

ON A MOONLESS NIGHT

by

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OPEN ON A MOONLESS NIGHT ABOVE PASADENA CALIFORNIA.

NARRATOR (ESTHER)
I know what my mother did that
night. It was dark and the moon hid
behind the clouds, forewarning of a
darkness that is to come.

Flashes of memory play while we travel above the city.

NARRATOR (ESTHER) (CONT'D)
Though I knew exactly what she did.
I don't know how to feel about it.

Blood flowing from a head on the pavement.

NARRATOR (ESTHER) (CONT'D)
I don't know if I can blame her
either.

Teeth biting hard on lips while a child sits in therapy.

Scene continuous to travel across the city and passes a
police station.

NARRATOR (ESTHER) (CONT'D)
The darkness fell upon us far
behind our past.

Feet running then falling down paved stairs.

NARRATOR (ESTHER) (CONT'D)
A time so long ago that one should
fail to remember.

A black SUV. The sound of a girl GIGGLES, then blood
splatters on the window.

NARRATOR (ESTHER) (CONT'D)
But the memory lingered, eating
through our sanity, our lives.

Scene continuous and passes a bum pushing a cart.

NARRATOR (ESTHER) (CONT'D)
It lay heaviest on her.

Three ominous blurry figures tower over us, they look like
kids but were not sure.

NARRATOR (ESTHER) (CONT'D)
It was only a heavy cloud then,
until the darkness devoured every
life it touched.

Multiple children gathered around a child's fallen body. A woman CRIES in the background.

NARRATOR (ESTHER) (CONT'D)
Like a wicked dream it stayed. Ever
present. Ever watchful. Ever
vengeful.

Scene stops moving. We focus on a bar parking lot.

EXT. BAR PARKING LOT - NIGHT

It's a quiet night with SOFT MUSIC spilling into the parking from the bar. The parking is partly filled with vehicles.

Parked far to the back and close to a dim alley is a dark brown 1980 buick.

The silhouette of a woman wearing black long sleeve sits quiet in the car, her face half covered by the sun visor.

INT. 1980 BUICK/EXT. BAR PARKING - NIGHT

The woman taps her fingers on her lap, her facial features hidden quite well in the dark.

Startled by the sudden increase of music, she turns her head to a dumpster located a few distance from the bar exit. Hidden underneath towering trees, no movement can be seen from the darkness.

She turns her head towards the bar again and sees two guys walk to their car.

She watches them until they drive off. She looks at her watch. She presses the night light button, 1:30 AM.

She hesitates but turns the radio on and fidgets with the knob, searching for a channel, until.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Good evening to one and all. Thank
you for tuning in to K-Brite 740.
Tonight, we will be looking closely
at Deuteronomy 32:35.

She makes a slight adjustment to her turtle neck, pulling it away from her wind pipe. She breathes.

She turns to the drivers window. She rolls it down, suddenly an increase of music spills into the parking again. She turns off the radio.

She takes a good look at the guy exiting. Familiar. She adjusts her sitting position.

Exiting from the bar with brisk wide strides is ROBERT CARILLO, 28, Hispanic, good looking in a rough way. He brisk walks towards a parked white Nissan.

Following behind Robert is a man with a distinct neck tattoo, CARLOS ESTRILLO, 30, Hispanic.

CARLOS

Where you goin', motherfucker. What you think you're better than us, huh? Just cause you moved to this place. You trying to normalize bro. Like the rest of these bitches. I saw how you looked at me in there.

Robert stops beside his old beat-down car and stealthily looks at his glove compartment. Carlos stops as well.

EXT. BAR PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

ROBERT

C'mon bro, this is stupid. I know what your doing, I get it.

CARLOS

Don't fucking call me bro. I ain't your bro no more dude. Not since you left. You didn't even say nothing to us. We found out from your fucking neighbor. After all these years, man! After what we did for you inside.

Music spills into the parking lot as Carlos continues his rant.

MATT MATTIS, 25, White, exits the bar and see's the confrontation.

CARLOS (CONT'D)

You think fucking Gaspar is going to let you slide? After what you did to him inside? You think you're family can save you if shit goes down? Nah, dude! We, gonna save you!

(a beat)

C'mon man say something. You gettin soft. Like this place.

(MORE)

CARLOS (CONT'D)
C'mon man. Feeling a little,
brokeback you motherfucking pussy!

Matt walks straight, relaxed but cautious. He makes eye contact with Robert.

MATT
Hey, Robert. You ok?

Robert nods.

ROBERT
Everything's cool. Thanks.

Carlos stares at Matt with a condescending look then spits on the ground.

CARLOS
(to Matt)
What are you some white savior?

ROBERT
Ya es suficiente Carlos!

Carlos brings his attention back to Robert and fist pumps his chest like King Kong. As he walks away, he pretends to charge at Matt.

MATT
What the!

ROBERT
Tranquilo!

Carlos gives Matt a wicked grin as he walks off.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
(under his breath)
Putá.

MATT
(aghast)
You sure you're ok?

Matt motions his head towards Carlos's direction.

MATT (CONT'D)
Seems fucked up? Never seen him
here before.

ROBERT
Yeah, I'm cool.

Robert points in exasperated gesture at the closed exit bar door.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
That! Was just some guy I used to
know. You ok?

MATT
Now I am.

They laugh it out.

ROBERT
You're not closing today?

MATT
Nah. It's Ian's turn.

ROBERT
Aight man, see you tomorrow.

MATT
Off for a few days.

ROBERT
Yeah? Cool.

Matt acknowledges and raises his hand. He drives off and leaves Robert standing by his car.

Robert looks beat. He motions his head at the bar exit then from the car window looks at the glove compartment again.

He brushes his mouth then the back of his head before looking at a moonless sky. He takes in a deep breath.

He looks back down and just when he has his keys inserted in the car door, a sudden blow hits the back of his head and he drops to the ground.

EXT. ALICIA'S DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

A car enters the driveway. It's bright light blinds our eyes.

POV From front of car. DET. ALICIA KNOWLES, 38, Black, morose, sits quietly on the drivers seat. She looks beat. She grabs a bag and a stack of folders from the passenger side and gets out of the car.

She walks towards the house with dead heavy strides.

She fidgets the key into the door handle and murmurs a curse. Finally unlocked, she gets inside.

INT. ALICIA'S KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Alicia sets her bag and folders on the kitchen counter and walks straight to a cupboard above the sink. She grabs a bottle of whiskey.

From a cabinet beside the sink, she takes a glass, walks straight to a recliner in the living room. She pours herself a drink.

On the wall behind her are pictures of her family. The woman is obviously her but right now she looks like an old beat down version of the picture.

One picture shows her sitting right next to her husband, who has their daughter on his lap.

Another photo is of her with her dad, a stout gentleman holding her by the shoulder, her brother right next to her, and her mom.

Other photos are simple police gatherings. One of the picture shows the background of a stage with a banner for new recruits. Alicia gives her warmest smile as a white man, her age, hugs her tight while holding a piece of paper with the word PARTNER written on it.

The house sounds dead. She stares at the TV like there's a show playing.

Moments later she takes her phone from her pocket and opens a text message.

ANITA: Tried calling you and the precinct earlier. We need to speak. Call me as soon as you can.

Next message.

RANDOM CELL NUMBER: I have what you need. Just text me where to meet.

She turns the phone off and puts it by the side table. She continues to drink and falls asleep.

DREAM SEQUENCE:

Slowly zooming in towards a black SUV, we hear the sound of a girl GIGGLING, it's coming from inside the vehicle. The passenger door opens but just before we see the girls face, BANG.

RETURN TO SCENE:

Alicia wakes up to a heavy sweat and a RINGING phone. She looks at the wall clock, 9:00 AM.

ALICIA

Shit!

She picks up the phone.

ALICIA (CONT'D)

I know. I'm sorry. Got home late last night.

(a beat)

Yeah. I'll be there soon.

She hangs up and supports her head as she leans forward. She has a headache but plays it cool. She looks at her phone screen again and from there notices multiple missed calls.

She grabs her blouse and smells her armpit, awful, she cringes.

INT. ALICIA'S BEDROOM/ INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Alicia walks to her room and grabs a new blouse from the closet. Her bed, in mint condition.

POV. She goes straight to the bathroom and takes off her old blouse, puts on the clean one, pulls that forward and applies deodorant on. She tucks the blouse in and walks out.

INT. CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION ROOM - DAY

Alicia walks in with a coffee in one hand and bag stuffed with folders in another.

She heads straight to a table next to an older and heavy set man. DET. WILLIAM PASTELY, BILL, 55, White. The lines on his face tells of a man tested by time but has the look of positivity in it.

DET. ANGEL GALVEZ, 45, Hispanic sits right behind Bill. Too focused in reading a report. He looks at Alicia, then Bill.

Bill keeps his tone low but doesn't turn to Alicia.

BILL

(to Alicia)

You gotta stop doing this.

Angel looks away and keeps his focus on his desk.

ALICIA
I know. I'm sorry.

BILL
You're making this very difficult
for me when there are multiple eyes
looking at you and waiting for you
to fuck this up.

She takes the folders out of her bag, sets them on the table.

Bill finishes reading his report, puts the folder on Alicia's
table. She glances at it.

BILL (CONT'D)
That's your fifth case. No lead on
that one either.

ALICIA
You mean, our fifth case?

BILL
Kid, I'm only here to shadow yah as
requested by your own father to the
chief of this department. I don't
want to do this and neither do you.
Your an experienced detective. This
would be embarrassing to anyone.
The soonest you can show me your up
to speed, the soonest I'm gone. So
man up!

They try to keep the conversation casual.

ALICIA
I can handle my own affairs, Bill.
I don't know what Dad told you but
I don't expect you to baby me.

BILL
I've been friends with your father
for a long time. Heck I've known
you since you were little and...

ALICIA
I don't need to be lectured as if
I'm you're child.

BILL
Huh! You're really taking it that
far this time. Very well then. Stop
acting like a child.

Bill points at the folder on her table.

BILL (CONT'D)
Read that. I'm going to get myself
a coffee and some air.

Bill grabs his cellphone from a drawer. He makes a brief eye contact with Angel. They both raise their brows.

A cellphone RINGS. Alicia looks at her phone. The name makes her lips purse.

ALICIA
Why you had to call him?

BILL
Don't look at me.

Bill turns his head towards a door with stencilled *Chief of the Investigative Department* written on it, then walks out of the room.

Alicia gets the hint and picks up.

ALICIA
Yes, Dad.

INT. CARILLO'S HOME - DAY

MARTHA CARILLO, 50, Hispanic, her hair tied to a bun. She's dressed like she's going to church. She stands supported by the kitchen sink, her cellphone up to her ear, she waits, no answer.

She drops the call. Hurries towards her daughters room.

INT. ESTHER'S ROOM - DAY

The room has a nostalgic appearance to it with 90's band posters plastered on the wall. We see the picture of our victim earlier, Robert Carillo in his teenage years with a young girl who looks just like him.

Martha opens the bedroom door, towers over the bed of her sleeping daughter whose hidden under a thick duvet.

MARTHA
Mija. Mija. Wake up. Esther!

ESTHER
Ma! I'm still sleeping.

MARTHA
Sleeping. It's lunch time.

Martha points at the clock on the bedside table.

MARTHA (CONT'D)
And you're sleeping.

ESTHER
I'm closing the restaurant later,
remember?

MARTHA	ESTHER (CONT'D)
Si. Si. Pero dios mio. When I	Ma. Ma. Ma. What is it? What
was your age, I...	is it? Just tell me.

MARTHA
Mija. Robert said he was gonna be
here early today but it's late.

ESTHER CARILLO, 26, peaks out of the duvet and looks at her bedside clock. We finally get a look at her face. Not a teenager at all but her room seems to be locked in time. She has a simple beauty, just like her mothers.

ESTHER
Maybe he's running late.

MARTHA
No. Mija. You're brother is never
late. Now, you are always late but
no, not my son.

Esther rolls her eyes.

ESTHER
Call him Ma.

MARTHA
That's the problem, he's not
answering. Not in text, not in
call.

Esther grabs her phone. Calls Robert. Waits. No answer.

MARTHA (CONT'D)
(annoyed)
You see.
(a beat)
Well, call his work?

ESTHER
He never gave me their number.

MARTHA
Well then what am I supposed to do?