

THE WORD

Written by

Not the Messiah -- a very naughty boy!

FADE IN:

EXT. PEACE ARCH BORDER CROSSING - CANADIAN SIDE - DAY

Not a nice day. Heavy rain, straight down. Even the U.S. and Canadian flags look forlorn on the Peace Arch. The signs flash red: WAIT TIME 75 MINS.

Behind the lined-up cars, a GREY 2012 SEDAN approaches, keeping left behind a dirty 1999 SUV.

INT. SUV - DAY

A beleaguered African-American MOM ignores the rowdy kids in the backseat, eyes fixed on the sedan in the mirror. It veers into the Nexus fast lane, accelerating past her as she stops. She watches it pull up to the U.S. Nexus booth.

MOM

Fucking rich asshole. Go to hell.

In the back, her son punches her daughter in the nose. The girl starts to cry.

INT. SEDAN - DAY

PATRICIA WOOLSEY (45), Caucasian, her chipper, sharp-eyed face drawn tight, smiles glibly up at the border guard.

BORDER GUARD (O.S.)

Yep we're checkin' everyone today,
Ms. Woolsey. Sorry for the wait.

PATRICIA

No need to apologize. I hope
everything's all right.

BORDER GUARD (O.S.)

Do I need to check your trunk?

Patricia grins, warm.

PATRICIA

You caught me at last.

Silence. Then Patricia reaches and accepts her passport back.

BORDER GUARD (O.S.)

Nice to see you.

Patricia winks and steps on the gas.

The second she's moving, her face drops into a quiet stress. She accelerates, then stops hard at the next set of lights.

She clenches her teeth. Her eyes are wet.

SIMONE (O.S.)
(mock childish)
Patricia...

Patricia's hands tighten on the steering wheel. Behind her, the back seat armrest slowly folds down to reveal the blackness inside the trunk. The panel that divides it from the back seat is gone.

The voice floats out of it, still sing-song.

SIMONE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Are we there yet, Patricia?

PATRICIA
You're across. Why don't you
just...leave us here?

Patricia checks the border crossing in her rearview. The wait signs flash orange, now: AMBER ALERT

SIMONE (O.S.)
Because I like you, Patricia.

The lights turn green. Patricia closes her eyes for a second, then steps on the gas. Simone LAUGHS.

EXT. SALMON RIVER HIGHWAY - DAY

Patricia starts the sedan into the Oregon forest, windshield wipers bumping back and forth past her face. Behind her, the sun tinges the sky pink as it sets.

The forest masses, dark, waiting to swallow the tiny approaching car.

EXT. SIUSLAW FOREST - DUSK

BANG!

Patricia's head hits the ground, eyes open, face-up. A few raindrops land on her face, mixing with blood dribbling from the nickel-sized hole between her eyes.

The raindrops run off her cheeks like tears.

A drop splashes against the dome of her eye. The eyelid doesn't move.

SIMONE DESPOSY (mid 30s), Caucasian, what TV would call "the girl next door," stands over the body, gun in hand. Her clothes are nice, if rumpled, and her face is comfortably familiar. It twists in an easy smile.

Then, something catches her eye. She looks at her fingers, still wrapped around the gun. Blood. She looks down. More blood on her grey shirt. Not tons, but noticeable.

SIMONE

Shoot.

She eyes Patricia's blouse. It's clean. She looks at the sky, holds out a hand. The rain is stopping.

EXT. SERVICE ROAD - DUSK

Simone approaches the sedan, which is pulled to the side.

INT. SEDAN - DUSK

The window slides down as Simone approaches. POP MUSIC plays on the car's radio. Simone smiles warmly into the car.

SIMONE

Do you remember the camping fuel in the back?

Silence.

SIMONE (CONT'D)

Could you reach and get it?

SHUFFLING SOUNDS as someone squeezes between the front seats into the back. Simone fiddles with a lighter, then puts a cigarette in her mouth and takes a drag.

SIMONE (CONT'D)

It'll be on your left.

Another moment. MORE SHUFFLING. A can of camping fuel is held out the window to her by a child-sized, dark-skinned hand.

SIMONE (CONT'D)

Thanks.

She turns away, revealing the corpse behind her, crumpled thirty feet away. She starts toward it. The POP MUSIC continues on the stereo, cloying.

In the distance, Simone struggles the corpse's blouse off, then pulls off her own shirt. She's naked underneath. She throws the blouse on, leaving it unbuttoned.

She drops the grey shirt on the corpse, douses it with fuel, then hesitates, kneels and touches the wet ground. Satisfied, she stands and flicks the cigarette onto the body. Fire flares, then dies quick.

She dumps the rest of the fuel on the body, burning it down as much as possible. Flesh chars and bone starts to peek.

When the fuel runs out, she starts towards the car. Halfway there, she smiles and waves, then flashes recognition -- oops. Her face changes. Her cheeks redden.

She does up a few of the middle buttons on the blouse, hiding her bare breasts, and continues to the car.

SIMONE (CONT'D)

All right! Next stop, Shelter Cove.

AARON (8), African-American, definitely wise past his years, stares back at her. Tears on his face.

AARON

It's getting dark.

Simone crosses around the sedan and enters the driver's seat.

SIMONE

You want to sleep here?

Aaron is silent. Simone turns the key, killing the music for a blissful second as the car starts.

EXT. SIUSLAW FOREST - DUSK

The corpse's face is half-melted, but its eyeball stares.

With the sound of the ENGINE, the POP MUSIC starts again, then fades as the car pulls away.

A small grey speck crawls down the exposed white bone of the cheek into charred black flesh...

EXT. 101-S - NIGHT

...closer, the speck becomes the sedan, speeding down the highway, alone in the night.

INT. SEDAN - NIGHT

Aaron's eyes are still, closed. Next to him, Simone steals a long glance at the boy before her eyes return to the road. The music is off, now. No sound but the rain and the car.

AARON (O.S.)
Are you going to kill me?

Simone jumps at the voice.

SIMONE
You scared me!

She looks over. A very awake Aaron stares up at her.

SIMONE (CONT'D)
Heck no. We're partners, right? On the run from my government and your parents. Your fake parents.

AARON
I don't know.

SIMONE
You said you hated them.

AARON
I don't know.

SIMONE
(curt)
Well, fine. I don't need you anymore if you want out.

AARON
I think Mommy is sad.

SIMONE
I didn't hit her hard.
(thinks)
You mean she's sad because you're gone. Of course she is, kid. But you wanna do what's good for you, or what's good for everybody else?

AARON
Okay.

He leans his head against the window and shuts his eyes.

SIMONE
"Okay," I don't know what that-

She looks over. He looks like he's already asleep. She watches his chest rise and fall, then looks at the road.

EXT. SOMEWHERE ON THE CALIFORNIA COAST - DAWN

Sunny. Beautiful. Just the wash of waves and a few gulls.

The sedan's at the end of a barely visible dirt road. Simone stands on the beach, sipping gas station coffee, staring out across the ocean. She's gorgeous in her tranquility.

Aaron, bleary-eyed, steps out of the car and slams the door.

AARON

Is this Shetter...Shetter Cove?

Simone turns with a smile.

SIMONE

Shelter Cove, cutie! No, it isn't.
Had to get off the highway. Jerky?

She holds out a bag of beef jerky. Aaron joins her and takes it eagerly. He savors it, watching the ocean. For a moment, stillness. Humans, food, and the magnificence of nature.

Simone looks sideways at Aaron. She draws a black gravity knife from her pocket, holds it down. The blade drops out.

Aaron looks over at her as she pulls out an apple and starts to cut a piece off. Something catches his eye behind her.

SIMONE (CONT'D)

Gotta have fruit, too, okay?

AARON

What's that?

Simone follows his eyes. Down the beach a ways, a dark cave yawns from the rock, an ugly wound in the cliff's side.

SIMONE

You know what the best-sounding
word in the whole world is?

Aaron just stares at her.

SIMONE (CONT'D)

(with joy)
Spelunk!

EXT. CAVE - DAY

The duo approach the cave, both munching on apple slices.

At the entrance, a pile of large, jagged rocks. Their shapes make them look like pieces of a bigger whole. Simone carefully helps Aaron over them. Past the jagged rocks, at the mouth of the cave, Simone keeps Aaron's hand in hers.

They start in.

INT. CAVE - DAY

Once their eyes adjust, the cave isn't too dark. Somewhere ahead, sunlight reflects in from another hole in the rock.

The cave gradually widens as they walk further.

SIMONE
This is cool, huh?

AARON
It IS cool.

Aaron lets go of her hand and walks forward, bold.

SIMONE
Don't go too far ahead.

Aaron plays around, touches the walls, explores.

Behind him, Simone pulls the knife out again. The blade drops down. She watches him with a small smile, then swallows it, closes her lips. Blank-faced, she starts towards him.

AARON
In Ainsworth Hot Springs they have caves and you can go in them with hot water. They're pretty cool, but this is wayyyy bigger.

Simone readies the knife, stealing up quietly.

AARON (CONT'D)
Mommy hates Ainsworth.

He turns to face Simone. She holds the knife out to one side, ready to slash. Aaron leaps backwards, trips, cowers.

He looks up. Simone hasn't moved. Her arm wavers.

AARON (CONT'D)
Simone?

A strange, keening gasp escapes her lips. The knife drops from her hand. Suddenly, her skin draws tight. Her mouth sucks air, desperate. Her skin starts to spot as her superficial blood vessels burst.

Aaron stands and edges sideways, trying to get a look behind her. Suddenly, her left arm shoots up, grabbing out at him. He jumps back with a yell, cowering against the cave wall.

From his new position, he can see everything.

A massive, bulbous tentacle extends from somewhere back near the entrance, encrusted with barnacles and oozing ichor. Near its tip, smaller tentacles taste the air, slide up Simone's back, penetrate her skin. Her blood drips off them.

Her feet are slightly lifted off the ground below her, where the cave floor turns red. It's as though she's walking on a pool of her own blood.

AARON (CONT'D)

Simone!

Her eyes are open, moving. She can't speak, but she's alive.

Aaron starts to cry. He looks back, further into the cave.

AARON (CONT'D)

I don't know what to do. I'm sorry.
I'll get help. I'll help.

He turns and runs, leaving her suspended, puppeted, bleeding.

INT. CAVE - DEEPER - DAY

Aaron runs. It's darker, here. Simone has disappeared behind.

He trips and falls onto the rock. His breath leaves his body. He rolls over painfully, gasping. As his gasps subside, something becomes audible. A FAINT, MUSICAL SIGH. He stills his breath, listens harder.

MYRMOS (O.S.)

Father...

There's something beautiful in the voice, but it's weak, pained. Aaron pulls himself up and looks towards the voice. Further down there's the faint glimmer of sunlight. He stands and starts towards it.

INT. CAVE - DEEPEST - DAY

Aaron rounds the corner towards the sunlight. It's not strong, but two holes in the rock reveal the warmth of day somewhere above, beaming softly in.

Aaron enters and stops dead.

MYRMOS (O.S.)

Father!

Aaron slowly walks to the center of the room.

Lying on the rock is MYRMOS, a humanoid sea-creature, a pathetic bastardization of the Creature from the Black Lagoon. About four feet in length, its spindly body narrows into a ridged tail.

Its upper torso is thin and jutting, and a strange ribcage rises and falls with breaths that take in air. Gills slash across its neck, but they don't move.

AARON

Who are you?

Myrmos can barely speak.

MYRMOS

I have brought you...blood.

Aaron notices the sticky black oozing from Myrmos' chest.

AARON

You're hurt!

MYRMOS

Yes...soon it will...be bold.

Aaron turns and looks back the way he came. Something moves in the blackness. Something SLITHERS.

MYRMOS (CONT'D)

The blood...

AARON

What blood?

With difficulty, Myrmos reaches a three-fingered hand to its wounded chest and withdraws it, dripping black. It slashes a vertical line in the rock, then a horizontal one. A cross.

MYRMOS

The blood. I am...yours, Father.

If Aaron recognizes the allusion, he doesn't show it.

AARON
How do I help you?

MYRMOS
I help. The blood...for everyone.
They keep us for themselves.
The...Philosophers.

AARON
I don't know that word.

MYRMOS
The ones...who made us.

AARON
Your parents?

MYRMOS
The ones...under the sea...who
believed in good and evil but could
not prove... They had to make...us.
With machines, they made us. I
escaped, as one has not since...
(trails off)
And with me, the other came.

The SLITHERING SOUNDS from the dark amplify. Aaron turns.

AARON
It's hurting my friend.

MYRMOS
She has...invited it.

AARON
Can I help her?

MYRMOS
It will take...all of you, in place
of her. And you are worth...many
times that. Many times her.

The SLITHERING is loud, now. But nothing is visible.

Aaron runs to the entrance. As he rounds the corner, Simone comes into view. She is strung up, rag-dolled on the massive tentacle, which gropes its way towards him. Smaller tentacles grab at the walls and ceiling, thirsting forward.

Aaron recoils. Simone's jaw drops open, and again, the keening sigh escapes from her mouth. Her eyes roll.

Aaron runs to Myrmos.

AARON
I have to save her.

MYRMOS
No.

AARON
I want to.

MYRMOS
Then you must say it, Father. But
if you die...you die alone.

AARON
What do I say?

MYRMOS
The blood should be...for all.

AARON
But she'll die!

MYRMOS
One or all.

Aaron turns. The tentacle emerges into the room, Simone's limbs spread in front of it like a cracked smile.

AARON
They're the same.

Myrmos sighs. Aaron kneels down, eyes steeled.

AARON (CONT'D)
What do I say?

MYRMOS
Your word must...surrender...you,
Father.

Myrmos raises its head to Aaron's ear. The faintest MUSICAL SIGH. Then Myrmos falls back. Aaron says nothing.

Hesitant, Myrmos reaches a tired hand up and spreads its blood on Aaron's lips. Aaron's mouth spreads in a bloody smile, then he turns to face the thing behind him.

The tentacle rears above him, and he stands strong between it and Myrmos. Finally, Simone SCREAMS. The tentacle pushes forward, right down until Simone is face to face with Aaron.

He says something that stops all sound, and her eyes go wide in the blanket of silence.

Then, with an unearthly ROAR, the tentacle reels backwards, dropping Simone to the ground, her back a bloodied mess. The tentacle rears high above Aaron, towering.

A tentacle darts out and lashes round one wrist, then the other. He screams as it stretches his arms out, lifts him.

AARON

Help me!

Myrmos is silent. Dead. Simone's eyes are still, closed.

A tentacle spears through Aaron's feet. His blood drips to the ground below. The tentacle roars...

...and suddenly Aaron is calm.

SIMONE (O.S.)

Thank you.

The tentacle roars again. It rips the boy into so many separate pieces, the body just disappears.

The main tentacle wavers, tastes the air. Suddenly, light grows, from somewhere in the cave. The tentacle shies back, but the light expands...BURSTS...

The tentacle shrieks agony.

EXT. SOMEWHERE ON THE CALIFORNIA COAST - DAY

The cliff face is quiet.

Then light shoots out of the cave entrance. It beams out of the holes in the cliff face.

For a moment, it covers everything...

EXT. SPACE - DAY

The light spreads across the globe from somewhere on the California coast, wrapping around the Earth's curves, until the whole little blue ball shines bright white...

SMASH TO BLACK.

THE END.