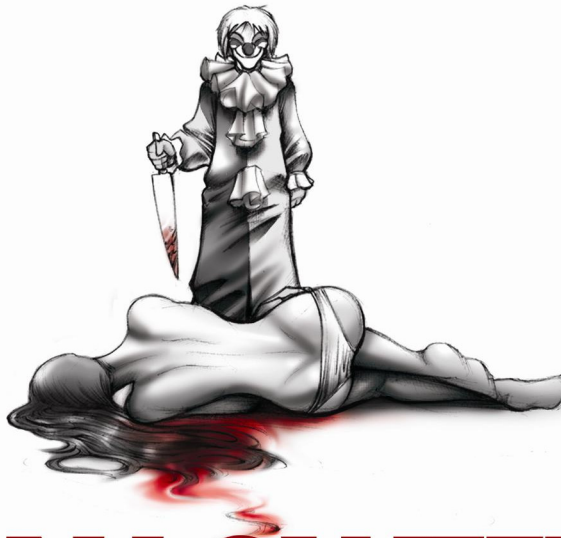




HALLOWEEN
SAM

MALEK AKKAD
PRESENTS



HALLOWEEN

SAM

Written By
STEFAN HUTCHINSON

Illustrated By
MARCUS SMITH

Based on characters created by:
JOHN CARPENTER & DEBRA HILL

Special Thanks:
Steve Cattaruzza, Stephen Christy, Cody DeMatteis, Sammy Montana & Brian Rayman

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ONE



London, 1957.

A busy street, a waiting taxi and a hurried goodbye.

“Are you sure you’re doing the right thing? You can fix things here. You can make it work -”

“I’m sorry. I don’t know what else to tell you. It’s probably meant to be this way.”

“Sam, you have a *life* here.” The young woman paused for a moment. Perhaps in one sentence she had said too much. Perhaps it was best to let him leave without the drama of her plea.

“It’s time to go.” He moved over to the lady and shook her hand tightly. “Goodbye.” Maybe he wanted to hug her, but that would be misleading. That would imply that beneath his confusion, there was the capacity for love, and, as an unfortunate consequence, the capacity for loss. As it was, the man’s piercing eyes could not maintain contact with the desperation in hers, and his face carried only a great sadness. There was a brief pause, swollen with the anticipation of one sentence from either party that could change the course of events. No words came, and after the pause ended the emotion that remained was empty and suffocating. He got into the taxi, pulled the door shut and set off.

That was the moment that would haunt Elizabeth Worthington for the rest of her life. It was also the moment that Sam Loomis left London – and England - for good.



As the years passed she watched from afar, a love affair built on whispers, rumors and press clippings. During the many years they had been friends, Elizabeth had admired his ability to focus his voracious intellect, his resolute determination to see everything and anything through to the end. But above all, she was drawn to the facets that contrasted with what she respected; his self-doubt; his compassion; his horrible fascination with all things twisted.

She was a journalist, and he was a psychologist – both of whom who had been drawn towards the darker of cases. The rapists, the haunted, the murderers, the lonely, those who harmed themselves and others – all of these would cross their paths and, in Sam’s case, change the very direction of it.

“There’s a design to fate,” he had once told her, “and unfortunately it seems to be a design that doesn’t care for the emotions of those who are but instruments in its larger purposes.” Sam had seemingly resigned to the role he had perceived for himself, whereas Elizabeth was determined to fight it – for both Sam and herself.

The events in London however, which would forever remain unspoken of, had proved to be too much, and so it was that he relocated to “somewhere else”. Somewhere else happened to be Illinois, a place that initially seemed as arbitrary as any other, at least until October 31st, 1963.



Autumn leaves fall, Jack O’Lanterns smile wickedly and children play vicious tricks.



“MICHAEL!” – The scream echoes from the girl’s window, but nobody notices - she falls half-naked from a chair with a thud, landing against the floor as blood begins to pour from the knife wounds that open-up her perfect body – she’s dying and she doesn’t know what she did wrong –

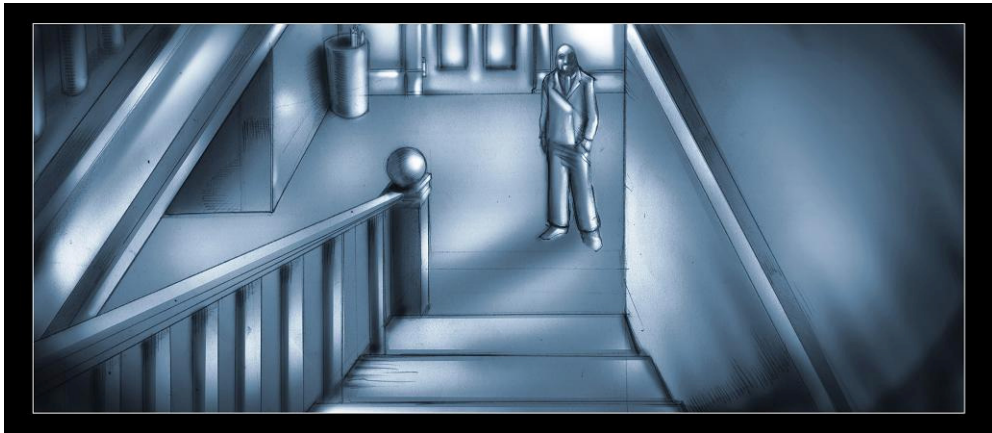
The masked killer leaves fifteen year old Judith Myers’ corpse on the floor, turns around and heads down a flight of stairs. Leaving the suburban house behind he goes out into and walks straight into the dead girl’s parents who are arriving back from god-knows-where. They don’t know about their daughter – they don’t know she’s lying dead and mutilated only a few meters away. They’ll never know what she did wrong –

They pull off the mask to see the silent face of Michael, their only son.

< and then... >

A few weeks later, Sam Loomis paid his first visit to the crime scene. The remaining family had moved almost instantly to a nearby home arranged by friends who had recently begun a realty business. The house still bore their shadows, the fallout from the nuclear family which, up until that night had been bland and horribly normal.

“Six years old and a killer,” he said to himself as he entered the Myers House – not through the front door, but from a back door that led into the kitchen. This is where Michael Myers had walked, and Sam desperately wanted to understand. Other than a few youthful cobwebs, nothing gave way to a sign of anything *wrong*, but at the same time, something wasn’t *right*.



Silence permeated the air as he entered the hallway and walked slowly up the stairs. His fingers trailed against the paint of the banister, and that’s when he began to feel it; nervousness, an uncertainty, a growing itch that suddenly became a lump in the throat –

< - the exact same feeling he had when he had met - >

The boy. How could he have done this? What could have possessed him?

Sam continued to trace the killer's steps – into the bedroom. His hands felt hot inside, but cold to the touch as the color began to drain away from his skin. His heartbeat grew stronger and his eyes darted erratically around the room. The bed, sheets no longer upon it; the dresser; the mirror; the floor; the recent past –

< - her throat was hacked apart - >

The crime scene photographs filled his mind. The girl – Judith Myers – was only fifteen, and there she was, undressed, penetrated and lying in a pool of her own blood. Just a girl, just a girl, just a –



The lump in his throat grew larger, stronger, suffocating – the pounding of his heart gave way to a vile, dizzying nausea – the room began to distort, and everything he had ran from all of his life, everything that had chased him from his sleep suddenly came forth, strong, immutable, unchangeable –

He felt it spread through him, down each vein, an internal scraping that wanted to explode and scream – the very shadow of death caressing him, glaring in his eyes –

< - black holes – swallowing – devouring - >

And in the girl's mirror, he saw his own reflection - skin washed-out, icy white, only the shape of a man. He stepped back, took a gasp of air, and then his stomach gave in and he vomited on the floor.

The calm began to return, as did the reasoning and the intellect. But this time it was different – *he* was different.

There was an understanding, a numbing realization of what was at hand. Weeping fragments of horror, accumulated throughout his many long years, began to point mockingly to this very place before coagulating into a single prehensile entity.

Something had emerged, something buried away long ago, in him, and perhaps in every man. Something that had no name, something hideous, something that now had a human form –

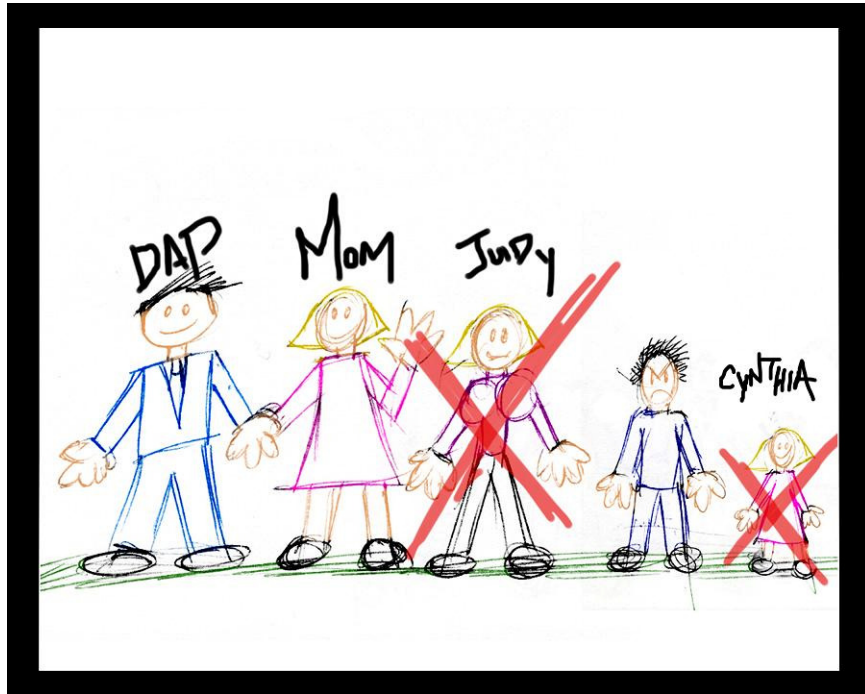
It wasn't the first time Sam Loomis had become aware of his own mortality, but without mercy this knowledge sliced through everything that he had previously considered rational.

He felt himself fall into a quiet, dark place.

All that was left was fear.



TWO



The shadow of this fear would never leave Sam. It would always be there, just over his shoulder like the hooves of the devil, waiting for him to fall. The same darkness that claimed his parents all those long years ago was now with him, stood close, breathing softly down his neck.

The boy grew up, as boys always did, and in perfect symmetry, so too expanded the dark cloud that surrounded him – a rootless black flower, waiting to bloom. Beneath his placid exterior, the boy planned and envisioned his own path, all the while staying silent.

As the boy's calculated stare pierced Sam deeper each day, he noticed that the looks cast his way from those around him grew more and more judgmental. Eyes that once admired him, passed sentence on him now – after all, why was he so obsessed? Why did a supposedly brilliant Doctor have such an unhealthy preoccupation with one patient, a patient who had never even said a word, and for all intents and purposes had been a model prisoner?

“You don't understand...” Sam lost count of how many times those words had passed through his lips to his colleagues. Every time, the mocking response would be masked by a polite and occasionally sympathetic smile that only added to the weight on his shoulders.

Each laugh, each whisper that he caught dwelled in him. For many nights he would sit and stare at his reflected image, distraught at his own helplessness, a feeling that made even the aging process insignificant. After all, Sam was getting

old: his hair gone, lines drawing their own way across his face, lungs unable to hold enough oxygen.

The gun didn't taste of anything – at the point he placed it into his own mouth, he was numb to anything sensory.

Again, he stared into the mirror. The frame was barren, but the glass was polished. Unlike many others who had chosen to end their lives, Sam had intended to do it with full clarity and without distraction. As such, no letters had been written, nor were there any pictures of long-absent friends and long-avoided relatives. Not even a mention of the boy. No, this was about himself and himself only. Neither the dear nor the estranged had any place here.

A sad old man crying. That's all I am. That's why they curse me. A pathetic cowardly creature with memories lost and broken. How far have I come from who I was? What has changed inside me – why can't I change it back? Why am I letting these things control and destroy me for a thousandth time? I don't want this life. I loathe this emptiness, this abhorrent isolation. I want things to make sense - I want my world to be beautiful again – I want everybody to come back –

And at that point, he pressed hard on the trigger, and one more thought, simple and haunting, seared through him.

But what if I'm right?

One by one his fingers softened and the pistol dropped to the floor. He wiped his face. It was December 31st, 1977. Within a year his question would be answered.



“Police reports state that the killer – believed to be Michael Myers – is still at large, and described as wearing a white mask and coveralls –“

Michael Myers escaped from Smiths Grove Mental Institute on October 30th, 1978. The day after – *Halloween* - he butchered his way through almost twenty people. Haddonfield, a small town famous for absolutely nothing, would become known around the world – a mass grave of innocence, a red-smearred mortuary of youth.

At the point he escaped, Sam was there. At the point he was stopped, Sam was there. After the ashes had cleared, Sam was alone.

He had been played for a fool. He had no idea that Myers had another sister – an adopted girl named Laurie Strode. It was a secret so well hidden, even she didn't know. She was seventeen when Myers came for her and all of her immediate

friends. This time, he didn't simply want to kill a sister, but destroy her utterly and relentlessly. Sam was powerless and, despite his years alone with Myers, ill-prepared for that night's events.

When he finally found the killer, he was almost too late – he was about to strangle the girl in the house where she was babysitting –



< the girl sits crying – you see the mask for the first time and you're a sobbing child again – you hear the breathing, now loud, magnified, inhuman and grotesque – the sound of life in the shadow of death – you fire six shots >

What Sam saw brought him back to that first moment in the Myers House when he felt the horror fill his heart and mind. A black silhouette, a white face without expression, and black empty eyes – everything he had sensed on the boy was now here, made real and literal, made flesh and blood –



He fired the bullets without hesitation. One by one they hit their target in the chest and he fell back, over a balcony and onto a lawn. He laid there, motionless, white mask looking up into the night sky.

“It was the Bogeyman,” mumbled Laurie through shock, shivers and tears.

“As a matter of fact, it was.” His reply was quick, cold and efficient. It was as accurate a name as any.



When Sam walked to the balcony, he realized two things. If Michael Myers corpse lay there on the lawn, then everything would be over and he had overestimated his opponent and misread the path of his own life. If he was not there – then even his worse thoughts did not come close to the actuality of the night. He peered over the edge, into the abyss, and before his eyes spoke to him, he knew that his findings – or lack thereof – would be inevitable. There was no surprise.

Myers had gone.



For Laurie – and Sam – the night was far from over. He came for her again in the hospital where she was supposed to be recovering. Sam fired more bullets, as did Laurie. Still he advanced, a silent, masked, unstoppable -

< - bogeyman - >

“It’s time, Michael.” Sam meant the words. Cornered, wounded and with nowhere to run, Sam knew there was only one possible ending. A room full of gas, a lighter to ignite it and Sam committed an act of self-sacrifice. The explosion was to destroy them both, something that, as the blood poured from Sam’s slashed stomach, felt appropriately pre-ordained. He *had* to die. At least the girl would survive –



< the flames consume you – skin burns and blisters – he’s still walking – close your eyes – close your eyes and make him go away >

In the morning, the smoke around Haddonfield Memorial Hospital cleared as October reluctantly gave way to November. The few survivors were rounded-up and their shocked eyes watched as white sheets covered the ravaged bodies of those who were alive the night before.

Laurie survived. She sat in silence in an ambulance as she was taken away.

Sam survived. He sat in silence in an ambulance as he was taken away.

Myers survived. He too sat in silence – waiting for another night, another Halloween, another massacre.

Once more, Sam looked at his reflection. It was changed now – the scars that had been inside him now decorated much of his body, the burns destroying half of his face. He traced the shape of his scorched skin, vile contours reminding him of his futility and his reawakened sense of failure. Not the loss of the children that had died, or any of the casualties who were now being lowered into the cold soil. No - none of these.

< - Michael - >

Michael Myers had gone, and Sam was now all alone in the universe; a life without meaning and devoid of any decent reason to continue. For the first time since 1957, he recognized the notion of loss, a sense of being irrevocably incomplete. The tears again began to fall.

< what will I do without you? >



THREE



Langdon, Illinois.

“Sam, you’re not well.” Marion Whittington was more than concerned. Sam was looking weak, thin. His frame struggled as it rested upon his cane.

“Quite right. *I’m old*. I’m old and you worry too much.” Sam lowered himself – slowly – into his favorite chair, the one that he kept permanently in front of his favorite desk. “I would also think that all things considered, I am doing rather remarkably well.”

The year was 1995, and by either fault or design, Sam was still very much alive. He was undoubtedly frail and his body should have given up a long time ago, but his spirit had learnt to walk even with the weight of its history slicing through his weary shoulders.

“I’d believe you if I hadn’t heard the same thing from a hundred other men, all stronger than you,” she replied with a certain indignation. Marion, she too a former psychiatric nurse who had seen first-hand what Michael Myers could do on more than one occasion, cared deeply for Sam – she had taken a lesser role at the hospital, affording her the time to take care of him, the crazy old lunatic who saw ghosts around every corner.

“Well, there’s no reason why I cannot be as accurate with my self-diagnosis as they were.”

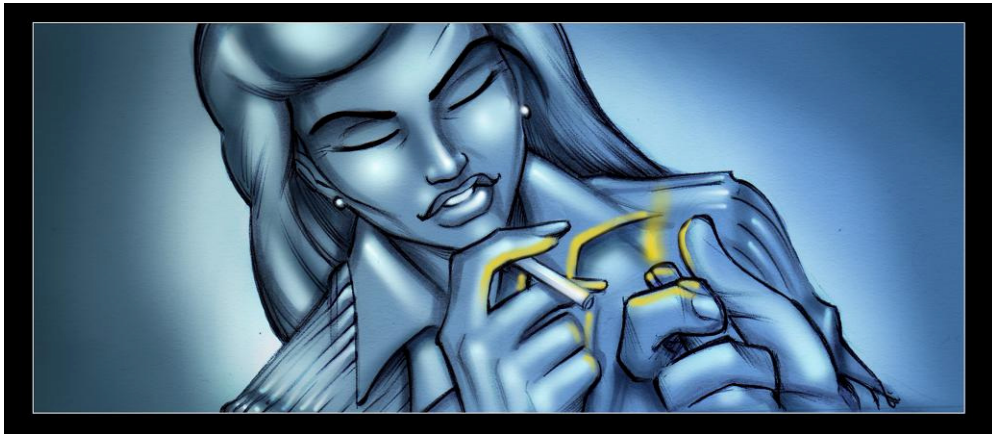
“Sam, they’re all dead.”

“Ah. Very well. That does change things and also gives you the victory in this little exchange.” He smiled, took a deep breath and contemplated a glass of whisky briefly, before deciding against it. She, in her late forties now, knelt down beside him, using the arm of his chair to rest her head.

“I’m not interested in being the victor,” she smiled, “I’m interested in your health, your well-being and your future.”

“Future?” he laughed, almost aghast at such a thought.

“Yes, your future” she replied, bluntly and with her brow somewhat furrowed. “It helps that when I go to work, or when I go to see a friend, that I can do so without wondering if you have fallen off your chair or gone on another dangerous escapade searching for you-know-who.” She reached into her pocket and pulled out a packet of Marlboros. Sam watched her with affection that fell somewhere between paternal care and that same sort of distanced affection one would afford a person who had become a dear friend through history, rather than compatibility or any sort of shared ground. He grabbed his lighter from the desk and the end of her cigarette greedily swallowed the flame.



“He’s moving again.” From a cupboard in the desk that was normally kept locked and secure, Sam began to pull out a map of the surrounding area. “I have a feeling that he’s coming back here.”

Marion sighed and looked at the map, and then to a notice board atop the desk, which was adorned with press cuttings and sketches of Michael Myers. The map told her nothing, other than that even now, after all this time, Sam would not give up.

He looked back at her, dismayed at the dismissal he clearly saw in the smoke she inhaled. He stared directly at the cigarette and then into her eyes,

drawing attention to her addiction to offset the subtle scorn she was projecting towards his.

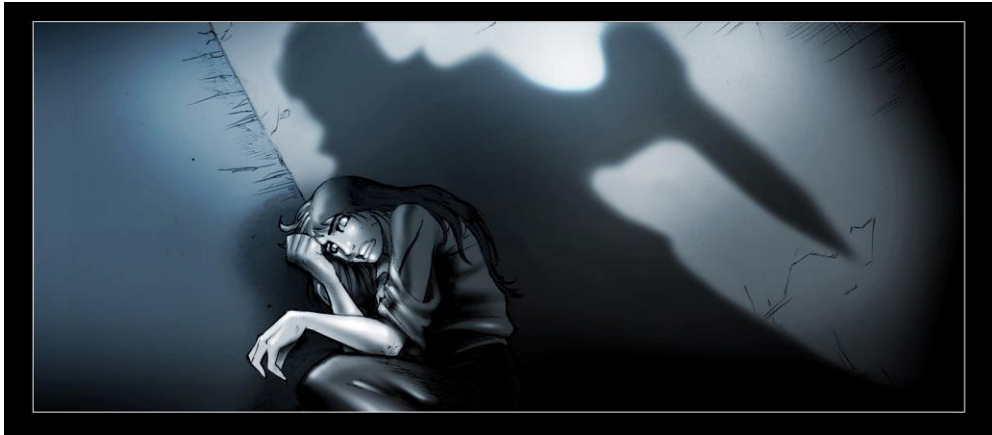
She remembered how quiet he was after that night in '78. How it was over a month before he really began to make any coherent sense and how subsequently, the hunt for his nemesis took over his entire being.

He had spent a lot of time with the girl, Laurie Strode, after that night, and he was instrumental in her decision to enter a witness protection scheme of their own doing – a simple lie to the rest of the world. At first, she was reluctant; Myers was dead – she had to believe that – and she couldn't spend her life in fear, or running. She had to face up to the bogeyman, should he one day rise.

And rise he did.



Every night, he would appear - in every dark corner of every room, in every shadow that rushed past in night time streets, behind her eyelids whenever she would close them.



“You know what his memory does to you – what it does to me,” Sam pleaded to Laurie, “what’s it going to be like when he *really* comes back? Look at what happened to your friends – at least you are alive, and as long as you remain that way, well, *we’ve won.*”

That night they both cried. What sort of victory insisted that she give up everything and everyone? She was only just beginning to rebuild her existence, and now this man wanted her to throw it all away. A man who everyone thought was just as crazy as the patients he once treated - a man who had also saved her life twice.

And so, between them, they forged a new identity. Laurie Strode would cease to exist, leaving everything behind in the twisted metal of a fatal car crash. In

her place, would be 'Keri Tate'. She would have a new name, a new life and even a new history - a fictional one unfortunately, but an elaborate one, one which gave her the joy of giving birth to a son, John.

So, for a final time, Laurie Strode said goodbye, to the world and to herself. And as for Sam, he kept a small folder of information on 'Keri Tate'. It did not say who she once was, and it fitted discretely into a filing cabinet with over forty other named folders of people and enquiries. Perhaps, one day, he would need to talk to her again - after all, his own attempt at starting a new life had only made his demon stronger.



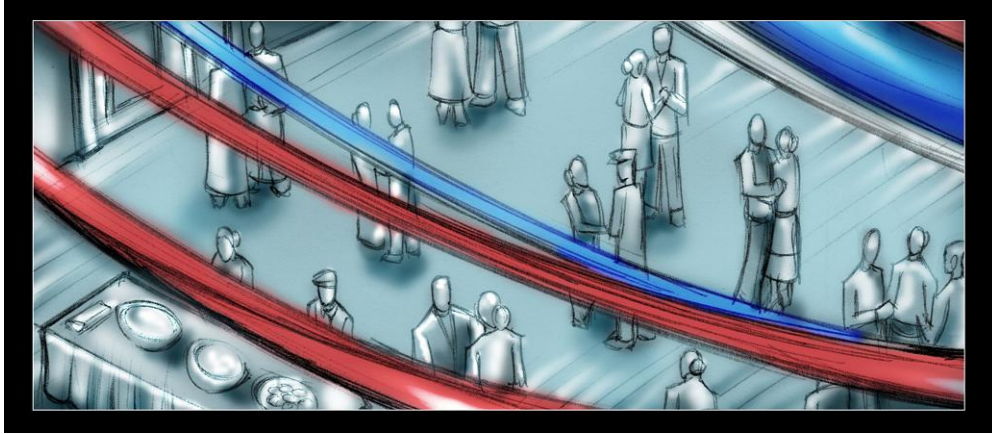
Elizabeth searched through her boxes of memories until she found the oldest photographs of Sam that she had. She smiled at how smart, dignified and proud he had looked in his regiment uniform, and it brought back the memory of their first meeting.



The charming little man who rarely smoked but always carried a lighter - something he initially carried out of annoyance but then turned into many a conversation starter; the wry intellectual with his own niche humor of deadpan comments and raised eyebrows; the impish devil who was always several steps ahead in every exchange; the humble man who the world betrayed.

This was 1942 and the world was at war. She, barely twenty, worked in the local bomb assembly factory. After each shift, she would bang her nails against the walls creating sparks from the fragments of gunpowder that remained there - or so she told everyone.

She was on a date with a handsome man, but a handsome man with very little to offer other than a handsome face. The date was a dance in a hall in the middle of Whitechapel, a departure evening for many. Men and women danced under paper streams the colors of the British flag until the night ended with a drunken group rendition of "We'll Meet Again".



< - we'll meet again - >
< - don't know where, don't know when - >
< - but I know we'll meet again some sunny day - >

Her date began to bore her, and that was when her attention drifted. In a far corner, there was activity – laughter that contrasted wonderfully with the mundane aura of the stoic man who had no interest in Elizabeth other than as an arm ornament and perhaps as a final sexual conquest before he left to fight the mystic others that were the Axis Powers.

Somewhere, in the center of this laughter, was the funny little man; the funny little man lighting everybody's cigarettes.

She pulled herself free of the bore and made her way forwards, an unlit cigarette poised in her mouth.

“When the Luftwaffe's greatest weapon is a plane that screams very loud, I doubt there's much to worry about other than an indecent groping,” quipped the little man to his small but admiring audience, finishing an anecdote that may or may not have been true with typically dry delivery. Elizabeth parked herself at the side of the conversation and smiled radiantly at him, attempting to look dignified with a stick of cold tobacco hanging from her lips. He smiled in return, aware of her game. Instead of assisting her, he placed the lighter directly into his pocket, leaving her stranded.

And that was Sam.

Somehow, despite her gloriously fumbled entrance, they became friends. Good, loving friends, but despite her wishes never any more than that. Sam would find his way initially with another woman, and this would end in tragedy when 1957 came.

Her thoughts regained focus and came back to the present. She packed the photographs into her handbag and looked at herself in the mirror. She was seventy-three now, and it was time to close all of the stories that continued in her life before the final curtain. Sam's time was running out, and she wanted to say something – anything – to him. She had no idea what, but maybe she could at least put a *real* smile on his face. Not a weary one, but one full of excitement, the one he so often shared in their youth. If things were as fated as Sam believed they were, why could this not be her fate and destiny – to bring his life and her own to a full circle?

“Stupid.” The one word came from her lips as she thought about what she was doing. Sam had avoided all contact with everyone from his past and going to see him was a great risk. And who was she doing this for? He, who quite possibly would not care, or more terrifyingly would be angry at her unannounced return to his life? Or was it for herself – she who had never told him her feelings and yet, almost forty years later could not forgive herself?

Did life – acknowledged in a moment of humorous definition as the all-encompassing flow of her existence – really allow for such petty things as endings? Could reaching backwards into the past help to light the future for either of them? Could anything be made right? What was ‘right’ anyway? For every question she poised to her accumulated wisdom, she found no answer, other than a dumbfounded confusion summarized tragically in that one word: “Stupid.”

Her bags were ready, and she set off for the airport. The date was January 31st.



January 27th.

Sam sat at his desk and looked again at his map. Why was Myers moving again? Was it even Myers? How could he ascertain anything now? The chair creaked as he rested back.

“What are you doing, Michael?” Each marker on the map related to an event that could be attributed to Myers. His investigations would be limited due to his mobility issues, and also by the contempt in which he was held by just about every figure of authority that he encountered. To them, he was the boy who cried wolf, proclaiming Myers as being responsible for practically every unruly event in the whole of Illinois.

Lately, Myers had been absent.

Officially, he was dead, but Sam knew better. Over the years, he came close to proving his case many times. Events were not always documented by the

authorities, sometimes even deliberately hidden, but that never prevented him or imposed any doubt upon his certainty.

< - the bodies we saw in the snow - >

Whenever Myers would appear, Sam would be there, but his arrival was always a little too late and often dictated by a degree of conjecture. The solid, tangible proof that his devil was still running free eluded him, despite their encounters.

He looked again at the map - the same map Michael had tricked him with before. From another angle, it looked different. He felt a rush of guilty excitement inside him as events started to fall into place. He looked at the dates by all of these horrible moments. Some of which were hideous -

< - forgive me for failing them all - >

- Others were not, and consisted of minor events, like missing animals, robberies and so on. All of them without apparent motive, and seeming like fragments of a twisted joke. That was the killer's way - an intention to haunt and terrify, rather than to simply kill.

< - the beauty queen you beheaded - >

A sharp stabbing pain suddenly tore through Sam's chest, followed by a sudden shortage of breath. He fell back into his chair and the pain began to subside. Again, the map held all of the clues. There was nothing random, but a pattern of focus, a constellation of intent.

< - the photographer - his pictures were the doors - >



"You're not moving at all. You never were. *You're watching me.*" Sam smiled, exhilaration running through him as things started to make sense.

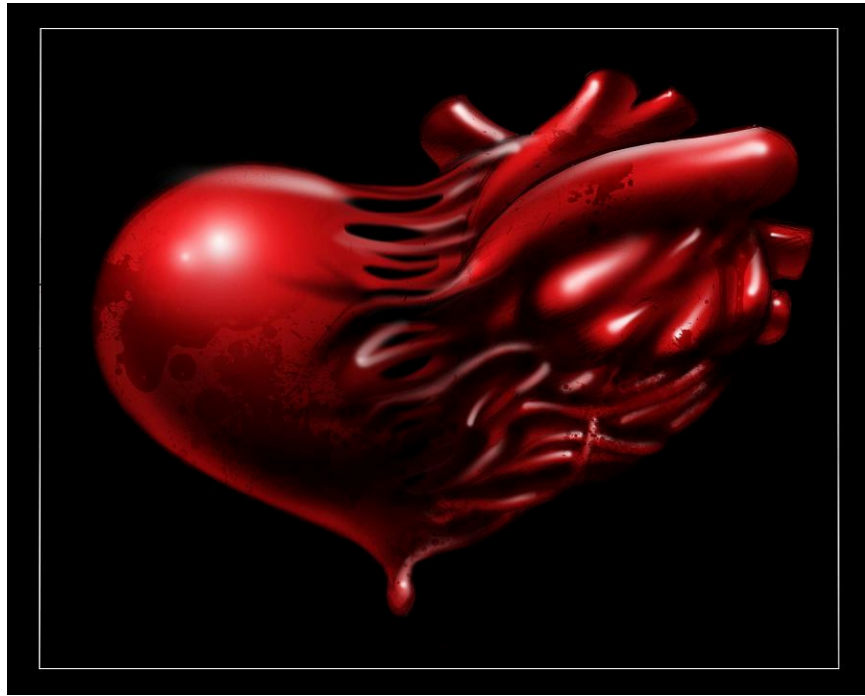
Then the pain shot through him again. He couldn't ignore it this time, nor could he make it vanish, and just as Myers had remained out of his grasp, so did the air his lungs needed.

He felt the left side of his body get very cold very quickly, and suddenly crashed down to the hardwood floor as his heartbeat increased rapidly without rhythm – *louder, a sound in his head – bang, bang, BANG!*

And then it stopped.



FOUR



Elizabeth had not been to America for many years, and on her previous visits she certainly hadn't visited anywhere quite like Langdon. All she knew of the country manifested itself in clichéd images of skyscrapers, suntans and Elvis. She didn't know the small-town ways of Haddonfield, Russellville or Pontiac, and as she was driven through the suburbs on the chilly morning of February 1st, she felt a warmth and homeliness that had been oddly absent from her life for many years.

She pressed her hands against the cold glass and watched in wonder as the tiny worlds of quiet families fluttered by. Sometimes simple things could be beautiful, she reminded herself. Perhaps her confusion over exactly what it was she wanted to say would be excused by this principle of simplicity. Maybe her being there would be enough.

It was the news of Sam's heart attack that had made the decision for her to finally travel to him. Her generation – what was left of it – was mournfully fading away. As she approached his home, sat in the back of a cab, she thought back to that goodbye – the image of Sam, having just lost so much, being taken away to the same soil she was now above. The warmth inside began to fade, her thoughts again haunted by the transition she had seen.

A few months before Sam had left, he was happy. Occasionally, he talked quietly about the atrocities he had seen – and experienced – in a concentration camp as a prisoner of war; these digressions, although undoubtedly painful, were minor in that they rarely transgressed his upbeat surface.

She remembered the girl from the circus, the bodies in Canterbury, the demons of history, the colony and the liars. So terrifying at the time but now reconciled only as shared adventures – it made the suffering of others less real and more palatable. She remembered how Sam had been consulted by the London Police Force in their hunt for a baby killer. She remembered his wild and grinning enthusiasm with each breakthrough he made within the case, and the black humor that rolled forth with each macabre find. Finally, reluctantly, she remembered what had happened to – *no, that was too atrocious to relive* –

Did running to this far side of the world really help Sam? Was it possible to even begin running from something so horrific?

No. Perhaps he didn't run. Perhaps he understood what had happened on a much more profound and dangerous level. Perhaps he came to this corner of the world to embrace the darkness. Perhaps in Michael Myers, he had found the embodiment of that which he had seen in the death camps, on the streets of London and in the back of his own mind? If that was so, then all that was missing for Sam to be at peace was the one final inevitable thing that every life worked towards: Death.

Stop. She held her thoughts there as the cab reached its destination. She got out and stood in the tree-lined street of identical white wooden houses. As her transport drove away, she stared forward at the home of Sam Loomis.

The front door opened, and an old-ish man in casual attire appeared – Sam? No, this was not Sam, although for a moment he seemed familiar. Behind him, a woman, a nurse with a cigarette in her mouth – Marion.



Elizabeth recognized her from the press cuttings, and it occurred to her that she felt like she had wandered into a movie set. It didn't feel real, seeing in person a face she had only heard of, one who had almost assumed the role that she once had all those years ago. She stepped back, behind a tree, and tried to listen to the conversation. How ludicrous, she thought, a seventy-three-year-old woman playing the spy.

“Thank you for coming, Mr. Brackett. I mean that.”

“It’s fine Marion, it’s fine. Send him... send him my best wishes.”

“I will. I’m sorry I can’t take you to see him, but you know the cantankerous old fool.”

“I do. He’s a stubborn bastard. Stubborn and crazy.”

“Don’t take it to heart. He won’t let anyone see him. Especially friends and family. If he has any family left that care about him I guess – even David won’t be –”

They said more – a lot more – but Elizabeth didn’t hear any of it. She didn’t have a chance to. There was a sound, a motion – *somebody or something was stood directly behind her* –

She felt a dull pound – instant and blinding – rush through her skull. She stumbled backwards and reached to her face, feeling the blood trickle down through her hair. She tried to scream, but it didn’t come as the huge wound that had just been inflicted on her began to bleed more and everything turned black.



I’m in a room. Simple, white and sanitized. A boy sits in a chair, he gazes forward. I try to talk to him, but he doesn’t answer. He just stares through me, as if I’m beneath his notice. The walls fall away.



Electricity surges through my skull and my body spasms uncontrollably. Memories fall into my hands like snowflakes and disappear just as suddenly – so much is forgotten. For a final time I see my parents as raging horses charge into view.

We're somewhere else. So many years ago. I'm the boy now. I'm trapped here, and I can't wake up. I look into another of many mirrors and see that same cold, murderous gaze, a gaze full of immense power. Those black, cavernous sockets –

– I look into those eyes. I see those who I have loved. They're lying in their own blood. It's my fault. It has to be. This wouldn't happen for any other reason. They scream – they scream because I'm unable to save them – they fear I'll replace them –

I promise them I won't – forever is forever. But then I step outside of myself and I'm an old man now. Bombs fall from above. I'm in the middle of a thousand other men, heads shaven, bodies beaten. I smell bodies burning, the meat and the fat of flesh roasting in hell.



The boy again. He still sits there. Behind him lie the bodies of thousands, ready for the fire. Young and naked they lie, mutilated but laid out in a way that is almost magical. The smoke rises, blossoms, and I see a huge shape. A black body, a white face, a blade to destroy us all.

I see Death. I see Michael.

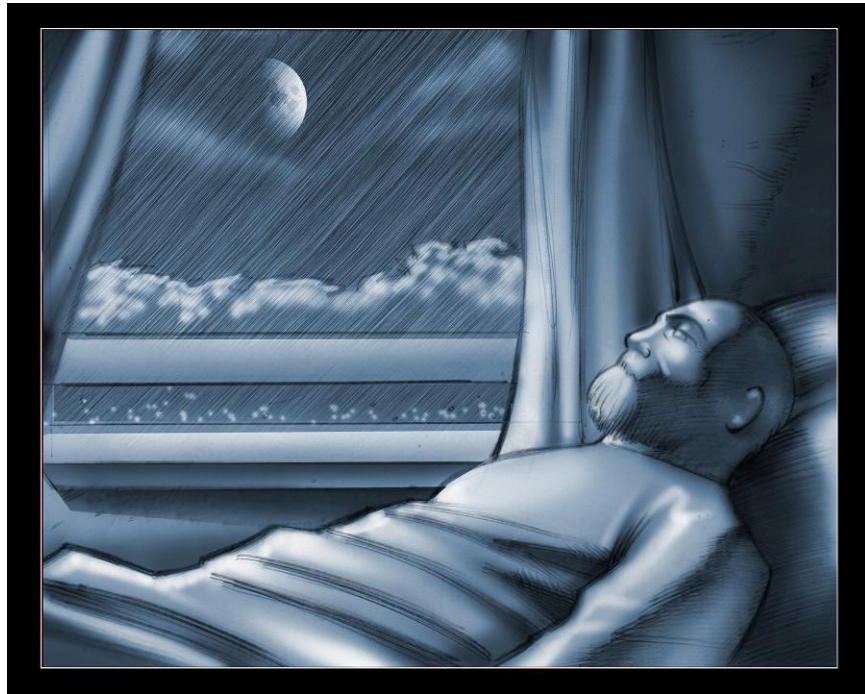
He still does not acknowledge me. I'm on my knees begging and he moves through me like I am not there. He moves towards –

Laurie. Keri. She's here. I rush to save her, pushing her from his path and that's when he changes, that's when he sees me –

< - oh god, what have I done - >



FIVE



Sam awoke in his hospital room covered in sweat and surrounded by absolute darkness. He began to breathe, slowly, counting each breath and the interval between them, listening to how each inhalation was of the same rhythm as his heartbeat. He was alive, this much he was sure of.

He had been happy that the hospital had granted all of his requests; a private room, no visitors, a window and a few possessions: a notebook, some pens and his lighter. The lighter, of course, had not worked since 1978 – and this gave it a certain ominous charm. Indeed, on that fateful Halloween night, it should have been instrumental in the destruction of an entire wing of Haddonfield Memorial Hospital in that failed attempt to destroy himself and Myers. Instead, he had to make do with a cheap disposable equivalent.

The original had been in his possession since 1939, and would not be leaving him without a struggle. It had been in his possession when his plane had crash-landed over Germany, it was this lighter's flame that first revealed the bodies of his angels and it was this lighter that decided to stop working when Myers escaped from incarceration.

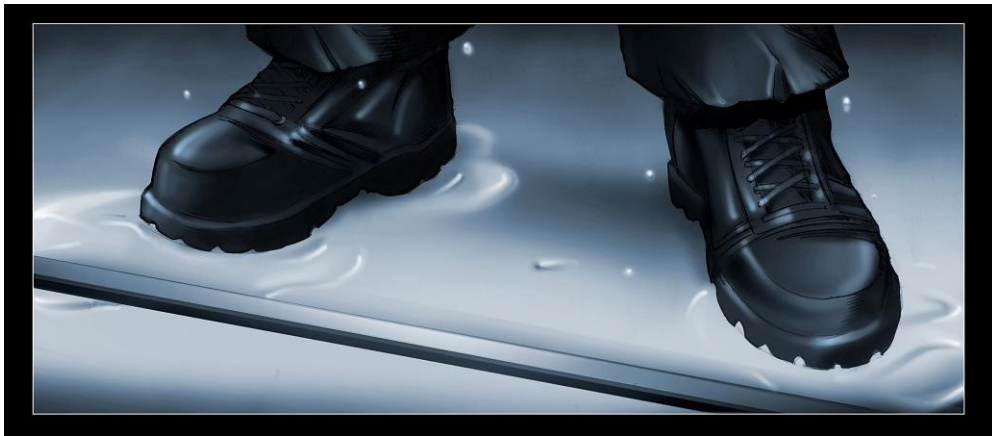
He was recovering well. 'No shocks or stress' was the instruction he had remembered from the doctors the previous morning. The room was now black and outside cold rain poured down from the night, lashing against the glass. His sight not yet functional and still half-asleep, he pushed himself upwards, turning to the window.

He looked outside at the blurry, soaking landscape, seeing how the well-organized and immaculate hospital gardens surrendered to the darkest infinity of the night. His vision started to clear, but his thoughts, however, he could not gather coherently in any great magnitude. He rushed through his childhood, running through the mythical London fog that existed more in nostalgia than reality, and he thought of his current predicament. More importantly, he thought of everything in-between. He thought about his entire life, just as if –

Then it started. The nausea – the swamping feeling that began in the Myers House thirty-two years ago. The fear, the claustrophobia, the sense of a shadow standing behind him – *right over his shoulder*. Outside, a sudden glow flickered from the reflection of a light – perhaps of a car passing somewhere, or, if one believes in such things, a timely flash of lightning in the sky. As he expected, the shadow was again stood behind him.

< - bogeyman - >

“Hello Michael.” He spoke quietly, clearly, refusing to take his eyes away from the window as his thinking became less clouded. “I was wondering when you would come.” He paused for a moment, before turning.



Stood at the far side of the room, was the form of Michael Myers. His coveralls were washed down with the rain and his boots were drenched. The mask, however, regained its hideous ability to penetrate. The white visage peered forth at Sam for what seemed like an eternity. There was no movement, not even a tilt of the head. The sound, however, was unmistakable – the slow, aggressive breathing, crudely amplified by the rubber mask.

There was no bravado in Sam’s voice as he spoke, nor was there any fear, which is not to say he wasn’t scared. He *was* scared – terrified to the core of his being – but this fear was tempered somehow by acceptance. As sure as night followed day, which it had done today in the gardens outside, death would one day come for him.

“I remember when it used to be impossible to get your attention. It seems that of late, I am the center of it. What changed, Michael, what changed?”

Myers did not move. Sam felt the weight of those black holes again and he bowed his head slightly, a glum smile emerging.



“I’m old now, Michael. The man you first met, the man who spent every day with you, well, in a room not unlike this one, actually...” Sam looked around the room for a moment, staring at the shapes of the walls with a degree of recognition, “He’s not really around anymore. The strength has left him it seems.” His speech was fragmented but considered – each simple statement as pure to the thought that spawned it as it could possibly be.

No response.

“We spent a long time together, didn’t we? And look at us now. You’re wandering around looking for something, and so am I. I wish I had the ability to step outside myself, so I could look at myself like everybody looks at me. I’d be able to see how ludicrous my obsession was, how pointless my pursuit. Even if I had caught up with you, I know it wouldn’t have changed anything.”

“Isn’t that the same for you – do you ever wonder what the point is anymore? Perhaps it is too late now. It certainly is for me. I wonder why you are here. Is it some final Halloween joke of yours? If it is, you’re several months early. Perhaps if you’d told me you were visiting I’d have timed my heart attack better.”

Still nothing. Sam’s frustration and fear grew as one. Pointless questions began to flow easily – anything to fill the void. “Are you here to kill me Michael? To finish things off? Why didn’t you do it earlier? Why wait till now?”

And then a movement. Myers raised his right hand slightly. In it he held a large butcher’s knife which suddenly gleamed as another random flicker of light passed outside. Sam stared at the blade, seeing not only the gleam, but the blood that painted its steel.

“Oh-no. Michael – ” Sam pushed himself forwards. “Not again.” He shook his head and felt tears sadness up in his eyes. “What have you done?”



Another movement, as Myers threw a small plastic bag onto the bed beside Sam. Sam shook his head. “Please, Michael – you can kill me, you can end everything tonight.” Sam pleaded to the monster who just stood there. Sam had no doubt that underneath the silent exterior, Myers was laughing and mocking, looking at him in the way he had just described – ‘like everybody else looks at me’. He tried hard to put the sound of determination into his wavering voice: “I’m not playing this game.”

< - keep smiling through - >
< - just like you always do - >
< - till the blue skies drive the dark clouds far away - >

But he had no choice. Myers was there for a reason, and until he knew that reason, he had to play along. He began to peel back the plastic and recognized the smell of fresh blood instantly. Something was inside the bag, something still warm and wet. Eyes wide with hate and anger, he looked back at Myers and shouted – “*You monster!*” He turned the bag upside down, spilling out the contents.

< - and will you please say hello - >
< - to the folks that I know - >
< - tell them that I won’t be long - >

A severed hand landed on the bed and fell to the floor. Sam gasped, his heartbeat increasing faster than his health would allow. It was a small hand, a frail one, and the amount of blood still dripping from it showed how fresh the wound was. But that was not all that was in there. Photographs, smeared with blood from the gaping wrist, fell slowly from the bag, one of them still stuck to the side of it. Sam picked one up, and was shocked to see -

< - *and they'll be happy to know* - >
< - *that as you saw me go* - >
< - *I was singing this song* - >

- Himself. Younger, healthier – another man entirely. A funny little man in uniform, a photograph that he had not seen in a lifetime, a history his mind had left behind. A photograph that could only have been taken by –

< - *we'll meet again* - >
< - *don't know where, don't know when* - >
< - *but I know we'll meet again some sunny day* - >

- *Elizabeth Worthington*. Myers stepped aside, and Sam's face froze in an expression of shock and revulsion. She was there - with them now. She had been in there as long as Myers had, tied to a chair and gagged, bruises lining her face, and, worst of all, bearing a dripping red wound where her hand once was.



SIX



Elizabeth's eyes scream out to Sam, and from beneath the gag, he hears a muffled cough and splutter. It sounds like she has blood in her throat. Nothing she has experienced could have prepared her for this moment – *nothing at all* –

“She means absolutely nothing to you, Michael, absolutely nothing!” Sam struggles to get to his feet as he feels his heart pounding harder and harder in his chest. It feels like it will explode.

So many questions again. Elizabeth – she hadn't been a part of this life at all – did death need to reach that far back into his past? Is everything a sick joke destined for this moment? Why hasn't he just killed her?

“Please, I beg you. Do whatever you want to me, Michael – anything at all. *Just let her go and leave her alone, leave everybody alone and go back to hell!*” His voice rises – he can't even speak any more now, he's shouting, ranting, he's losing control and giving way to madness –

< - just like before - >

Myers moves towards Elizabeth with the blade and Sam uses everything he has to push himself to his feet. With a single shove, Myers knocks the old man down to the floor and he feels the pain of the impact through his whole body – his heart pounds harder – *BANG, BANG, BANG* –

“NO!!!” Myers moves in on Elizabeth as Sam screams. He slices the blade *slowly* across her cheek – the bruised white flesh opens up to a stream of red liquid, muscle tissue and cheekbone – her eyes rotate wildly and she jerks in the chair unable to do anything but experience the tearing of her flesh –

All the time, Myers looks straight at Sam, and Sam stares back at him, powerless yet again. Sam can't hold the stare, and he looks to the horror that even he cannot comprehend as it spins in Elizabeth's eyes –

Myers is infuriated – he's demanding Sam's whole attention, and he sees the two old friends make eye contact. He grabs Elizabeth's hair and pulls her back, breaking the link between her and Sam, before pushing the tip of the blade against her lower eyelid. Suddenly, he pushes it in, turns it and pulls it out – gouging and severing the soft eyeball and ripping away her tear duct.



“MICHAEL!!!” Sam screams – please god, let somebody hear him – let somebody who works in the hospital come to help –

Myers releases her hair, and Elizabeth's face flops forward again towards Sam. Blood pours forth from her socket.

Nobody comes. Nobody is going to help, and everything is useless – *NO* – there is something. Myers wants the attention. He wants something from Sam. Sam grasps this, and he sees Elizabeth sobbing from her one remaining eye, and he prays that she will pass out –

“Why, Michael, why? You've heard me ask you that question so many times, but you always leave it for me to answer. You leave me alone in the darkness, desperately trying to understand you -”

Myers lowers the blade from Elizabeth. Sam sees this and tries as hard as he can to ignore the juggernaut of agony racing through his chest.

< - think, think, think – what does he want – does he want Laurie? No – he thinks Laurie is dead – Laurie is dead, and he's like I am, he's lost, he doesn't know

what to do, he doesn't know how to relive that feeling – he wants to kill Judith again, but he can't because Laurie is - >

“Gone. That’s what it is, Michael, isn’t it? Your sister has gone.”

Sam pushes himself to his feet, reaching for his bed to collapse on it. “You don’t know what to do anymore, do you? All those tricks on the children you play, what use are they when you can never do the one thing you dream of. The thing you spent fifteen years planning was torn from you in an accident, wasn’t it?”

< - keep talking – keep talking – whenever it’s silent you can hear him, you can see him – the breathing – the staring – you can’t give up – ignore the pain – ignore the fear, because there’s nothing left to be scared of anymore - >

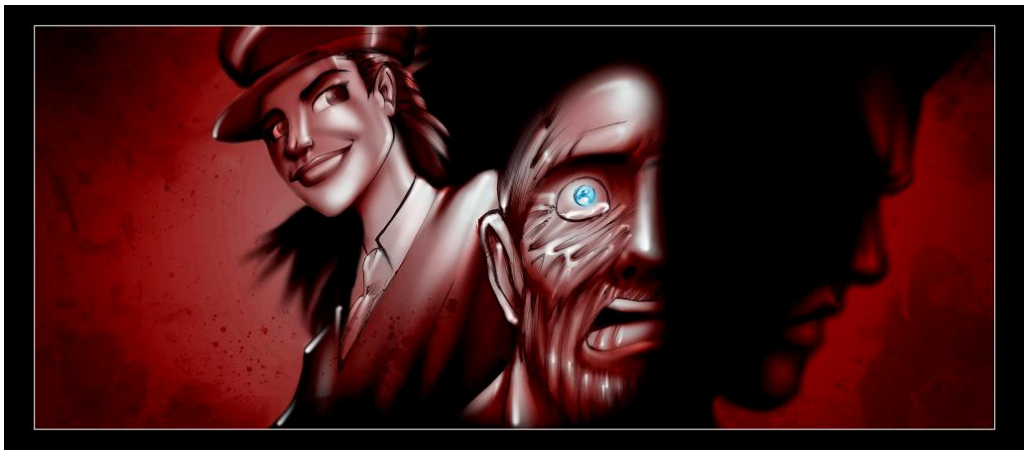
Sam takes deep breaths. He wants to talk, but he can’t for a moment, he needs the oxygen more. And then -

“When I was studying, Michael, learning about the evil things that men do, I began to understand. The artistry intertwined the madness of it all. The desire for everybody to hurt, for everybody to submit to you – to be feared – to be revered – to be the darkest angel, the blackest god.”

< - talk about anything - >

Sam’s breathing slowly regulates, and he begins to talk in a calmer, more considered voice. Elizabeth’s head slumps; perhaps she is unconscious, perhaps she is dead – either option is better than her suffering any more.

“I lived in an area, for a while, in London, called Whitechapel. That’s where these pictures were taken, and that’s where I met Elizabeth here.” He motions towards the woman, as Myers briefly glances at his blade again to remind Sam of what he can do.



“Whitechapel had a famous serial killer – like you in fact. He was called Jack The Ripper. His real name was always a mystery, perhaps in the way that your true face is now. Perhaps that anonymity is what gave him his power – to be a name, a concept and not a human being.” He smiles gently. “A bogeyman.”

“He killed four women initially, but then he killed another. His first victims he’d killed in the street, in a hurry. Perhaps he had done this out of enjoyment, just as you did when you killed those girls – Annie and Lynda?”

Myers moves away from Elizabeth. He’s listening.

“His final victim, however, was different. He didn’t kill her in the street, but in her home. It wasn’t rushed – he spent a long time with her, dismembering and mutilating her body. A horrible mess he made.”

Sam moves closer to Myers. Sam’s face is animated, his eyes widening with each word, each syllable somehow spoken gently. “And after that, he disappeared. He left the world alone, because he had achieved something that couldn’t be bettered, that couldn’t be repeated. He vanished into the night, Michael, and he didn’t kill or hurt anybody again.”

Myers tilts his head, slowly. The white mask, angled, still watches relentlessly, and then he tilts his head back again.

“And you, you’re just the same, Michael. You just don’t realize it. Your sister, Judith, your very first kill – that was it for you, wasn’t it? That was the greatest thrill you ever had. A trick or treat on your family and especially on your poor sister. Blood spilt for whatever inhuman force it is that drives you. And you know something else Michael? You can’t repeat it.”

Myers’ knuckles clench on the knife handle tightly, his bones wanting to burst through the skin as if something inside of him wants to cut Sam down suddenly and violently.

“The only chance you ever had to feel that way again has gone. Laurie Strode is dead, Michael, killed in a car crash, and without your victim, *what are you?*”

Myers raises the blade to strike Elizabeth, and again Sam starts to shout and scream, his eyes filled with glee and, unexpectedly, with a vicious smile creeping from the corners of his mouth –



“Get it over with, Michael. Kill the woman! Kill me! You can keep killing all you want, Michael, but you’ll never get what you want, you’ll never get the girl because she was taken from you by a car! A stupid car – that’s all it took to rob you of everything, Michael, *everything!*”

He loses his breath again and he begins to cough into his lap, dizzy with the sickly rush of adrenalin. There’s the sound of the door and then Sam looks up once more.

Myers has gone.



Sam moved from the bed towards where Elizabeth was still tied. He understood now that this was the end, and he could feel his body beginning to slow down. He could not bring himself to hold his smile now that Myers had left. Instead, it was just he and Elizabeth and the truth of that situation was hideous. As he had done so many times before, Sam found himself crying.

“I’m so, so sorry,” he quietly mumbled, biting his lip as the static sensation in his nerves began to jab more severely – electrified anaesthetizing needles stealing the control of his body away from him. He fell to the floor awkwardly, before propping himself up against a wall directly behind the chair. He reached forward to untie her.

And that’s when he noticed something else.

The floor below him was drenched with Elizabeth’s blood. Not from her face, nor from her wrist, but from her back. The blouse she wore was soaked red completely. He reached up to her neck – her pulse was still there, still going strong, despite everything that had been done to her.

He continued to release her, and as the last bond was undone, she too fell from where she was sat to the floor beside Sam. Face down in an almost fetal posture she lay, and Sam touched the blouse on her raised back. It was warm.



Slowly, he peeled up the blouse. On her back, were multiple cuts – deep lacerations that sliced through the skin. At first they seemed random, barely discernible from one another in the mass of dark red wounds. As he looked closer, however, patterns began to emerge – *letters*.

First, he made out an “R” – a hard “R” cut only in straight, jagged lines.

Then, he made out an “A”.

Sam smiled a melancholy smile. There wasn't anything else to do but that. The smile progressed into a lone note of quiet and despairing laughter. For the first time in over thirty years, Sam felt a sense of release – after all, his part had been played, and he truly could not affect how the future was going to be.

Elizabeth, once a dear friend, had become another discarded pawn – a messenger in a way that she could never have imagined.

< - there's a design to fate - >

As always, Myers had waited. Just as he had waited fifteen years between killing Judith and attacking Laurie, so it was that he was waiting now. Sam didn't know when he would strike, but he knew that it was going to happen.

He wiped as much of the blood off Elizabeth's back as possible, and looked at all the letters in order.

“K – E – R – I T – A – T – E”

“Michael, Michael – you clever boy -”

Sam began to feel senseless exhilaration rushing through him as the weight of his burden suddenly diminished.



All along Myers had known. That was his reason for visiting Sam, his old enemy, and in some ways, his old friend; a final game of trick or treat. His only task now was to find Keri Tate, and that would not be difficult. It would be a task he would undertake when it suited him, when it made sense in the lurid fantasies that fueled the dark mists and caused the black petals to blossom.

Inside, Sam felt his broken heartbeat – no longer a heavy bang, but a gentle murmur. A warm glow passed through him, soothing the nerves that had ached for so many years. The tears trickled down his face, across the tragic glee in his cheeks and his eyes slowly closed. Sam was finally at rest.

*< - holding hands we run together through time and streets of memory alone
- we look upwards to see the sky light up - we laugh as the wind blows cool in our
faces - I fall through the air - I turn to light - angelic bodies crash into the ground -
a chance of a family - a frame now shattered - something will forever be with me - >*



< - you'll never be alone again - >



SEVEN



Sam Loomis was pronounced dead on the morning of February 2nd, 1995. Outside, the rain had stopped, and there was a pure mist. When the mist faded, it was replaced by a perfect crystal blue sky.

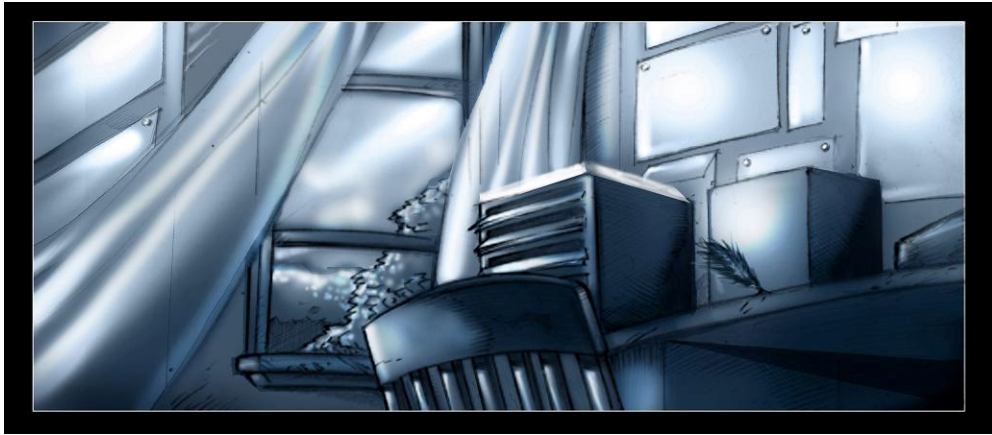
His cause of death was noted as coronary failure, and there were no suspicious circumstances. He had been found in his bed, and the nurse that discovered him had initially assumed that he was merely sleeping. His room was clean and immaculate, with a rather strong smell of disinfectant. The only oddity noted was the absence of one object – his lighter.

In England, Elizabeth Worthington's family reported her as missing. They did not even know she had left for the United States. After several months of investigation, they managed to trace her journey to Langdon, but found no further information. She remains on the list of missing persons in two countries.



October, 1998.

Marion was used to life without Sam around now. At first, she was devastated, but soon enough, she got used to the empty house and the eeriness of the study where Sam had spent the final two years of his life. She never removed anything from it, only polished it and organized it.



Unlike Sam, she believed that Myers would never return, and she placed the folder marked “Keri Tate” safely inside the folder marked “Laurie Strode”.

Halloween was coming soon, and the power of association alone brought back all of her fond memories of Sam. For some reason, she felt a desire to explore – probably because of the time that had gone since he had passed away.

She saw the locked cupboard in his desk, and realized she had never seen the contents, other than the map he had shown her several times. After trying *several keys, she finally found the correct one and opened it.*

Inside, she found journals – many of them, each one covering two years of thoughts and events in the life of Sam Loomis. He had never spoken too much of his past, and now it was time for her to solve that riddle. She picked up the volume labeled ‘1956 – 1957’, lit a cigarette and started to read.

Outside, the autumn leaves were falling.



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