

Nocturnal

By

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FADE IN:

1

INT. DINING ROOM IN THE SCRUMP HOME - DAY

1

A mug with the phrases "Write. Revise. Eat. Repeat." is picked up and brought to the lips of CHARLES SCRUMP (37), a man who typically wears bright shirts with mismatched buttons and has a youthful gleam in his crows feet-adorned eyes. He wears an interested look while he reads a comic book and gently sets down the mug on the table.

After jotting down some notes in a thick notepad, he glances up and looks off at something unknown to us in the distance. CHARLES' face contorts to a slight frown and burrows his eyebrows before letting out a quiet and disappointed-sounding exhale.

Our attention is refocused to the figure sitting across the table from CHARLES--or rather, the object sitting across from him. CHARLES finds himself looking at a large newspaper being held at the sides by two small hands. Suddenly, the hands set the paper down and reach for a glass of water.

EDDIE SCRUMP (6), an first grader who wears dull-looking clothing and a bored look on his face as if he knows everything, sips from his bland drink before he picks up a pen and fills in a long word in the crossword section of the paper. EDDIE then reaches for his slice of toast on his plate and bites into it.

EDDIE

Ow!

Jolted back to reality and away from his thoughts, CHARLES becomes concerned with the boy at the table.

CHARLES

Squirt? You alright?

EDDIE

My mouth, ow, my mouth...

EDDIE fiddles within his mouth for a few seconds, before he retreats his hand and opens his fist to reveal a slightly bloody tooth.

CHARLES

Oh my god, Eddie! Your tooth!

EDDIE

Oh my god.

(CONTINUED)

CHARLES

Do you know what this means,
Eddie?!

EDDIE

Oh my god I'm dying.

CHARLES

No, no, no! You're growing up, not
dying! You're now starting to lose
your baby teeth! It's a good thing!

EDDIE

How is this a good thing, I'm
literally falling apart piece by
piece, I'm bleeding, my mouth still
hurts, how is this a goo--

CHARLES

New adult teeth will grow back in
place of the baby ones you lost.

A concerned EDDIE fiddles with pressing a napkin in his
mouth, and CHARLES ponders at his distressed son.

CHARLES(V.O.)

This is my last chance... No more
screw ups. Otherwise my six-year
old with the maturity of someone
twice my age is probably going to
start growing a beard tomorrow.

CHARLES

Uh. You can also get free stuff for
your teeth!

EDDIE raises his eyebrows curiously at his father.

EDDIE

Free stuff? How?

CHARLES(V.O.)

Go for it, Charles.

CHARLES

The Tooth Fairy.

EDDIE

Another one of these strange
festive figures you've been
babbling about for the past year?

CHARLES

They're not strange. They just want you to have a good time and spread their happiness and message to everyone in the world through gifts. You see, you place your tooth under your pillow at night, and the tooth fairy comes later to take your tooth and replace it with gifts.

EDDIE

...Right. So tell me, does this *Tooth Fairy* person make as much noise as this Easter Bunny guy had the nerve to make in the night this past Easter?

CUT TO:

2 INT. EDDIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 2

A flashback transitions to EDDIE sleeping soundly in his bed. A figure suddenly walks into view of the window.

CUT TO:

3 EXT. THE SCRUMP HOME'S FRONT YARD - NIGHT 3

Crickets faintly chirp in the night. A person in an adult male-sized rabbit suit carries a bag of plastic Easter eggs. The figure tiptoes throughout the grassy yard, reaches for eggs, and repeatedly places them around the bushes of one side of the yard.

The figure slowly backs away to admire their work. Their foot suddenly triggers an electronic, drilling sound to play briefly, before several motion-activated sprinklers rise up from the grass in the yard.

The figure cusses aloud in the familiar voice of CHARLES.

CHARLES

Shit.

The band of sprinklers shoot streams of water at the bunny-eared figure that proceeds to shout loud profanities as they desperately scurry around the yard trying to shield themselves. Several neighborhood dogs begin to bark in the distance, and the windows of two neighboring houses light up as well.

CUT TO:

4 INT. EDDIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 4

The noise from outside is muffled. EDDIE awakens and turns his perturbed attention at the window, observing the frantic bunny-eared figure scuffle around his front lawn. EDDIE sighs briefly before approaching his window and shutting the window's curtains.

CUT TO BLACK BRIEFLY, THEN CUT TO:

5 INT. DINING ROOM IN THE SCRUMP HOME - DAY 5

EDDIE

Because I've got school in the morning and I need my sleep.

CHARLES(V.O.)

Savage. He got it from you, Meredith.

CHARLES

Uh. I can assure you, the tooth fairy is a very tiny person. She will barely make a peep when she visits you at night to deliver the money.

EDDIE

...Right. So tell me, does this "tooth fairy" person sometimes forget to leave their gifts like this Santa person did this past Christmas?

CUT TO:

6 INT. LIVING ROOM IN THE SCRUMP HOME - DAY 6

A frown is plastered on a gray and bland pajama-adorned EDDIE who faces us. He suddenly yells out.

EDDIE

Dad.

We suddenly see his back in front of a large and overly-decorated Christmas tree, yet the base of the tree is completely barren.

EDDIE

Dad!

EDDIE calls out louder before wandering off screen. His head in the frame was covering a picture ornament on the tree of two taller figures holding a small child.

(CONTINUED)

EDDIE walks through the corridor connecting the living room to the dining room when he suddenly hears a strange sound from a door he passes on his right. It's the downstairs bathroom door. EDDIE encroaches upon the door, before he hears the sound more clearly than before--a fart. EDDIE grows wide-eyed, surprised by the random sound of someone passing gas repeatedly in his bathroom on Christmas morning. A familiar sounding sigh echoes from the bathroom, triggering a reaction from EDDIE.

EDDIE

...Dad?

Cue amusing music with a light but slow tone. A familiar voice calls out from inside the bathroom.

CHARLES

Shit. Oh, uh, I mean, hey Squirt!

EDDIE

...You good?

CHARLES

Uh...taking care of the quiche from last night!

EDDIE

You do that.

CUT TO:

CHARLES emerges from the bathroom with dark crescents under his eyes and looking exhausted. His arm wraps around his stomach as if he's extremely uncomfortable, and as soon as he spots EDDIE leaning against the adjacent wall, he straightens up and folds his arms across his chest.

CHARLES

Hey.

EDDIE

...Hey. Alright then. Uh, so yeah, pretty sure we got scammed.

CHARLES

Alright, sorry, just had to take care of business.

EDDIE

(under his breath)

Let it rip.

(CONTINUED)

CHARLES

What'd you say, Scout?

EDDIE

(quickly)

We got ripped off. Anyways, that Claus guy didn't even bother to leave gifts behind like you said. But he still made off with the cookies and milk like some freeloader.

Luckily I had a feeling this would happen, since I wasn't too comfortable with some overweight and foreign stranger walking around the house.

CHARLES

Oh really?

EDDIE begins walking down the hallway and away from CHARLES and towards us, folding his arms and wearing a smug look while looking off into the distance.

EDDIE

Yep. I thought the story of Santa was a little creepy, so I wanted to catch the guy and tell him to maybe not break into people's houses and just knock next time. So I put some stuff in the milk to catch him, but I guess that plan failed. At least we got back at him for not leaving any presents like he was supposed to.

CHARLES

(reluctantly)

...You messed with the milk?

EDDIE

(smirking)

Laxatives.

CHARLES(V.O.)

...Shit.

EDDIE walks off screen, before CHARLES suddenly takes on a nauseous look on his face, before diving back into the bathroom while holding his backside.

Cut the light, amusing music.

CUT TO:

7

INT. DINING ROOM IN THE SCRUMP HOME - DAY

7

CHARLES ponders about his past horrors and long date with a toilet seat. EDDIE removes the napkin from his mouth, observing the small bloodstains.

CHARLES

They only forget when you torture them with stool softener.

EDDIE

It was out of self defense. A safety precaution.

CHARLES

The Easter Bunny and Santa aren't bad people, Eddie.

EDDIE

It's fishy how the Santa guy somehow still delivered the gifts the next night. You'd think sending the guy running to the shitter would send him a message of not breaking into our house again.

CHARLES addresses EDDIE in a much more stern tone from across the table.

CHARLES

Edward! Language.

EDDIE

Don't blame me, you say it too. And thanks for using my real name, I like it way more than the weird nicknames you label me with. And don't you see how bizarre festive-burglar stuff is?

CHARLES

I don't understand why you're always trying to push away fun things. You're never eager about anything anymore besides crossword puzzles, sleeping, and homework.

EDDIE uses his hands to further convey his annoyance to his father. CHARLES happens to do the same.

(CONTINUED)

EDDIE

Well I don't get why you're always trying to push this weird stuff and people on me. Why should I care about these flakey people?

CHARLES

Why don't you want to have fun? Why don't you want to care about things anymore?

EDDIE

Because caring too much about things can sometimes hurt you.

CHARLES' expression softens from annoyance to open-mindedness. EDDIE's face contorts to furrowed brows and a pitiful look of an honestly sad child. He refuses to make eye contact with his father.

Soft, melancholy music plays in the background.

EDDIE(CONT.)

It hurt a lot when Mom died. This kind of stuff reminds me of her. Of you two. Always trying to make me giggle at your weird stories you two wrote. Even the kids at school constantly talk about how amazing their Easters and Christmases were while I can never say the same about my experiences with them.

CHARLES

It was hard on me too, Squirt. Really hard. Do the other kids at school make you feel bad about yourself for not being able to enjoy fun things?

EDDIE's head neither nods nor shakes. He stares at the floor as if it's more interesting than his father's question, but he still remains attentive.

CHARLES(V.O.)

(light chuckle)

He sometimes reminds me of my editor, but he can't help the fact still just a kid.

CHARLES moves his head to catch the lower gaze of EDDIE and make solid eye contact with him, convinced that he is going to make his son smile.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CHARLES(V.O.) (cont'd)

But just give it a chance. Your mom loved this kind of stuff, and she'd love to share the experience of fun festivities with you if she got the chance. It'd mean a lot to her if you just gave these sorts of things one more try. I'm sorry the Easter Bunny and Santa were klutzy screw ups this year, but I'm sure they're sorry for disappointing you.

I know you're a tad more serious than how Mom was, but I really think you may enjoy these sorts of things. Please?

EDDIE

...Well what kind of gifts does the Tooth Fairy leave?

CHARLES

Money.

Suddenly cut sentimental music. EDDIE makes direct and eager eye contact with CHARLES.

EDDIE

(abruptly)

I'll do it.

CUT TO:

8 INT. EDDIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

8

EDDIE eagerly lies in bed in his bedroom lit by a single lamp and looks curiously, almost longingly at his tooth before placing it under his pillow. CHARLES proceeds to tuck in the boy.

EDDIE

Are you positive this'll work? And she'll come?

CHARLES

Yes, Squirt.

EDDIE

You positive she gives money?

(CONTINUED)

CHARLES

Yes I'm sure.

EDDIE

How much per tooth?

CHARLES(V.O.)

He really *is* your son, Meredith.

CHARLES

It depends on how long you're asleep for.

EDDIE

Bye Dad, love you, see you in the morning. Would you mind shutting out my light?

CHARLES

(chuckling)

Alright, sweet dreams, Squirt.

CHARLES shuts off the light in the room before making his way towards the doorway. He sneaks a glance back at the already sleeping EDDIE and smiles, before he turns back towards the door and puts a serious face on. He approaches us, until the scene FADES TO BLACK.

CUT TO:

9

INT. CHARLES' BEDROOM - NIGHT

9

A sequence of shots show CHARLES putting on all black clothing to conceal his skin, all while maintaining a straight face.

CHARLES(V.O.)

All black to become one with the darkness.

He pulls black socks on his feet.

CHARLES(V.O.)

Extra padding. Extra noise cancellation.

CHARLES clamps and unclamps a toy dinosaur grabber on a plastic rod.

CHARLES(V.O.)

To reach to great lengths.

(CONTINUED)

CHARLES finally places a ski mask over his face. We see him admiring his work in the mirror before turning around and repeatedly clamping the dinosaur grabber.

CHARLES
Let's do this.

CUT TO BLACK

10

INT. EDDIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

10

Suspenseful music plays. The door to EDDIE's bedroom opens ajar, with an aloof CHARLES peeking in. He glances at EDDIE, sound asleep and a lump under the covers. CHARLES ducks down inside the room before shutting the door and beginning to army crawl across the floor towards the bed. When he reaches the bed, he grabs his dinosaur grabber from his belt and raises it to the same level as the top of the bed.

From the bed, we see the dinosaur grabber appear and look left and right. It nods and is lowered.

CHARLES looks at the dinosaur grabber on floor level again, before sighing and raising it again.

We once again see the dinosaur grabber at the top of the bed. It approaches the side of EDDIE's pillow which his head lies slightly on top of. The grabber slowly wedges its way under the pillow.

EDDIE suddenly stirs, causing CHARLES to freeze and look wide-eyed. The boy's movement ceases eventually, resulting in CHARLES greatly exhaling. Though looking stressed initially, CHARLES' face contorts to a determined look, and he continues to fish with the dinosaur grabber.

CHARLES hears a slight scrape sound, and he closes the dinosaur grabber's mouth before fishing it out and lowering it once again to the floor.

He holds his hand out and unclamps the dinosaur grabber. We see through the darkness a small tooth fall into his hand. CHARLES for the first time exhales satisfactorily, and he places the tooth inside his pants pocket, before removing his hand to reveal two single dollar bills from his pocket.

Inserting the dollar bills into the mouth of the grabber, we see CHARLES raise the grabber back up to the top of the bed.

Suddenly CHARLES' arm holding the grabber skyrockets upwards as he gasps out of surprise. He glances upwards guiltily until he sees the familiar short arm holding up the head of the grabber. And connected to that arm is the furious face of EDDIE.

(CONTINUED)

EDDIE

Caught you! I knew it all along.
And to think I trusted you.

CHARLES

Eddie, I can explai--

EDDIE

(deadpan and serious)
Get out.

A quiet, somber instrumental slowly progresses.

CHARLES takes on a sentimental look, and he slowly releases the grabber and stands up. He removes his ski mask, which further reveals his downtrodden and depressed look. Unable to look his son in the eye, CHARLES slowly files out of the room.

FADE INTO:

11 INT. CHARLES' BEDROOM - NIGHT

11

Somber music still plays.

CHARLES stalks into the room before sitting himself on the edge of the bed. He runs his hands through his hair and rubs his neck, while he himself looks rather down and stressed. His attention drifts from the floor to his nightstand. The same picture from the Christmas tree ornament is displayed of CHARLES holding a younger EDDIE while standing next to a woman that has the same hair color and smile as EDDIE.

CHARLES

(quietly)

I'm not you. I don't know how to
get him to smile like how you
could. Sorry I let you down too,
Mere.

CHARLES gives the photo a longing look, before he tucks himself into bed. We then see an aerial view of the bed, moonlight from the window pouring onto the empty space on the bed's right side.

FADE TO BLACK, THEN FADE INTO:

12

INT. DINING ROOM IN THE SCRUMP HOME - DAY

12

CHARLES sits at his usual place at the dining table. He has a dull look to his eyes that disinterestedly skim the comic book he's reading. He glances once at the raised newspaper that stares at him, then lowers his gaze back to his book.

EDDIE

Dad?

CHARLES sips his coffee while he slowly raises his gaze at the talking newspaper. He "hmm's" in response, as if he already knows what the voice will say. The newspaper is lowered to a horizontal position on the table, revealing the usual serious face of CHARLES' son.

EDDIE

I know something the Easter Bunny,
Santa Claus, and the Tooth Fairy
all have in common.

CHARLES redirects his attention to his raised coffee mug.

EDDIE

They're all nocturnal.

CHARLES stops raising his mug right before his mouth at this moment. He stares silently and extremely wide-eyed at his son who somehow isn't roasting him for being a screw up at the moment.

EDDIE

Also, why were you trying to steal
the Tooth Fairy's money from me
last night?

Time passes slowly in CHARLES' head. After enduring a long and surprised stare, he almost lets a full smile melt onto his face, but he restrains his look of satisfaction with a serious face to not give away his true, happy thoughts. He clears his throat and smirks slightly.

CHARLES

Well you see, Squirt--

CUT TO BLACK

CUT TO TITLE TEXT ON SCREEN

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