

WISHFUL THINKING

Written by

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1 BLACKNESS 1

A CAR ENGINE HUMS. The metronome swish of WINDSHIELD WIPERS.
HEAVY RAIN PATTERS from outside.

FADE IN:

2 INT. MOM AND DAD'S CAR - NIGHT 2

BOBBY MILLIGAN (11) stirs from a deep sleep in the backseat
of the car. He rubs his eyes and looks out the back window.

BOBBY'S POV - THROUGH REAR CAR WINDOW

The blood-red taillights of the car illuminate FAT RAIN DROPS
careening down into the slick black asphalt like tiny meteors
before disappearing into the darkness behind them.

BACK TO SCENE

Bobby slowly turns back and sits upright in his seat.

BOBBY'S POV -

FROM THE BACKSEAT we see MOM and DAD in the front with their
backs to us. Mom drives, while Dad lulls toward the passenger
window, lost in thought.

Past them, THROUGH THE FRONT WINDSHIELD, a lonely highway
stretches out before them as the rainstorm rages around them.

BACK TO SCENE

BOBBY

Oh no! WHAT?! C'mon!

Dad startles and whispers to his wife.

DAD

He's up. Here we go.

BOBBY

Where are we going now?!

DAD

We told you yesterday, kiddo.
We're going to visit grandma and
grandad this weekend.

BOBBY

Seriously?! I told Derek and Tipps
that I'd play Juggernaut Four with
them this weekend.

(MORE)

BOBBY (CONT'D)
There's a limited special
tournament going on and everything.

MOM
Well, Bobby. Your grandparents
don't get to see you very often and
they miss you.

Bobby dramatically huffs, falling back into his seat.

DAD
Now don't throw a temper tantrum.

BOBBY
I don't want to visit grandma and
granddad!

MOM
Tough. We're already almost
halfway there.

BOBBY
You guys didn't care to ask me what
I want! You didn't even wake me
up. You just scooped me out of bed
in the middle of the night and
threw me in the car. That's
technically kidnapping.

DAD
Knock it off, Bobby. I mean it.

BOBBY
God! I should at least get some say
in what I do with my time. I'm not
a prisoner. GOD! I wish I really
would get kidnapped! At least then
I'd be away from you!

MOM
Kidnapping?! Wow. And the Oscar
goes to...

BOBBY
Yeah! Maybe you'll wake up someday
and I just won't be there. You
won't know if I ran away or someone
nabbed me or whatever. Then you'd
be sorry and you'd wish that you'd-

DAD

STOP! Just listen to yourself. You don't ever talk to an adult that way, let alone your own parents for God's sake. You really are something else. Wishing to be kidnapped? Really?!

Bobby scowls in silence for a moment.

BOBBY

I guess I wouldn't run away. But you guys would be pretty sad if I got nabbed by some psycho. Then maybe you'd regret treating your son like this.

MOM

Yeah, you're so mistreated. Call CPS immediately.

BOBBY

I just hate that you didn't even ask me. Like what's that?

DAD

We told you multiple times we were going to visit this weekend. Once again, you didn't listen.

BOBBY

I do listen! *YOU GUYS* are the ones who don't listen to *ME!* I said I was going to game with my friends. Period.

MOM

You can play with your friends any time. Period. Your grandparents love you very much. And they won't be around forever, Bobby.

BOBBY

Well, if they miss me so much, why don't they ever come to Chicago to visit us?

DAD

Jesus, Bobby. Seriously? They can't get around very well, and honestly we owe it to them to get out to visit and spend some quality time with them. They've done a lot for you.

Bobby pounds his fists into the car seat.

BOBBY

I. Don't. Care. Sending fifty
bucks every birthday doesn't mean
that-

Mom jerks the car off the road to the shoulder, screeching to
a halt.

She spins back to look directly at her son.

MOM

Look here you ungrateful spoiled
little brat. We didn't raise you
to speak so disrespectfully to
people who love and care for you.
Now I don't know where this
attitude has been coming from
lately and I don't care. You're
grounded. No phone and no gaming
until further notice.

Bobby gasps.

MOM (CONT'D)

Now sit there and pout and whine.
But you have no one to blame but
yourself.

BOBBY

MOM! NO! Seriously! That's so
unfair! I didn't ask to go on this
stupid trip with you! Just 'cause
I'm a kid, I don't get a say in
anything. It's not fair.

MOM

Right. Deal with it.

She pulls back onto the road.

Bobby slams himself back down, growling, kicks and punching
the doors and car seats.

MOM (CONT'D)

You want to lose more, bucko!

He lets out one final exasperated growl and folds his arms,
staring angrily out the window.

SILENCE, save for the rain and the wipers screech as they
seem to fling buckets of water from the windshield.

Mom grips the steering wheel tightly.

Dad turns on the radio. A ROCK TUNE fills the car. He turns it up.

Mom wipes tears from her eyes. Dad notices, and gently puts a hand on her leg.

MOM (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I just- I don't know why he acts like this. What the hell did we do wrong?

DAD

I know, hun. Maybe we should take away more. You know, limit access to the internet, social media, all that crap. Maybe that's why...

On the RADIO, the ROCK SONG is interrupted by a NEWS REPORT.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Local authorities are urging anyone who may have more information regarding the whereabouts of the couple, now identified as fugitive child murderers,--

Dad quickly changes the RADIO to a different UPBEAT TUNE.

DAD

Yikes. Scary.

MOM

We never acted like that when we were his age.

DAD

No. I would've gotten swatted if I spoke to my folks like that.

She nods, wiping more tears from her eyes.

Bobby sits up.

BOBBY

You know I can hear you guys, right?! I'm not deaf! You can't take my phone and you can't "swat" me either! That really is child abuse. Look it up. Just cause that kinda stuff was ok in your day doesn't make it right. People go to jail now.

DAD

Bobby, sit back and sh- stop talking. Not another word from you until we get there.

BOBBY

You're the ones who chose to have a kid. It's your responsibility to make sure that kid is happy and gets what he needs.

In a flash, dad's seatbelt is unbuckled, and he's spun around, leaning over the seat into Bobby's face.

DAD

What did I just say?! Your mom and I feed you, clothe you, give you damn near anything you want, and you're so entitled that you don't even see that. You don't NEED a phone. You don't NEED a game system, or TV, or ANY of the crap that you have. There's plenty of kids in this world who'd kill to have even a fraction of what you have. You aren't thankful for any of it, let alone the people who give it to you. You're a spoiled little brat, Robert. It breaks my heart that you talk to your mother and I the way you do. Who do you think you are? You should be ashamed. Your mother wants us all to share a little family time with her parents, who also love you and are so excited to see you. Just a little time together. That's all. And you talk to her this way? Your own mother? No, sir. You apologize to your mom right now.

They stare at each other. A standoff.

DAD (CONT'D)

NOW!

Bobby slouches back, muttering an apology under his breath.

DAD (CONT'D)

What was that? ...ROBERT!

BOBBY

I'm sorry, mom. I didn't mean to be rude.

Dad turns around.

DAD
Thank you.

A moment passes.

BOBBY
Mom? Dad?

DAD
What, Bobby?

BOBBY
Well... Since I've agreed to go and
apologized, can I get my phone and
games back?

Mom and dad close their eyes in exhausted frustration.

3 EXT. LONELY HIGHWAY - NIGHT 3

The family car sloses through down the rain slick highway.

4 EXT. GAS STATION - NIGHT 4

CAR DOOR slams.

GAS LID spun open.

GAS NOZZLE ripped from pump.

GAS NOZZLE slammed into gas tank.

Dad squeezes it, then leans against the car and sighs.

5 INT. MOM AND DAD'S CAR - NIGHT 5

While Dad is outside by the pump, mom looks over the seat.

In the BACK, Bobby is sleeping deeply.

MOM
Hun? Honey?

She gently nudges him.

MOM (CONT'D)
I'm going to hit the bathroom. You
need to go? Bobby?

She pushes him a little harder. He stirs a bit.

MOM (CONT'D)
Do you need to pee? Last stop
until grandma and grandad's.
Bobby.

He swats her hand away, and roles away from her, in a sleepy annoyed haze.

BOBBY
Leave me alone. Go away.

Mom slowly pulls her hand away. Something inside is so close to shattering into a million pieces. She sighs and gets out.

6 EXT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

6

Dad straightens as Mom exits the driver's side and comes around the car to him.

MOM
I'm going to the bathroom.

DAD
You're not taking Bobby?

MOM
His highness couldn't be bothered
to get up. I tried.

Dad steps to the rear of the car and taps the window.

DAD
Bobby! Hey, kiddo. Get up and
pee. We still have quite a drive
ahead of us.

INSIDE the CAR, Bobby dramatically flings himself over.

BOBBY
I SAID LEAVE ME ALONE! I'M TRYING
TO SLEEP! GOD!

Dad slumps in defeat, turning back to Mom. Without saying a word, a quiet sadness is shared between them.

Mom turns to go into the station. Dad goes back to the pump.

7 EXT. DARK BUILDING - FAR ACROSS STATION LOT - NIGHT 7

The bright florescent lights above the pumps highlight the small island of light in a vast sea of darkness.

MYSTERY POV - ACROSS LOT

In the darkness, FROM BEHIND bushes, watching Mom enter the station and Dad focused on the pump.

SLOW FADE OUT.

In BLACKNESS, the FAR AWAY ECHOES of a CAR ENGINE STARTING and GRAVEL UNDER TIRES. The dreamy syrupy sounds grow louder and more definable as we-

FADE IN:

8 INT. MOM AND DAD'S CAR - NIGHT 8

Bobby stirs from his deep sleep in the backseat of the car.

He hears the sound of the CAR driving faster over GRAVEL and the HUM of the ENGINE. But there is another sound under this; barely audible.

Bobby rubs his eyes.

The LOW SOUND grows louder, becoming recognizable as DISTANT SCREAMS.

Bobby peeks out the back window.

BOBBY'S POV - THROUGH REAR CAR WINDOW

OUTSIDE the red taillights illuminate TWO SHAPES racing behind the car. The Shapes are Mom and Dad, growing smaller by the second as the car speeds away from them. Some black liquid covers half of Dad's face, spilling onto his shirt. Bobby notices this just as his parents are utterly swallowed whole by the darkness beyond the red taillights.

BACK TO SCENE

Bobby slowly turns toward the front seat.

BOBBY'S POV -

FROM THE BACKSEAT we see a LARGE MAN slouching over the steering wheel. A hospital robe is loosely tied closed behind his bulging, sweat-drenched neck.

BACK TO SSCENE

Bobby's eyes widen. He can't speak. His eyes slowly pivot to the passenger seat.

BOBBY'S POV -

FROM THE BACKSEAT we see a DIRTY HAGGARD WOMAN crouched in the passenger seat backward, FACING US. Her wild eyes are fixed directly AT US, as she stares motionless; frozen in a horrific smile. She shakes a small toy that is clutched in her talons, and lets out a gargled squeak.

The LARGE MAN slowly turns, revealing a small blood smeared CHILD'S CLOWN MASK barely covering his greasy bulbous head.

9

EXT. LONELY HIGHWAY - NIGHT

9

Bobby turns in horror, pressing himself into the back window and peers out to the now distant island of light beyond the darkness. He bangs on the window and lets out a muffled scream as his former family's car disappears into the night.

FADE TO BLACK.

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