

ETERNAL

Written by

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INT. NEWSROOM - 2032

The screen lights up with a female brunette TV REPORTER and her plain partner.

REPORTER 1

They say youth is fleeting, but what if you could get it back? Earlier this week, Baby Lola celebrated her 40th birthday. The once terminally ill chimp is now bouncing off the walls all thanks to a new strain of eucalyptus.

REPORTER 2

The unusual plant was found off the coast of Talcahuano, Chile and has restorative properties beyond anything in scientific history.

Screen shows quick montage of baby chimps, including Baby Lola, playing vivaciously in a lab.

Cut to a average-looking male reporter on another channel.

REPORTER 3

The product is scheduled to be tested on terminally ill patients in the coming months. Officials from the General Medical Council are hopeful it will have the same age-reversal effects as it did on Baby Lola.

Screen shows montage of people getting protein injections and creams. People gradually look younger and stronger.

Cut to handsome, revved-up reporter.

REPORTER 4

They're calling it Etern-ALL, a liquid that brings users back to their strongest peak in health and appearance.

Cut to two young, flashy news correspondents.

FEMALE CORRESPONDENT

Don't know what to get your loved ones this holiday season? How about eternal youth?

MALE CORRESPONDENT

That's right! Beautique has just announced its release of the miracle cream, Etern-ALL.

FEMALE CORRESPONDENT

After taking every nation by storm, the life-revitalizing phenomenon will now be available in a convenience store near you.

Cut to images of Etern-ALL flying off the shelves and varying stores going wilder and wilder with panic.

Cut to two serious reporters on a 60 Minutes-type show, who obviously have used Etern-ALL.

REPORTER 5

FDA officials have declared Etern-ALL unsafe, claiming that lasting effects include headaches, seizures and sudden weakness or death upon discontinuing use.

REPORTER 6

If a little headache means I can wear the same blazer from my first week on the job, who minds. Pain is beauty, right?

Cut to montage of Etern-ALL users with migraines, rubbing their temples. Then, users falling to the ground with seizures or dead.

Cut to the original news show. The brunette reporter is now a plastic-looking platinum blonde with too much makeup, but appears a bit younger.

REPORTER 1

Today marks the 25th anniversary of the Etern-ALL going off the market. For all you users out there, stay strong.

A counter pops up on the screen. "Population: 4,312"

REPORTER 1 (CONT'D)

Today's death rate: 79.

The reporter grasps her temples in pain, then returns to the camera with a Barbie smile.

REPORTER 1 (CONT'D)

Stay young, New York.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

The screen zaps off. BLYTHE (17) sets down the TV remote and grudgingly gets off the couch. For a dealer, she is naturally pretty, but low-maintenance.

CASEY (mid-30s) enters their messy, but decent apartment. He is extremely strong and handsome - an obvious user - but not artificial.

CASEY

Hey, did ya go out yet? It's crazy today, everyone's looking for some years.

BLYTHE

You know I wasn't. Stop trying to trick me.

Casey goes to give Blythe a hug, then noogies her.

CASEY

Good kid. You know I'm just trying to protect you. Death rates are up, people need their fix.

BLYTHE

I don't get why people even start using nowadays. They know they only have a couple of good years max before--

Blythe stops, realizing that Casey is shooting up some liquid Etern-ALL and looks apologetic toward her brother.

CASEY

Don't give me those puppy eyes. I got into this way before they started tampering with it. The first time I used, Etern-ALL was pure.

BLYTHE

Yeah, before we got to it.

CASEY

Dealers didn't do this. All those artificial drones wanted to be teens again. Beauty companies started messing with the formula. Now, people only want the junk. Look great for a couple of years, then drop. Never know when the side effects will kick in.

Blythe pauses. Casey finishes up his shot then packs his stuff, getting ready to go back out. Blythe grabs her bag of Etern-ALL shots.

BLYTHE

How are your headaches?

CASEY

You know I don't abuse. Not getting rid of me that soon, kid. C'mon!

EXT. URBAN STREET - DAY

The town is decrepit. Old buildings are rotting next to apartment buildings. Some kids play on old hoverboards. The street is filled with mannequin-like adults frantically getting Etern-ALL from dealers.

A WOMAN drags a kid by the wrist with her bag full of Etern-ALL. The KID gets caught in the crowd. Blythe goes to help him.

BLYTHE

Did you lose your mommy?

KID

No, my bitch-wife can't wait up.

The woman, panicked, clutches onto her bag and returns.

WOMAN

I told him he looked a little tired and accidentally overdosed him. Lucky the OD didn't kill him. HAHA. Ha. Just gotta nurse him back to young adulthood.

KID

I'll nurse you, you son-of-a...

They are gone in the crowd. Blythe catches up with Casey, who's laughing at her.

CASEY

I remember when people aged gracefully.

BLYTHE

Can't wait.

CASEY

Good kid. You're beautiful and healthy. Never start using if you don't have to. And you don't.

BLYTHE

God! Stop already, you'll scare off the customers. Hey, Beaker.

Blythe and Casey walk up to Beaker's stand. BEAKER (20) looks young, but haggard with his messy red hair and shifty eyes. He's busy preparing a batch of Etern-ALL.

BEAKER

Hey, kiddies. Looks like everyone's here to celebrate old Beaker's birthday.

CASEY

Yeah, or Market Day. 25 years, pal.

BLYTHE

Happy Birthday, Beaks! How *old* are you?

BEAKER

Young, dearie. Young! And let's see... 25 years since we went off the market...that makes it.. carry the 2...so I... Why, I'm 86.

BLYTHE

Geez. And you're still in the business?

BEAKER

I'd still be teaching chem at Cornell if it weren't for the death drop of 2042. With everyone dying, what's the point of going to school?

BLYTHE

(under her breath) I'd like to go to college.

BEAKER

You and who else? No one's had kids since they found out it kills you. Etern-ALL and its reverse effects... we should have listened when they banned it.

Casey coughs then nods uncomfortably to Blythe. Beaker looks at Blythe aghast, then humphs and goes back to work.

CASEY

They knew the risks, Blythe. Mom and Dad loved you.

BLYTHE

I just wish dad could have stuck around after Mom died, you know.

CASEY

C'mon. Let's see what's going on up there.

A huge crowd has formed around the massive PSA television by town hall. The perfectly coiffed, tautly-skinned MAYOR SPALDING is speaking. In the distance we hear, "The death drop in South America has reached an all-time high..."

MAYOR SPALDING

...leading to a deficiency in our supply. The Etern-ALL plant will no longer be available until transporters can bring it in from Chile. Officials have been working on a substitute, but no progress has been reported.

There is commotion among the crowd. Chatter, yelling, some fallen users who could not handle the news. A counter shows up on the screen. "Population: 4,264"

MAYOR SPALDING (CONT'D)

Today's current Death Rate: 127...
Stay young, New York.

The TV screen turns black and there is only panic. People rampantly run to dealers and bang on doors. More people drop in the commotion.

CASEY

We need to go.

BLYTHE

What?! No, it's a major selling day. We need the--

CASEY

Blythe, we're leaving, now!

The siblings run through the busy street and fight their way back to their apartment.

They lock the doors, close the blinds and hide their stash. Casey looks at his supply of Etern-ALL then Blythe in fear.

Cut to Reporter 1, now looking a bit older and less put-together.

REPORTER 1

It's been 59 days since the Etern-ALL shortage. The death rate has hit an all-time high. While most have given up, there are rumors of a gang, searching for non-using young bloods.

The Reporter clutches her forehead in pain as the TV cuts out. Casey is holding the remote and a bowl of tomato soup. Blythe rolls over on the couch and puts her face into a pillow.

CASEY

C'mon. You've gotta eat something.

REPORTER 1

(in the background) Sources say the gangs believe the blood of non-users or people born after Market Day has the same restorative properties as Etern-all.

BLYTHE

You're just trying to fatten me up so you can eat me and stay young forever.

CASEY

(seriously) Why would you say that? Hey. Look at me. This isn't a joke, Blythe.

REPORTER 1

Although there is no evidence behind these claims, three attacks have been reported as of this morning. If you or someone you know is clean... please. Be careful.

CASEY

And why are you watching that? I told you, no lights on until I can re-board the windows.

BLYTHE

I'm sorry. It's just so boring
being locked up in here. Why can't
I go outside, just for a minute?

Casey slams the soup bowl down, hastily sits beside her, then tries to cool down before speaking.

CASEY

We have talked about this. It's not
safe anymore. I know you think this
is a joke, but there are people out
there who will do anything,
ANYTHING to stay young and alive.

Casey rubs his temple, trying to conceal his pain.

BLYTHE

They're bad aren't they? How much
are you using?

CASEY

I have to ration, Blythe. I have to
be here.

BLYTHE

Okay, but don't kill yourself
trying to stay alive. Here, let me
get you a shot.

CASEY

No, Blythe, I need to talk to you.
We can't stay here any longer.
Tuesday night, we leave.

BLYTHE

What!? What do you mean? I thought
you said I couldn't go out there.
Where are we supposed to go?

CASEY

Tuesday night, 1 a.m. No one will
be out. Half the town is dead now.
Didn't even take two months for
them to run out. But I heard some
people talking.

BLYTHE

About what, Casey?

There's a pause. Casey reaches for the soup and hands it to Blythe.

BLYTHE (CONT'D)
C'mon, Casey.

CASEY
They know about you, kid. They know
you never used. Your real age. They
want young bloods, Blythe.

Blythe spills her soup.

BLYTHE
Oh! Oh, it's okay. I'll get another
shirt. I'm fine. Let me just...
I'll get a new one.

Blythe hurries into her bedroom, shuts the door and falls to
the floor in anguish.

EXT. BLYTHE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Four USER-MEATHEADS bang at the door. They have weapons.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Casey, startled, runs to the hall dresser to get his gun. He
sees that Blythe's door is shut and hears weeping. He
prepares the gun, grabs his last few shots of Etern-ALL and
goes to check the door.

The men outside look like exhausted 30-year-olds. Their
clothes are torn and dirty. Beaker is in the back of the
group, his shifty eyes twitching left and right.

BEAKER
Casey, boy. Come on out. We just
want a word.

Casey runs to Blythe's room, but she is gone. The window is
open. There is a note on her desk: "Stop living for me. I'm
sorry."

USER 1
Don't be shy. We just want to meet
your sister.

Casey sees a bat cracking the front door's wood. He hikes out
the bedroom window and makes a run for it. Beaker spots him.
Casey throws his bag of Etern-ALL shots behind him. The users
forget about Casey and grab the shots.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK CAROUSEL - NEXT EVENING

Casey, exhausted and looking about 40-years-old, drags his feet to the carousel and waits.

BLYTHE

Wasn't that great of a hiding spot, huh?

CASEY

I know you too well, kid. The carousel? C'mon. It was our favorite place growing up.

BLYTHE

I just had to get out of there and I knew you would try to stop me and-

CASEY

Hey, none of that. Come here.

Blythe walks around to see the front of her brother. His hair is graying and he looks frail.

BLYTHE

Casey, what happened to you?! Is this the Etern-ALL? How much did you take?

CASEY

None.

BLYTHE

Then I'll get you some. Where's your stash?

CASEY

It's gone, Blythe.

BLYTHE

What do you mean it's gone? You've been rationing.

CASEY

They came for you. At the apartment. I had to leave it behind.

BLYTHE

Casey. I'm so sorry. This is exactly why I left. You shouldn't have to take care of me.

CASEY

Kid. Come here. C'mon.

Blythe sits next to him. Casey takes a photo out of his pocket and unfolds it.

CASEY (CONT'D)

It's my job to take care of you.
You're the only reason I'm still
around.

BLYTHE

You don't have to say that.

CASEY

I do. Look. That's you. And Mom.

BLYTHE

Where did you find this? Wow, you
look so much like Grandpa.

Blythe holds the photo of her newborn self, parents and grandparents.

BLYTHE (CONT'D)

You *really* look like Grandpa.
Casey... why did you start using?

CASEY

They knew the risks of natural
childbirth. Takes such a tole on
users. After your mom died, your
dad was so weak. He couldn't handle
her being gone and stopped using.
He couldn't pull through. Cheap
stuff and its side effects. I had
to be around to keep you safe.

BLYTHE

What are you saying?

CASEY

I'm sorry I kept this from you. It
was easier this way. A newborn. An
old man. I had to start.

BLYTHE

How old are you, Casey?

CASEY

Old enough. You'll see.

BLYTHE

Who are you?

CASEY

(weak) The same old Casey, kid.
Very old. (weakly laughs) We have
to get you out of here befor--

BLYTHE

Stop treating me like a kid! C'mon!
Just say it.

CASEY

I'm your grandfather. When your
parents passed, your grandmother
followed. The world was changing.
You were one of the few young
bloods.

Blythe shh's him, pauses, then throws her arms around him.

BLYTHE

Thank you.

Casey hugs her, tears building in his eyes. Blythe wipes the
water from her eyes, then gets up. She runs to the booth
beside the carousel and retrieves her bag.

CASEY

I don't know how much longer I
have. You have to get out of here.
There's a safe house in Jersey.

BLYTHE

(returning) Fine, but let's get you
better first.

CASEY

I don't have anymore Etern-ALL.

BLYTHE

I was saving this. In case, well, I
didn't want to be the only one left
in New York and the side effects
would kick in after a week or so--

CASEY

You're not going to be the last--

BLYTHE

Stop interrupting. I know I'm not.
Here.

Blythe injects Casey and the effects start to take hold. He
still looks aged, but bright.

CASEY

Thank you. Thank you. But this
isn't going to last.

BLYTHE

Which is why we're going to Jersey,
Gramps. Together.

Casey gets up, stretches and starts to walk away.

CASEY

Well, c'mon kid.

They head out of the park as the night darkens. Beaker and
his gang follow a few meters behind.

FADE OUT