

"SIMON AND THE DEMON"

By

Brooke Jaffe

FADE IN:

INT/EXT. CAR - DAY

A beaten-up station wagon trundles down a bleary, sun-cracked highway running inland of Santa Cruz, California. Inside the car is SIMON (23), white-knuckled hands on the steering wheel, squinting through the bruises blooming on his face and past the unforgiving sunlight with a grimace. He's the kind of shaggy-haired, sun-speckled California "dude" who would look at home in a 90's extreme sports movie, and probably has a tenuous relationship with wearing shirts; though at the moment he's dressed in the cheery primary colors of a fast food chain uniform stained with drops of browned blood. It comes from his nose, judging by the crust above his upper lip. The inside of the car is strewn with a few towels, a wetsuit, and a plastic water bottle labeled "holy water" in sharpie. The tip of a surfboard pokes out over the back seat.

SIMON

I can't believe you did that.

In the back seat appears THE DEMON (ageless), a ram-horned humanoid with blood red skin and yellow eyes, looking rather smug as it lounges languidly across the car and drums its claws against one goat-furred knee.

THE DEMON

You're welcome.

SIMON

For what? Getting me fired? Again?

THE DEMON

For getting you out of that wretched establishment.

SIMON

Dude, I need to pay my fucking rent. I need to eat. I need to do basic human shit and you know what? That costs money! Money I need to have a job to get.

The Demon rolls its eyes.

THE DEMON

Now, now--

SIMON

A job *you* so fucking generously got me
fired from!

THE DEMON

Oh please, stop being so dramatic.

SIMON

(scoffs) Dramatic.

THE DEMON

Yes, dramatic. That accursed place is
beneath you, and far beneath me. I would
not abide it a moment longer. Its loss
means nothing to us.

SIMON

Us? That's fucking rich.

THE DEMON

Yes, child, US. Your body, your mind, they
are as much mine as they are yours. You
know this.

Simon goes rigid, tugged by a flick of the Demon's wrist,
and he pulls the car over to the side of the road and stops
it in the wide, empty emergency lane. They both dip forward
as he slams on the break. The Demon looks nonplussed, and
with a second flick Simon's body releases.

SIMON

(in disbelief) You just did it again. We
agreed--

THE DEMON

That you would maintain control so long as you did not threaten our wellbeing. Yes, yes.

SIMON

And that's worked for, like, how long now?

THE DEMON

Time passes so quickly, I hardly know.

SIMON

Fifteen years. Fifteen years! And you just broke it! Can't go to college, I can't hold a goddamn job because of you--

THE DEMON

All I did was act upon your heart's desires. (Leaning forward, poking one claw into Simon's shoulder to punctuate:) *You* hated that place. *You* resented those people. *You* wanted nothing more than to tear that man to shreds. Compared to your violent heart, what I did was... restrained.

SIMON

You think beating the shit out of my manager *in front of everyone in the kitchen* was RESTRAINED? You sunnovabitch--

The Demon's glib smile drops and he raises a hand, drawing his finger through the air in a horizontal slash as Simon's mouth zips shut. He looks horrified, angry— but resigned. Tears are forming at the corners of his eyes. This isn't the first time this has happened.

THE DEMON

You forget who you are speaking to. Calm yourself, child.

SIMON

Mmmmph.

THE DEMON

There, that is better. Now: know I am aware of your mortal concerns. I am aware of everything you are and more. I am aware that YOU know that you do not need to go through these pitiful charades of normalcy, and yet you cling to them like a child to his mother's teat. I can provide for you, child: having me makes you more powerful than any human alive. Why do you continue to deny me so?

SIMON

Mmmphphmm.

The Demon makes a sweep through the air with his finger and Simon's mouth unzips again.

SIMON

(Coughing, panting) Because... because if I don't— well. You can make me miserable all you want, I can handle it. But... I-I'm not going to let you make everyone else miserable, too.

THE DEMON

(Considering, some dark plan brewing in his mind.) Hm, interesting. Let us test that theory, shall we?

Horror dawns on Simon's face.

SIMON

No, please—

Simon goes stiff, a gasp punctuating the moment his eyes widen and tears stream freely down his face. He blinks once, and his eyes are yellow.

THE DEMON

(In Simon's voice) It has been fifteen years, you said? That is quite a long time to go without stretching my legs.

The Demon, using Simon's body, revs the car back to life and pulls back out onto the highway. Now, sitting in the backseat where The Demon once was, is Simon— the *real* Simon. His eyes are wide. As the car pulls off at the next exit he lunges for the front seat and is thrown back with another casual flick of The Demon's hand.

SIMON

No— You can't—

He dives back and is tossed away again. Some of the junk in the backseat (wetsuit, surfboard leash) wrap around his neck and arms and bind him down to the back seat.

THE DEMON

Behave yourself.

EXT. SIMON'S HOUSE - DAY

The car pulls off at the next exit and turns at a light, drives into a residential neighborhood, and pulls into the driveway of a small blue house with a wave-pattern mailbox and a surfboard leaned up against the wall of the open garage. The Demon stops the car and gets out. Simon continues to struggle.

SIMON

Stop! NO! I— I'll do what you want just—

The Demon pauses at the open door.

THE DEMON

A child who disobeys must be punished.

He shuts the door and walks up to the garage door, unlocking it. A dog barks and wags its tail, until it sniffs at The Demon's hand and suddenly backs off. A woman's voice can be heard from inside.

MOTHER

Simon, you're home early?

THE DEMON

Yeah, mom. Crazy day at work.

SIMON

(from the car) NO!

In the car, Simon's face falls into abject, helpless
terror. The Demon glances back to the car, smiles, and
shuts the door.

FADE OUT:

THE END