearm.

DOUGLAS (CONT'D)

We saw you pushing the thing down the road...

GARRETT

You could have offered to help.

DOUGLAS

I suppose we could have, yeah.

Garrett peers around the car, raising his weapon. Douglas and Ryan stop in their tracks.

GARRETT
Don't move, either of you.

DOUGLAS
Come off it, sport.

Douglas motions towards the sun setting on the horizon.

DOUGLAS (CONT'D)
I think we both know it's a little late in the day for a gunfight. So how about we just do this the easy way?

GARRETT
Then you'll what? Even if it'd start, the engine will just get you killed after sunset. I give you three miles max before you two are canned food.

Douglas and Ryan chuckle to each other.

RYAN
The car is too much work.

DOUGLAS
We'll take whatever's in it, though. That bag, too.

Garrett cocks the hammer on his gun.

GARRETT
The hell you will.

Douglas shrugs. He raises his weapon and aims down the sight.

DOUGLAS
The hard way it is, then.

GARRETT
There's a hive! Less than a quarter mile from here.

Douglas lowers the weapon slightly and scoffs.

GARRETT (CONT'D)
Some ratty old farmhouse just beyond Cooper Road?

Ryan and Douglas exchange a glance between themselves.

GARRETT (CONT'D)
Yeah? You know the place, do you?

RYAN
Yeah, we d-

DOUGLAS
Shut up, you moron!

DOUGLAS (CONT'D)
We *might*.

GARRETT
Well, then you *might* want to lower your guns and start being constructive if we want to survive the night, you think?

DOUGLAS
We survive nights out here all the time, tourist.

GARRETT
Then let's just have the dick-measuring contest right now and get it over with, because in about twenty minutes we're all going to have far bigger problems than each other. They saw me come this way.

A tense silence passes; the jittering barrels of guns aimed and at the ready.

DOUGLAS
Ok, ok, ok.

Douglas lowers his weapon.

RYAN
Man, what are you doing?

DOUGLAS
He's right. Lower your gun.

Ryan reluctantly lowers his weapon.

Garrett lowers his gun. He holds it up as he emerges from behind the car.

GARRETT
We good?

Douglas nods. Ryan looks on to Douglas, then nods as well.

Holstering his weapon, Garrett rounds the vehicle and opens the back. He retrieves a black case and opens that. Inside are wooden stakes, holy water in decorative glass bottles, and some small hand-held, battery-powered blue lights.

Garrett retrieves the bundle of lights. He hands one to Douglas, and then one to Ryan.

Ryan looks the light over, finding a switch and flipping it. It glows a bright with a deep indigo hue.

RYAN
Oh, wild, man...

DOUGLAS
Well, look at Mr. High Tech.

GARRETT
Turn that off! Save the battery.

Garrett looks at the horizon as it consumes the last waning sliver of the sun.

GARRETT (CONT'D)
We should get inside. Now.

INT. GAS STATION GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

The door opens and Garrett enters. Douglas follows. Garrett pulls a flashlight from his satchel and shines it around the room. It reveals haphazard tool racks and empty shelves, musty and neglected.

Ryan stops halfway in the door. He squints at something in the distance behind him.

RYAN
Do y'all see...?

Ryan points out the door.

RYAN (CONT'D)
What do ya think that is over there?

There's a SCUTTling, a RAPID FLURRY OF FOOTSTEPS, as the indistinct object in the distance closes the gap between them with unnatural speed - the object reveals itself as a VAMPIRE!

Before Ryan can react, the Vampire has a hold of his arm. Ryan screams and attempts to retreat, but the vampire's grasp holds firm.

Garrett and Douglas spin around, drawing their weapons.

RYAN (CONT'D)
Get it off me!

Ryan grips the doorframe as the Vampire tries to drag him outside. As they struggle, the Vampire yanks Ryan's arm with all its might and wrenches it from Ryan's body in a bloody display. Ryan falls back screaming and collapses to the floor.

Garrett dives in to help Ryan. Douglas slams the door shut and braces it with his body. Ryan still screams, blood gushing from his tattered, mangled shoulder.

DOUGLAS

He's bleeding out! Can you tie a tourniquet or something?!

GARRETT

Around what?!

Ryan's screams die down, as does his tortured writhing. He falls limp on the floor.

DOUGLAS

Is he dead?

Ryan is motionless, lifeless.

DOUGLAS (CONT'D)

Did he just fuckin' die?!

Garrett looks up at Douglas, stunned. He seems suddenly startled.

GARRETT

Behind you!

The Vampire is back! It shoulder-checks the door, knocking Douglas forward. The Vampire forces its arm through and grabs a hold of Douglas' jacket. Garrett stands and idly watches as they wrestle back-and-forth.

DOUGLAS

What are you doing?! Help me, man!

A beat passes. Garrett remains motionless as Douglas fights against the Vampire's grasp.

DOUGLAS (CONT'D)

Come on, man! Help me!

Garrett reluctantly starts towards the door. He raises his UV light.

GARRETT

Open it!

Douglas darts forward. The door swings open, leaving the Vampire in full view. Garrett engages the UV light, flooding the area with bright indigo. The Vampire screams, emitting embers and smoke.

The Vampire charges through the door! It knocks Garrett over, throwing the UV lamp across the room. It dives for Douglas, pinning him to the floor. They are deadlocked wrestling when...

A hard kick knocks the Vampire off of Douglas - It's Garrett, brandishing a wooden stake! Garrett charges in and drives the stake into the Vampire's chest.

Dying, the Vampire VOMITS a thick stream of blood, covering Garrett's face completely. Garrett recoils, trying to shield himself. The Vampire slumps to the floor.

Douglas draws his shotgun, pointing it towards Garrett with a glare.

DOUGLAS

You were gonna just let me die!
Wait...

Douglas looks over Garrett as he wipes blood from his face and mouth. Douglas slowly raises his gun.

DOUGLAS (CONT'D)

Did...did you get that...*in you?*

Garrett looks back, stunned. There is a soft glint of red in Garrett's eyes. Douglas quickly aims his weapon, but...

He's not fast enough. Garrett charges Douglas with supernatural speed. He knocks the shotgun from Douglas' grasp and pins him to the wall. Garrett is panting, twitching. Douglas squirms.

Garrett hears a thunderous, deafening HEART BEAT as he watches Douglas' jugular vein pulse in his throat. Garrett strains to resist, then screams, his teeth forming into feral fangs. He throws Douglas to the ground and disappears deeper into the shadowed garage.

Douglas examines the darkness. His hands scramble for his weapon and a flashlight. There are LIQUID AND SLURPING SOUNDS coming from nearby.

The trembling flashlight beam probes the dark. It lands on Garrett, hunched over Ryan's corpse. Garrett looks over his shoulder, his eyes changed, fully red and inhuman. He turns back to his meal.

DOUGLAS (CONT'D)
Are you drinking my friend's blood?

GARRETT
He wasn't using it.

Douglas shudders and trains his weapon on Garrett. Outside, shadows stir beyond the open door.

A group of FIVE VAMPIRES cautiously approach the gas station. Garrett stands in a defensive posture between the creatures and Douglas.

GARRETT (CONT'D)
(whispering)
Turn off your light.

Douglas clicks his flashlight off. The room plunges into utter darkness. There are FOOTSTEPS that SKITTER and SCUFF. The DOOR CREAKS. The VAMPIRES SNARL, and Garrett SNARLS BACK. Douglas closes his eyes tight and braces for the worst.

More SCUFFLING and SNARLING, HISSING and EMPTY SWIPES - the sounds of animals facing off coming from human vocal chords. The room again falls quiet.

Douglas opens his eyes, then turns the flashlight on once again. The vampires are gone. Garrett is gone. He is alone.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAWN

Garrett leans on the hood of his car. He gazes off into a steadily brightening horizon, a slight smile on his now-pale face. Douglas peers out of the door, then exits the building, joining Garrett.

DOUGLAS
What did you do?

GARRETT
I let them know you were mine and they left. They fight each other for food more often than we fight them.

DOUGLAS
How do you know that?

GARRETT
I just know now.

Garrett hands his keys and satchel to Douglas. He tries to hand them back.

DOUGLAS

No...I...

GARRETT

Don't stress about it. Inside that garage you'll find a few liters of coolant and a new coolant line. That should get her started.

(pause)

As for the bag, You probably won't have use for much that's in there. My wife, Claire, had bariatric surgery a year before all of this. These pills are just vitamins, basically. Calcium and iron supplements. All-but-useless to anyone else, but life-and-death for her.

DOUGLAS

Man, I just figured that...

Garrett draws forth an old, faded photograph of CLAIRE, 28, a beautiful young woman.

GARRETT

Yeah, yeah, yeah, valuables and all that. I know what it's like outside the camps. I get it.

(pause)

You know, I didn't even have to come out here to get these. Our other scavengers kept them trickling in. I could have stayed home. It's just...she worked with kids. Special needs kids. Autism. Stuff like that. Do you know how strong someone has to be to do that? I could have never done that. I'd always tell her that, too. She's always been so tough - I guess I just wanted to feel like she needed me for a change, not The other way around. It turns out she never did. I didn't need to be heroic to be her hero, and I didn't even realize it until just now. Still, I wanted to be the one who saved her or something, I guess. I don't know.

DOUGLAS

Well, you saved me. What I don't know is why.

GARRETT

Because I still believe that, even now, after all this, most people will still choose to do the good thing, when given the opportunity to do so.

Douglas nods. He and Garrett share a silent moment as the sun begins to crest the horizon.

The sun's rays hit Garrett, who lets out barely a pained whimper as he rapidly dissolves into embers and ashes. Douglas looks into the horizon, alone, watching the sun rise. He gazes down at cinder on the asphalt next to him. It blows away in the breeze. Douglas sighs heavily.

INT. GAS STATION GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Douglas retrieves a large bottle of engine coolant from under the counter. He grabs rubber line from the garage shelves. He stops for a moment, seeing Ryan's corpse on the ground. He shrugs it off and heads out the door.

EXT. GAS STATION - MOMENTS LATER

The car's hood slams shut as Douglas closes it. He takes a look around, then clambers inside.

INT. GARRETT'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Douglas turns the key, and the car starts. He is startled by LOUD EIGHTIES NEW WAVE MUSIC. He turns it down and picks up an old CD binder from the passenger's seat. He flips through it.

DOUGLAS

A flock of what now?

(pause)

I mean, this one is just a bunch of letters. Oh, wait. That's supposed to mean "in excess". I get it.

He tosses the CD binder into the back seat and sighs.

DOUGLAS (CONT'D)

Not a single rock-and-roll record.

Douglas sees a worn road atlas in the passenger's seat. He picks it up and opens it. In red marker, he sees a point marked 'HOME'.

Douglas nods. He drops the satchel into the passenger's seat, puts the car in gear, and drives off.

The hatchback disappears into the distance.

EXT. BARRICADED ROAD - DAY

A pair of ARMED GUARDS, 30s, patrol makeshift wooden ramparts over a ramshackle but solid gate. With them is Claire. She paces back and forth, watching the road in the distance.

She stops dead in her tracks when the hatchback appears in the distance. She gasps, and runs to the nearby stairwell.

Outside the gate, the hatchback slows to a stop. The large, wooden gate cracks open, and Claire runs out towards the car.

The hatchback's door opens, and Claire stops short. The guards on the battlements ready their weapons.

CLAIRE

Who...?

Douglas emerges from the vehicle, his hands high above his head - one holding Garrett's photo of Claire, the other his satchel.

DOUGLAS

Miss, I believe your name is
Claire, yeah?

The guards keep their weapons aimed at Douglas. Claire straightens herself as tears well up in her eyes. She clears her throat.

CLAIRE

I am. Where is Garrett.

DOUGLAS

Ma'am, I am so very sorry...

Claire's composure breaks. She cannot keep herself from crying in earnest.

DOUGLAS (CONT'D)

He wanted you to have this.

Douglas extends the satchel to Claire. She takes it and looks inside.

CLAIRE

My Lord. This is years worth. Many
years worth.

Claire wipes her eyes, still crying.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Thank you Mr., Um...

DOUGLAS
It's Doug.

CLAIRE
Thank you, Doug.

Claire looks over the satchel once again. More tears fall.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Garrett, always running off the
play the hero.

DOUGLAS
No, ma'am. Your husband was the
real deal. He was a hero.

Claire smiles through the tears.

CLAIRE
Yes, he certainly was.

The guards lower their weapons. The wooden gate across the road opens fully. Inside there is a bustling community, complete with vegetable gardens, water pumps, electricity, and a population that appears healthy and happy.