

Reflection

by

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EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

SUPER: Ohio, 1974

A dark, quiet country road with cornfields on either side. Then...

VROOM. A car flies by, accelerating as it barrels down the road.

INT. EDGAR'S CAR - NIGHT

EDGAR CRANE, late 40s with an unkempt mess of black hair, holds the steering wheel in a white-knuckle grip. The rearview mirror is covered in black tape, both sideviews are smashed.

Edgar sneaks a glance behind him, sees an empty road.

The car sputters. Edgar looks at the dashboard. The fuel gauge rests on E.

EDGAR
Damnit...damnit, damnit, damnit!

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

The car rolls to a stop beneath a street light.

Edgar jumps out, hustles to the back of the car. He fumbles with the keys for a moment, then pulls open the trunk.

EDGAR'S POV

In the trunk are several GAS CANS and a LONG, FLAT OBJECT wrapped in a blanket.

BACK TO SCENE

Edgar stares down into the trunk for a moment, then grabs a gas can.

He pops open the gas cap and hastily begins refueling the car.

He looks up, sees his reflection in the car window. His breathing quickens. His hands begin to shake, rattling the gas can.

A DARK SHAPE appears behind him in the reflection. Edgar screams, drops the gas can, falls backward. Gas spills everywhere.

Edgar scrambles to his feet. He is alone in the road. He takes off, plunging into a cornfield, abandoning the car.

EXT. CORNFIELD - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Edgar races through the maze of corn stalks. He finally stops, leaning on his knees as he GASPS for breath.

All around him are endless columns of corn. He pulls out a ZIPPO, lights it. A yellow flame flickers to life. He slowly moves through the cornfield, holding the zippo out like a lantern.

A GUTTURAL HISS sounds from behind him. Edgar spins, frantically looking for the source.

ANOTHER HISS. He bolts, running blindly through the field.

EXT. FARM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Edgar bursts out of the cornfield, stumbling into the front yard of an old, red farmhouse. He catches his foot on a log, falls, grimaces in pain as he hits the dirt.

Edgar looks up at the house.

EDGAR
(shouting)
Hello?

He pulls himself up, winces as he does so.

EDGAR
(shouting)
Can someone help me? Please?

A light turns on in a second-story window of the house. Edgar exhales in relief, begins limping forward.

SPLASH.

Edgar looks down, sees that he's stepped in a large puddle of water. The waves ripple across its surface.

Edgar stands frozen, watches as the water settles, his reflection taking form.

The front door of the farmhouse flies open. A FARMER, mid 40s, skinny in a white tank top and boxers, pokes his head out with a flashlight.

FARMER
(shouting)
Who's out there?

EDGAR (O.S.)
(screams)

FARMER
(horrificed)
Jesus, Mary and Joseph...

INT. LOMAN ART GALLERY - MAIN GALLERY - MORNING

MITCHELL CRANE, 25 with messy brown hair and an oversized Beatles t-shirt that hangs loosely on his long frame, mounts artwork on the walls of the empty gallery.

INT. LOMAN ART GALLERY - REC ROOM - DAY

Mitch sketches a man in a sci-fi spacesuit into a notepad. 60's ROCK MUSIC plays faintly on the radio behind him. Mitch's eyes focus on the sketch.

The door swings open. Mitch quickly drops the notepad just as HENRY LOMAN, 40s with a thick mustache and receding hairline, barges in.

HENRY

Mitchell!

MITCH

Yes, sir?

HENRY

Mitchell, did you hang those paintings in the gallery?

MITCH

(nods, confused)

You said to put up the Jefferson series, sir.

Henry slaps his forehead, exasperated.

HENRY

Not those ones, you numbskull. The ones from his pre-war catalog! I told you that this morning!

Mitch balks for a moment, then,

MITCH

Sorry, sir. I'll fix it right now.

HENRY

You're damn right, you will! I shouldn't have to tell you things twice like this.

(looks at the notepad)

Were you doodling in here?

MITCH

No sir!

Henry narrows his eyes at Mitch.

HENRY
(jabbing a finger at him)
Pull your head out of your ass,
Mitchell, you hear me? I don't want
to have this conversation again.

Henry slams the door behind him. Mitch groans, gets up.

INT. LOMAN ART GALLERY - WAREHOUSE - DAY

Crates of art are stacked high along the walls. Old painting easels and rusted metal frames crowd the floor.

Mitch pries open a wooden crate full of paintings with a CROWBAR. He gingerly lifts out a painting, frowns at it.

MITCH
(forlorn)
Another thrilling night in the
warehouse...

A KNOCK on the open warehouse door. Mitch turns, sees EMILY GREENE, early 20s, in a sweater and short-cropped brunette hair. A CAMERA hangs around her neck. Mitch smiles.

MITCH
Hey Em!
(tilts his head)
Did you get a haircut?

EMILY
(brightens)
I did, actually. Thank you.
(sees the crate, sneers)
Ugh, Henry doesn't have you working
late again, does he?

Mitch nods, motions to the crate.

MITCH
Apparently, he wanted the other
Jefferson series for tomorrow.

EMILY
(rolling her eyes)
He's such an asshole. Well, I'd
give you a hand but I have film to
develop...
(holds up camera)
plus this warehouse gives me the
heebie-jeebies.

Mitch looks around at the warehouse.

MITCH
Oh, it's not all bad. The rats are
good company.

EMILY
There are rats in here?

MITCH
Only the ones the possum didn't eat yet.

EMILY
You did not see a possum.

Mitch laughs. Emily smiles.

MITCH
All right, these pictures won't hang themselves. Good night, Em.

EMILY
(sympathetically)
Try not to need a rabies shot by the morning.

Emily turns to leave. Mitch opens his mouth as if to say more, but stops himself. She walks away.

Mitch deflates, turns back to the paintings.

MITCH
(to himself)
Hey Em, can I take you out to dinner sometime? Of course not, why would any sane woman say yes to that...

EXT. LOMAN ART GALLERY - NIGHT

Mitch exits the building, crosses an empty parking lot to a lonely 1964 FORD MUSTANG with several rust spots on it. He opens the door and slides in.

INT. MUSTANG - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Mitch slumps down into the driver's seat, stews for a moment, then half-heartedly bangs his head against the steering wheel.

EXT. BACKWOODS ROAD - NIGHT

The mustang drives along a dark, narrow dirt road, pulls into the driveway of a decrepit-looking farmhouse.

Mitch exits the vehicle, walks up the steps of the porch.

INT. OLD FARMHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A worn-out leather couch sits atop a stained, faded carpet. Wallpaper that's peeling at the edges encompasses the room. An ANDY WARHOL ART BOOK sits on the coffee table.

Mitch opens the door and is greeted by BLU, a young potbellied pig. Mitch reaches down, scratches his head.

MITCH
Hey pal, ya miss me?

Blu nestles against Mitch's hand.

MITCH (CONT)
Yeah, I could use some dinner too...

INT. OLD FARMHOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mitch places a BOWL OF PIG CHOW on the floor next to Blu, then a BOWL OF SOUP on a work desk beside a PICTURE OF MITCH, MAGGIE, AND EDGAR at Mitch's college graduation.

He puts a record on a record player, places the needle on the album. '60s ROCK MUSIC begins to play.

Mitch sits at the desk, intently working on a sketch of a spaceship landing on an alien world.

Mitch stops drawing, furrows his brow.

MITCH
(to himself)
No, that's no good...

Mitch erases part of the spaceship, redraws it, grimaces.

MITCH
(to himself)
Damn it...

Mitch rips the page out, crumbles it, throws it in a WASTE BIN overflowing with similarly discarded images. In a corner of the room are several HALF-FINISHED PAINTINGS.

MITCH
(rubbing his eyes)
This is all garbage...

Mitch stares out the window, sees his own reflection in it.

THE PHONE RINGS. Mitch jumps, startled. He takes the needle off the record.

INT. OLD FARMHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The phone CONTINUES TO RING. Mitch rapidly descends the stairs, plucks the receiver off the base.

MITCH
Hello?

MAGGIE (O.S.)
Mitch?

MITCH

Mags? Hey! How is everything? How are the boys?

MAGGIE(O.S.)

They're... they're OK...

(BEAT)

MITCH

Is everything all right?

MAGGIE(O.S.)

(takes a deep breath)

Mitch I'm just going to come out and say it, Uncle Eddie passed away last night.

Mitch's eyes widen as if struck.

MITCH

Oh my god...

(takes the phone, drops
down onto the couch)

what happened?

MAGGIE(O.S.)

They think it was a heart attack. They found him out on a farm near Cleveland. I'm so sorry Mitch...

MITCH

I...I'm sorry too...

MAGGIE(O.S.)

The wake is on Friday at Macallan's, 3:00 pm.

MITCH

(dazed)

Macallan's, all right...I just can't believe it...

MAGGIE(O.S.)

I know. I'm really sorry, Mitch. I know how close you both were. I'll see you on Friday.

MITCH

Friday...OK, see you then, Mags...

Mitch hangs up the receiver, stares off into space for a moment, then brings his hands up to his mouth.

INT. MACALLAN FUNERAL HOME - DAY

Mitch steps into a small reception room. A few clusters of people mill about the mostly empty rows of metal folding chairs. An open coffin sits on a dais at the front of the

room, with an ACOUSTIC GUITAR resting beside it.

MAGGIE CRANE, 29, slim in a black funeral dress with her blonde hair pulled back in a bun, quickly approaches Mitch.

MAGGIE
Oh, Mitch...

She pulls him in for a hug.

MAGGIE
How ya doing?

MITCH
I'm all right...

They release. Maggie's oldest son, JONATHON CRANE, 8, in a grey school uniform with neatly combed blonde hair, follows a step behind his mother.

MITCH
(to Jonathon)
Hey, Johnny...
(beat)
How you holding up?

JONATHON
I'm OK, Uncle Mitchell.

MITCH
Good, that's good. I know this must
be hard...

Mitch opens his mouth as if to say more, then stops, gives a pained smile instead. He turns to Maggie, motions towards the casket.

MITCH
Shall we?

Maggie nods.

MAGGIE
(to Jonathon)
Your Uncle Mitchell and I will be
right back, OK baby?

Mitch and Maggie approach the open casket. Inside is Edgar, his body dressed in a black suit.

MITCH
Hey Uncle Eddie...

MAGGIE
I still can't believe he's gone.

They stare down into the coffin. Mitch begins to smile.

MITCH

You know, I think this is the first time I've ever seen him in a suit?

A hint of a smile creeps onto Maggie's face despite herself.

MITCH (CONT)

Remember when he used to play Elvis songs for us out on the porch?

MAGGIE

Oh god, Dad couldn't stand it.

MITCH

He'd storm out and tell him to stop filling his kids' heads with nonsense.

(Mitch's smile fades)

Guess someone else will have to drive Dad nuts now...

Maggie squeezes his arm. Mitch forces a smile, then looks around the room.

MITCH

Hey, where's Tommy?

Maggie looks behind them, sees THOMAS CRANE, 6, small in the same gray school uniform as Jonathon, sitting alone at the end of a row of chairs. She nods to him.

MAGGIE

You ought to go talk to him. He could use a little help right now.

MITCH

Oh, I don't know, Mags. I'm not any good at...

MAGGIE

(giving Mitch a gentle shove)

Don't be ridiculous. He adores you, trust me.

Mitch gathers himself, then walks over to Thomas, taking a seat in a chair next to him. Thomas doesn't look up.

MITCH

Hey, Tommy... how you feeling?

Thomas continues to stare at his shoes. Mitch looks away. They sit, heads hung in silence.

Mitch turns back to his nephew.

MITCH

I know you probably miss Uncle
Eddie right now... I miss him too.
He always used to make me and your
mom laugh when we were your age.

Thomas finally looks up, a sullen expression on his face.

THOMAS

Really?

MITCH

(nodding)

You know one time, he showed up for
Christmas dressed head to toe as
Elvis Presley, with a little Santa
hat to boot. He said he was
bringing us the gift of rock and
roll. Your grandpa almost threw him
out of the house.

Thomas slowly begins to smile.

MITCH (CONT)

I know it's sad that he's gone, but
I think Uncle Eddie would want us
to laugh about all the fun stuff he
got to do with his life.

Thomas looks down again, considers, then back up at Mitch.

THOMAS

Uncle Mitch, will you teach me to
draw dinosaurs?

MITCH

(taken aback)

Um... I...

THOMAS

Mom got me a book of dinosaurs for
Christmas and I tried to draw some
of them, but all my drawings came
out bad, but Mom says your really
good at drawing.

MITCH

Oh... you know I'm sure your art
teacher can show you-

THOMAS

I don't want to learn from Mr.
Keller. He's mean and his breath
smells like cat poop.

MITCH

(stifles a laugh)

Thomas, come on, that's not nice...

THOMAS

I'm sorry, but I don't like Mr.
Keller. Will you teach me instead?

Mitch sighs, glances at the casket for a moment, then back
to Thomas.

MITCH

OK, but just this one-

THOMAS

(beaming)

Really? Thanks, Uncle Mitch!

Maggie approaches them.

MAGGIE

Hey you two. Mitch, I-

THOMAS

Mom! Uncle Mitch is gonna teach me
how to draw dinosaurs!

MAGGIE

(smiles)

Well, that's very nice of him.

(to Mitch)

Mitch, there's one other thing.
Uncle Eddie's lawyer wants to see
us after the wake. Apparently,
there's a few items that aren't
accounted for in his will.

MITCH

Oh... all right.

(To Thomas)

Your Mom and I have to go do some
grown-up stuff.

THOMAS

Can we draw dinosaurs after?

MITCH

Soon, I promise, OK?

EXT. UNCLE EDDIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - AFTERNOON

Mitch and Maggie wait outside the front of the building.
Mitch takes a drag from a CIGARETTE, glances upward.

MITCH

You know, I don't think I even
remember the last time we were at
Uncle Eddie's place?

MAGGIE

He usually came to us, most times
with a guitar and a six-pack.

MITCH
(laughing)
Yeah, that was him...

Mitch's smile fades. He looks at the cigarette, turns it over between his fingers.

MAGGIE
Are you sure you're OK, Mitch?

MITCH
Yeah... yeah... I know that's what
Uncle Eddie would have wanted.
(beat)
You know he was the first person to
call and congratulate me when I got
into Purchase? I think he was more
excited than I was.

MAGGIE
(smiling)
He was always rooting for us,
especially you.

MITCH
I think he was just glad to have
another artsy misfit in the family.

A black lincoln continental pulls up. FRANKLIN J. ROMERO, late 40s, stately in a black suit and meticulously combed gray hair, approaches with a MANILLA FOLDER in one hand.

FRANKLIN
Mitchell, Maggie, thanks for
coming. Please accept my
condolences. Your uncle was a
wonderful man.

MAGGIE
Thanks, Frank.

FRANKLIN
If you'll follow me upstairs, I can
show you the items in question.

INT. UNCLE EDDIE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Vinyl records, books, and other things are stacked haphazardly against the walls. Flies buzz around a half-finished meal sitting on a coffee table. A fine layer of dust coats everything.

MAGGIE
(disturbed)
Goodness... it doesn't look like
anyone's lived here in weeks...

MITCH
(running a finger through
the dust)
You said they found him on a farm?

MAGGIE
Out in Ohio, yeah.

MITCH
Do we know anyone in Ohio?

Maggie shrugs.

MITCH
(to Franklin)
Uncle Eddie wasn't in some kind of
trouble, was he?

FRANKLIN
Not that I'm aware of. The extra
items are in the bedroom.

INT. UNCLE EDDIE'S APARTMENT - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Mitch and Maggie follow Franklin past a partially open door.

Mitch peers inside to see the bathroom. The sink is covered
in grime, and the mirror above it is BROKEN.

INT. UNCLE EDDIE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The bed is an unruly tangle of blankets. Dust covers the
nightstand and dresser.

MITCH
(whispering to Maggie)
What happened to Uncle Eddie?

Several items are in a pile on the floor, including a TALL,
NARROW SHAPE wrapped in a blanket.

FRANKLIN
(motioning to the pile)
Your uncle neglected to mention any
of these in his will.

Mitch approaches the tall shape.

MITCH
Wonder what this is...

He removes the blanket, revealing the empty, wooden frame of
a floor mirror. Maggie walks up next to Mitch.

MAGGIE
It looks like a mirror frame.

MITCH
What happened to the mirror?

MAGGIE
Must have broken, I guess.

FRANKLIN
It was in the trunk of his car when
he was found. Your father already
said he's not interested in it.

MITCH
(to Maggie)
Need an extra mirror?

MAGGIE
(shaking her head)
We don't have any space for it.

Mitch runs a hand across the wooden frame, notices an
INTRICATE PATTERN along the top arch.

MITCH
(looking at the frame)
You know what, Frank? I'll take it.

FRANKLIN
(making a note in the
folder)
Wonderful. It's all yours, Mitch.

END SAMPLE

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