

Angel In the Dark

By

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INT. SAL'S OFFICE. MORNING.

SAL is slumped asleep at his work desk. The floor is littered with crumpled papers filled with brainstorm ideas and sketches. Old Twinkie wrappers, Chinese take out boxes and an empty wine bottle sit on his desk. His computer sits in front of him. The motion screen is on. Suddenly a ring tone goes off. (SFX) Sal is still unconscious.

The ring goes off again.

A low groan escapes Sal.

The ring continues to go off.

Sal fumbles his hand around for the phone and puts it to his ear.

SAL:
Hello?

The ring goes off again.

Sal dazily looks at the phone and presses the accept call button.

SAL:
Sylvester Black..

MELVIN BRIAR:
Sal! You'd better have that manuscript ready you son of a bitch!

Sal shoots up straight as a board.

SAL:
Mr. Briar! I uh.. just got done hashing out a big chunk of it last night.

MELVIN BRIAR:
Well you better hash your ass over here and present it to the publishing committee.

SAL:
Today? But Mr. Briar...I-

CUT TO: Int. Briar Office. Morning.

Melvin Briar sits in his office, dressed in his tweed suit and looking over book cover samples for a children's novel titled: When Daddy Drinks.

(CONTINUED)

MELVIN BRIAR:

We've given you ten months to come up with something Sal, on top of the seven we'd originally agreed to.

SAL:

I understand Mr. Briar But its-

MELVIN BRIAR:

Do you have a manuscript?

CUT BACK TO: INT. SAL'S OFFICE. MORNING.

SAL:

Yes I'm looking at it right now.

Sal clicks the space bar on his laptop.

The screen is a blank slate except for the title head: "My Next Paycheck". Sal silently mouths "Shit."

MELVIN BRIAR:

All right then, I tell you what, something just came up. We're going to be booked today. Come in tomorrow morning with your manuscript, or else...

SAL:

Yes, Mr. Briar.

MELVIN BRIAR:

I'm warning you Sal, you've done well in the past but you've been losing us money ever since you penned that Idiot-Vampire-Dystopia-Monstrosity. Perhaps its time to find a new face for Briar Books & Publishing. That manuscript better be on my desk tomorrow and it better damn well impress me.

SAL:

Mr. Briar, I-

The phone hangs up. Sal tosses his phone aside and slumps into his chair. He slams his laptop closed and grabs the wine bottle. He brings it to his mouth then realizes that it is empty. He casts it aside and puts his head down on the desk.

Phone Rings...

(CONTINUED)

Sal looks at the phone and smiles as he sees his GIRLFRIEND calling. He picks up the phone and answers.

SAL:
Hey pumpkin...

GIRLFRIEND
Kill yourself.

She hangs up the phone abruptly.

Sal puts the phone down. He turns and eyes old author awards and newspaper clippings of his bestsellers. His gaze pauses on a canister of rat poison sitting on a shelf. The phone rings once again. He answers angrily

SAL:
Tell me something else to ruin my
life!

MILAN BAXTER:
Sal?

SAL:
Oh..Hey Milo..What's going on?

MILAN BAXTER:
Just called to see if you
remembered, you said today you'd
review the story I was working on?

SAL:
I'm not sure now's a good time
Milo...

MILAN BAXTER:
Come on Sal you're the best author
whose ever lived, and I could
really use some input from a
friend.

SAL:
Okay, send it to me. We can discuss
it tonight for dinner.

MILAN BAXTER:
Thanks Sal, I'll see you tonight.

Sal flips open the laptop and opens a chat file from Milan. He clicks on a file titled: The Angel in the Dark. The Manuscript opens up and Sal begins to read.

SAL:

It was as if I had encountered a dream, a distant vagueness of recollection that I once knew...

Sal Continues to Read.(fast forward.)

SAL:

I answered the door to find standing before me sopping wet, was a beautiful girl in gray.

Continued:

SAL:

The doctor smiled wolfishly at me. His eyes lit up in a flaming passion."Come now its late, and you need your rest" He pressed.

Continued:

SAL:

Where his gentle eyes had once looked upon me warmly now remained two black soulless shades of horror

Continued:

SAL:

"He's coming, that horrible mask. He's coming to kill us all!" She cried.

Continued:

SAL:

Closer and closer the steps came and then it appeared. A terrifying mask which seemed to leer into the very essence of my soul...

Continued:

SAL:

What once was a pleasant dream had become my nightmare. A vivid reality which continues to haunt me to this day. I know he still pursues me still, his terrible mask a shadow in my mind. I can only outwit him for so long, such is the doomed fate of mortal men. I go on

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SAL: (cont'd)
in my vain search for peace, a
silver lining in this cloud of
madness which plagues my mind. Who
are we but slaves to time and the
monsters that determine how much is
given to us?

Sal sits back. It is now the start of evening.

SAL:
My God...Its brilliant.

The door bell rings. Sal looks at the time and realizes its
half past 6.

SAL:
Shit.

The Doorbell rings again. Sal gets up.

CUT TO: INT. DOOR-WAY. NIGHT.

The doorbell rings again. Sal opens the door which is bolted
with a chain. MILAN peeks through the crack.

MILAN BAXTER:
I hope you're in the mood for
Chinese.

Milan holds up a box of takeout.

CUT TO: INT. DINING ROOM. NIGHT.

Sal and Milan sit together, a few takeout boxes are already
gone. Milan opens another. Thunder booms in the distance.
Sal opens another bottle of wine. They both laugh. Milan
pulls out a hard copy of his manuscript.

MILAN BAXTER:
So did you have a chance to read
through it?

SAL:
I have.

MILAN:
And?

Sal sips on some wine.

(CONTINUED)

SAL:
Honestly? It needs some work.

MILAN BAXTER:
Really? Is it that bad?

SAL:
Character development is key my
friend. You've really only begun to
scratch the surface.

Milan looks downcast and stares into his wineglass.

MILAN:
I'm so glad you've told me. But I'm
afraid I've already scheduled a
meeting with Briar.

Sal chokes and sputters on some wine.

SAL:
Briar Books?

MILAN:
Their CEO read some of my work and
invited me for an interview. We
just spoke today actually. When I
told him I had a project in the
works he almost signed me on then
and there, but I told him I wanted
to have someone I trust review it
before I bring it in tomorrow.

SAL:
You didn't tell him about the story
did you?

MILAN BAXTER:
No, just that it was something new
and fresh. He said Briar Books
could use more of that. Drop the
dead weight and start anew.

SAL:
Dead weight?

MILAN BAXTER:
Yeah some of those older writers
are losing their touch, or so Mel
said.

(CONTINUED)

SAL:

Mel?!?

MILAN BAXTER:

That's what Mr. Briar asked me to call him.

Sal gulps down his glass.

SAL:

I'm sorry to tell you Milo but these Publishing companies ruin beginners like you. They'll tear your story apart or revise it until its no longer your own.

MILAN BAXTER:

But this could be my big breakthrough. Remember when you submitted your first novel?

SAL:

That was some time ago...a long time ago.

MILAN:

If I turn this meeting down I may never get another chance. I've got to take it.

Sal drinks. He stares at Milan. Voices start playing in his head.

MELVIN BRIAR (V.O.):

I've had enough of your piss-poor writing Sal. You're done. Its time to put a new face on Briar Books.

MILAN BAXTER (V.O.):

You're Dead weight Sal.

MELVIN BRIAR (V.O.):

You've lost you're touch.

GIRLFRIEND (V.O.):

Kill Yourself.

MILAN BAXTER (V.O.):

I'm the writer she's always wanted.

GIRLFRIEND (V.O.):

You're a has-been and you'll never measure up to Milan Baxter.

(CONTINUED)

All three voices laugh.

MILAN BAXTER:
Sal? Sal?

SAL:
What!?!

MILAN BAXTER:
Are you all right?

Sal sees that he's gripping the edge of the table, his knuckles white. Thunder clashes.

SAL:
I'm fine. Say, why don't we open up another bottle? To commemorate the start of your career? I've got something special I've been waiting to bring out.

MILAN BAXTER:
Well I can't say no can I?

Sal takes the glasses and exits.

CUT TO: INT. SAL'S OFFICE. NIGHT.

Sal pulls out a glass of wine from his desk. Filling the glasses he takes the rat poison and pours some into Milan's.

CUT TO: INT. DINING ROOM NIGHT.

Sal returns and hands Milan the poisoned wine.

MILAN BAXTER:
To the best friend and the greatest writer of our time.

SAL:
To..your health.

MILAN BAXTER:
Cheers!

SAL:
Cheers.

Lightning strikes. Thunder booms. They both toss back their drinks. Milan starts coughing.

(CONTINUED)

MILAN BAXTER:
What is this?

SAL:
A Special brew. Made it myself.

Milan continues to cough and sputter he starts scratching at his throat.

MILAN BAXTER:
I can't....breath. Sal..

Milan looks to Sal who watches coldly as Milan chokes up frothing at the mouth. Milan collapses to the floor and spasms into death.

CUT TO: INT. SAL'S STUDY. NIGHT.

Sal drags Milan into his study. Lighting continues to strike. It is now pouring rain outside. Sal plops the manuscript on the desk and smiles to himself.

SAL:
How's that for dead weight?

Lightning strikes the house. The power goes out.

SAL:
Son of a-.

Sal goes and heads towards the breaker. Suddenly the lights flicker back on. The doorbell rings. Sal looks down in horror at the dead body.

SAL:
Not at home. Not at home. Not at home.

The doorbell rings again. Followed by a knocking at the door. Sal Waits. The doorbell is now going crazy.

SAL:
All right! All right!

Sal locks the study door and runs over to the door.

CUT TO: INT. DOOR-WAY. NIGHT.

Sal opens the door. Through the crack he sees a young woman in gray, sopping wet.

(CONTINUED)

YOUNG WOMAN:

Excuse me! I'm sorry to be a bother
but could I come in and get warm?
I'm afraid I'm going to catch
hypothermia.

SAL:

There's a nice farm just down the
road, its only a few miles.

YOUNG WOMAN:

Please sir! I'm lost you have to
let me in.

SAL:

Now's not a good time.

Sal begins to close the door.

YOUNG WOMAN:

Please Sir! He's going to kill me
if you don't let me in!

Sal stops.

SAL:

Who's going to kill you?

YOUNG WOMAN:

The masked man, the man in black.
Please Sir I beg you, I've only
just escaped him.

Sal looks into her panic stricken eyes.

SAL:

Oh hang it all.

Sal opens the door and lets her in. He stares outside into
the rain before closing the door and locking it. Lightning
flashes outside as the silhouette of CROW is seen. standing
outside.

YOUNG WOMAN:

Oh thank you, thank you so much.

SAL:

Let me get you a towel to dry off
with.

Sal goes to grab a towel.

INT. CLOSET. NIGHT.

(CONTINUED)

Sal grabs a towel.

INT. HALLWAY. NIGHT.

When Sal returns the woman is gone.

SAL:
Hello? Miss?

Suddenly there's a tinkling of glasses. Sal walks to the dining room.

CUT TO: INT. LIVING ROOM W/ FIREPLACE. NIGHT.

DOCTOR is pouring himself a glass of wine.

SAL:
Who the Hell are you?

DOCTOR HARGRAVE:
I dare say its rather chilly in here you think you can start us a fire old boy?

SAL:
I will not. How did you get into my house?

DOCTOR HARGRAVE:
By jove lad, you admitted me in yourself.

SAL:
No, I just let in a young woman.

DOCTOR HARGRAVE:
Are you feeling well old boy?
Perhaps we ought to get you to bed.

SAL:
What is this? What are you doing?

The Doctor begins to step forward menacingly

DOCTOR HARGRAVE:
Come now, Its late and you need your rest.

The Doctor smiles wolfishly at Sal. Sal is taken aback

SAL:
Is this some sick trick Milo set up?

(CONTINUED)

The doctor pauses. A look of suspicion crosses his face.

DOCTOR HARGRAVE:
Who's Milo?

SAL:
My friend who's in the study.

DOCTOR HARGRAVE:
I'm afraid you're mistaken old boy,
nobody's been into the study.

SAL:
Of course he is I just put him
there!

Thunder clap. A sharp scream pierces the air followed by a crash. Sal wheels around. Looking back he sees the Doctor is no longer there. He runs out to the hallway. The front door is busted open. Rain pouring down in drenches. A hard sobbing is heard coming from the Study. Sal enters.

CUT TO: Int. Sal's Study. Night.

Sal finds the Young Woman there crying over a dead body.

SAL:
Shit! Look Miss its not what it
looks like.

YOUNG WOMAN:
He was my dearest friend and that
monster killed him!

SAL:
Monster? What are you-

Sal crosses over and sees that instead of Milo a BUTLER lays upon the ground. No eyes just two black soulless shades of horror. Suddenly steps are distinctly heard. The woman looks up at Sal tears straining down her cheeks.

YOUNG WOMAN:
He's coming, that horrible mask.
He's coming to kill us all!

Sal turns. The steps grow louder. Sal eyes the door. The handle begins to turn. Sal quickly hides behind his desk in terror. The door opens. Sal glances at the door. The frame blocks the line of sight. Suddenly a clawed hand clutches the edge. The young woman begins to cry out.

(CONTINUED)

YOUNG WOMAN:

No! Please! Please! Help me! Please
Sir he's coming to kill me!

Footsteps are heard by the quick flutter of a cloak. The Young Woman screams but is cut off. Now the footsteps come closer and closer to where Sal is. He perspires. Sal hears the claws dig into the desk. He grabs an empty wine bottle, braces himself then leaps up shouting.

No one is in the room. Sal is freaking out. He grabs the manuscript and his keys and rushes for the door.

CUT TO: INT. DOOR-WAY. NIGHT.

Sal comes to the door but and is surprised to see it is closed, locked shut. He struggles to get it open.

DOCTOR HARGRAVE:

Where do you think you're going old
boy?

Sal turns. The Doctor is down the hall blood covering half his face. Thunder clap.

SAL:

Leave me alone!

DOCTOR HARGRAVE:

I'm afraid I can't do that lad, its
late and you need your rest.

The Doctor advances. Sal struggles to get the door open.

DOCTOR HARGRAVE:

It will all be over soon, just a
nice little nap!

Sal whirls around and swings the empty bottle. It crashes against the wall. He is alone. Sal begins to sob in fear.

SAL:

Out. I need to get out.

Suddenly he hears the same dreaded footsteps. Bolting in fear he sprints up the stairs. The footsteps follow him. In a panic he runs into the first room he sees and closes the door behind him. Holding his breath he listens. The footsteps come to the door. He hears the claw rake against the door, and then the footsteps pass on into silence.

Sal lets out a sigh. Suddenly sobbing his heard. He whirls around to see the Young Woman bent over in a corner with her back to him. She cannot contain her sobbing.

(CONTINUED)

SAL:
Shhhhh... Please Miss don't make
any noise.

She continues to weep more loudly.

SAL:
Shhhh! Be quiet! It'll hear-

Footsteps are heard coming fast. Sal runs over to the woman and tries to console her but she won't let him see her face.

SAL:
Please Miss! Shut Up!

The footsteps are louder. Clawing is heard at the door. Sal is shouting now.

SAL:
For the love of God Shut-

He forces her to look at him. But instead of the Young Woman's face it is the face of Crow. It screams in her voice.

Sal is knocked back. He scrambles to the door but it is locked. He turns to face Crow. Crow now stands, dressed in his black attire. He edges slowly toward Sal.

SAL:
Please. Please I beg of you..

Thunder clap. Lightning flashes. Crow edges forward. A black clawed hand reaches toward Sal.

SAL:
I didn't mean to do it! I didn't
mean to! Please spare me!

Crow raises his arms ready to strike. Sal looks about. He sees another door with a balcony on it. He rushes forward and with a terrified cry leaps off.

CUT TO: EXT. HOUSE. DAY.

RILEY, a young homicide detective, walks in on a crime scene. His veteran partner JAMISON is looking under a tarp. Riley walks over to him.

RILEY:
What's the story?

(CONTINUED)

JAMISON:

One guy dead in the house,
poisoned. This one seemed to trash
the place and then committed
suicide by jumping off the balcony.

RILEY:

Some wacko killed the homeowner and
proceeded to off himself?

JAMISON:

No. This is the Homeowner.

RILEY:

Well I'll be... Don't see that
everyday. Guy must've had some real
demons.

JAMISON:

Who are we but slaves to time and
the monsters that determine how
much is given to us?

They wrap up the crime scene. The camera pans over to the
Manuscript on the ground not far away from Sal's body,
titled: Angel In The Dark. Creepy music plays out.

FADE TO BLACK.

End. Roll Credits.

CUT TO: INT. PUBLISHING OFFICE. DAY.

MS. MAPLES plants the manuscript down on the table.

MS. MAPLES:

Well I must say once again you fail
to disappoint me.

DORIAN CROW (O.S.):

Well I guess its all in the taste
of the audience.

MS. MAPLES:

Well, they are going to eat this
up. I think we may have another
best-seller on your hands. How do
you do it?

The camera reveals DORIAN CROW, Famous Renowned Thriller
Author and coincidentally the same actor as Milan Baxter.

(CONTINUED)

DORIAN CROW:

I have my own demons Ms. Maples,
Putting them into writing helps me
control them.

They both stand up and shake hands.

MS. MAPLES:

Well I certainly hope you fare
better than your characters.

DORIAN CROW:

We all meet the same fate. Its just
a matter of how we go about it.

MS. MAPLES:

I'll get this to publishing right
away, take care of yourself Dorian.

DORIAN CROW:

Take care, Katherine.

Dorian exits. FADE TO BLACK.