

Black Angel  
by  
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INT. NEW YORK CITY APARTMENT / 1939 - EARLY EVENING

TROY -- a frail, tiny boy of about 7 -- resilient eyes, dark hair -- stands in the center of a large, opulent living room in an apartment somewhere in New York City.

He's dressed in a suit which makes him look much older than he is. He holds in his hand a TOY FIRE TRUCK.

In the bg faint CITY SOUNDS can be heard - they're far away, distant.

Troy watches his mother, JOAN (30, blonde hair, pert features, eyes intent) gazes at herself in a handheld mirror she holds in her hand.

She touches her earrings, hair, smooths her hands over her black dress, looks down at her brilliant pair of white high heel shoes.

She WINKS at Troy. He GIGGLES and winks back and RUNS over to her and puts his arms around her. She kisses him gently over and over atop his tuft of jet black hair.

JOAN

What am I going to do with you? Eat you up. That's what I'm going to do. Simply eat. You. UP.

Troy's eyes flit toward the BATHROOM DOOR at the end of the hallways.

Joan lifts his chin so his eyes rest upon hers.

JOAN (CONT'D)

He won't hurt us anymore.

Troy nods.

JOAN (CONT'D)

You're my beautiful boy. Nothing can come between us. Not the earth, moon or sky because we're each others earth, moon and sky. Aren't we?

TROY

(whisper)  
Earth, moon and sky.

They kiss.

JOAN

Go ahead now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He nods, walks to the bed in the far corner of the bedroom. Shafts of red and blue police lights FLASH inside of the apartment from the city outside.

Troy kneels next to the bed, slides his hand under the mattress. His tongue juts out of his mouth.

JOAN (CONT'D)

Careful.

Troy stops - found what he's looking for - pulls it out.

It's a SMALL OBJECT wrapped in a WHITE SATIN CLOTH.

He carefully carries it to Joan. More red and blue police lights FLASH across the room.

He gently hands it to her as if it were an injured bird. She removes the cloth to reveal the prize inside: A SMALL, PEARL HANDLED REVOLVER.

CLICK.

The bathroom door opens.

JOAN (CONT'D)

My bag. Hurry.

Troy runs across the bedroom, SNATCHES her RED BAG from atop a dresser filled with PHOTOS of Troy and Joan and some other TALL DARK MAN. They're at Coney Island.

Troy holds the open bag out to her. She wraps the revolver back in it's white satin cloth and places it into the bag.

Troy drops the bag.

It falls to the ground.

So does the revolver.

The bathroom door opens. From inside comes a rumbling voice:

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

What was that?

JOAN

Nothing Derek. Troy dropped his fire truck.

Joan silently gestures to Troy to hand her her bag...and the gun.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DEREK (O.S.)

Better not have marked up my floor. Paid good money to have that shit laminated. And you better not be wearing those white shoes Joan. I'm not takin' no whore to the stupid theater.

Joan quickly grabs the bag, rewraps the gun and places it inside.

She juts her feet out and gestures to Troy -- he quickly takes her heels off and tiptoes to the closet, puts them inside, grabs black heels -- runs over and puts them on her.

From the OPEN BATHROOM DOOR the SHADOW of Derek emerges.

DEREK (CONT'D)

Did you --

JOAN

Yes my darling. Of course I'm not wearing the white shoes.

Derek's shadow HOLDS for a moment, then retreats inside.

Joan looks inside of the bag - her fingers grace the wrapped gun - a little SMILE on her face - then she closes the bag with a SNAP.

Derek emerges from the bathroom. He runs his meaty hands over his slicked back hair and adjusts his tuxedo shirt.

DEREK

Feel like a fuckin' penguin in this thing.

Derek's 30 going on 60. Gin-soaked face. Nose that's been broken a few hundred times. A bandage on his chin. Slight black eye. A meat sack on legs.

He strides down the hallway, reaches Troy. Stares down at him. A soaring midtown Manhattan skyscraper if a soaring midtown Manhattan skyscraper had dark eyes and breath that smelled of cigars and booze.

DEREK (CONT'D)

You hurt my floor?

TROY

No sir.

DEREK

Told you to stop calling me that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

TROY  
Sorry.

DEREK  
Sorry what?

TROY  
Derek.

Derek leans down, his beady eyes inches from Troy's.

DEREK  
Sorry what?

A beat.

TROY  
Dad. Sorry Dad.

Derek rights himself up.

DEREK  
Get my jacket, son.

JOAN  
Please.

Troy runs to the bed where Derek's coat lies.

Derek casts a dark glance at Joan.

DEREK  
(vile)  
Please get Daddy Derek his jacket so he  
can look like a fucking bozo at the  
fucking opera.  
(looks her up and down; softer)  
You look good.

Joan stands and walks over to him. Puts her hands on his chest - her face barely comes to his sternum.

JOAN  
And you look very handsome.

Derek gently runs his bandaged finger across her forehead, removes a strand of hair.

DEREK  
I don't deserve you.

JOAN  
You always say that when you drink.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

DEREK

I'm trying you know.

JOAN

What do you mean you're trying? We love you. He's got a daddy, I got a good husband.

DEREK

Only you see it that way. I fight all day and then I come home and you're here. Calms me down. I know I got a temper.

JOHN

Yeah, well so do I.

DEREK

Not like mine. Mine hurts. It hits.

His eyes turn opaque, lost -- a child roaming the wilderness for home. Then the look vanishes. Derek the fighter returns.

DEREK (CONT'D)

(a bark)

Where's my --

TROY

Here.

Troy hands him his jacket. Derek takes it and puts it on, all the while staring at Troy.

DEREK

Let's go.

EXT. MANHATTAN CITY STREET - CONTINUOUS

Derek leads the way out of the apartment building -- Troy and Joan trail behind. Joan clutches her bag to her chest.

They navigate through the throngs of people -- MEN and WOMEN -- one WOMAN WITH BLONDE HAIR IN A RED DRESS -- MEN dressed in TUXEDOS. The city on the way to the theater.

Derek opens a TAXI CAB DOOR. Joan runs in, so does Troy and Derek follows.

INT. NEW YORK NIGHTCLUB - LATER/SAME NIGHT

A busy, bustling New York nightclub. SMOKE fills the room. Derek LAUGHS LOUDLY, his arm around TWO MEN (business colleagues). Joan and Troy stand nearby.

Joan frowns, looks off. Derek notices. He exhales loudly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEREK  
What is it, Joan?

JOAN  
This isn't good for the boy.

DEREK  
(to Troy)  
Is this bad for you?

TROY  
My throat hurts.

Derek drags on his cigar.

DEREK  
(to Joan)  
Get him some air then.

Joan nods, grabs Troy's hand and they depart.

Derek watches, pulls an unlit cigar from his pocket, his eyes dark, narrow and intent. A FLAME appears in front of him. Lights his cigar.

CANDY  
I'm Candy.

Derek turns and comes face to face with CANDY. Early 20's, blond hair, red dress, more boobs than face. Orange hat. Tough cookie.

DEREK  
Of course you are.

CANDY  
Bartender told me you used to be a fighter.

DEREK  
Used to be?

CANDY  
Are. You do something with your hands other than hit?

The business men stare at her, mouths agape. She notices.

CANDY (CONT'D)  
Catch many flies boys?

They close their mouths.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CANDY (CONT'D)

Got something out back I wanna show ya.  
Wife and kid left. Who doesn't want a  
quick holiday. You deserve it. Hard  
workin' man like you.

Derek looks her up and down. His eyes stay for a beat on her  
breasts.

DEREK

Alright. But 10 minutes. And you better  
swallow or I don't pay.

(to Hank)

Tell her I went to the john.

Derek walks away with Candy.

HANK

Modern times, Joe. We're living' in  
modern times.

CUT TO:

EXT. NIGHTCLUB

Candy leads Derek down a dark, deserted alley parallel to the  
night club.

Derek grabs Candy's hand. She pulls away. He does it again.

CANDY

Be a good boy.

DEREK

Does Candy have something sweet for  
little Derek?

CANDY

You married?

Derek effortlessly removes his wedding ring from his finger  
and pockets it. He raises his hands.

DEREK

A free man. Now how about a little lick?

Candy stops in front of a beat up old car parked in the  
alley. Derek stops as well. He presses his body against  
Candy's.

DEREK (CONT'D)

Why don't you tell me the real reason you  
got me out here?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Out of the shadows emerges Joan, the gun in her hand.

She shoves the blunt end in the back of Derek's head. Candy scoots out from under Derek.

Troy hands Candy \$100 from Joan's purse.

CANDY

Thanks, kid. You sure you're okay?

JOAN

You never saw us. You never saw him.

CANDY

Oh, pretty-please, can't I tell my friends what a great lay he was?

(to Derek)

Trash.

Candy glares at Derek and splits.

JOAN

Get in the car.

DEREK

Put that toy gun away.

Joan COCKS the gun.

JOAN

I said...

Derek slaps the gun out of Joan's hand. She SCREAMS. The gun slides across the pavement and lands at Troy's feet.

Derek dives at Troy, his arms outstretched!

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL MARSEILLES NEW YORK CITY / 1939 - EARLY EVENING

CORNELL WOOLRICH gasps as his bedroom door is flung open!

Clearly the moment we just saw is what he's writing on his typewriter.

BEATRICE

Steak?

Cornell (29, hair slicked back, eyes black as buckshot) sits in front of his Smith and Corona typewriter, his hands poised over the keys.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He is a pensive, anxious looking man, thin, with slight dark circles under his eyes. He is like a man haunted. His dark eyes dart back and forth, looking at the figure in the doorway.

Standing in the doorway is BEATRICE WOOLRICH, his mother. A stunning figure of a woman, she's in somewhere in her early to mid-60s dressed in a long, classic, form fitting black dress, a strand of black pearls about her neck.

She is slender and very elegant. She is a woman of great privilege and poise. Raised in great wealth, the world of the rich is all she ever known.

Her power is one part breeding, one part a glorious gift from Mother Nature. She has a prowess and confidence rarely seen.

She stands in the doorway of Cornell's obscenely expansive bedroom. She holds her head high, her lids heavy over her deep, brown eyes, she pauses in the doorway.

In her hand she holds a plate of vegetables and steak. In the other hand she holds a savage looking steak knife.

CORNELL

You scared me to *death*.

BEATRICE

Jumpy, jumpy, jumpy. Anxiety makes you die faster, it's a proven fact, Cornell.

She cuts a piece of steak with the knife, raises the squared meat into the air.

BEATRICE (CONT'D)

New pages, please.

CORNELL

I'm not ready.

BEATRICE

You're not ready or *they're* not ready?

CORNELL

I'm not.

BEATRICE

That's not what Addison said.

CORNELL

Addison's an editor, not God.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BEATRICE

It's only human to admit you're stuck,  
Cornell. That's why you've got me, you  
mysterious ghost writer.

Cornell rolls his eyes, removes the paper from the typewriter  
and exits the room.

Plate of food/knife in hand, Beatrice follows.

BEATRICE (CONT'D)

Here we go again.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Beatrice follows Cornell. They walk down a long, mahogany  
hallway. On the walls hang painting after painting, all  
beautifully framed, all perfectly lit.

Into the living room they go. It's huge and breathtaking,  
filled with dark mahogany furniture of black, brown and deep  
reds.

Cornell stops by the closet near the front door, papers in  
hand.

BEATRICE (CONT'D)

Did you hear me?

CORNELL

Yes, I heard you, yes, Addison will get  
the book on time.

BEATRICE

Why are you getting all huffy? Really, I  
don't understand why you put yourself  
through this. We have a good system. You  
write, I edit you - liberally - and you  
turn it into Addison and instant  
publication! It worked for all of your  
other stories. Come now. Would I let  
you down?

She pops the cube of steak into her mouth, and chews.

BEATRICE (CONT'D)

Oh, for heaven's sake.

She snatches the papers out of his hand.

CORNELL

Mother.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BEATRICE  
(reading)  
Just a minute, darling.

CORNELL  
Give me the paper.

BEATRICE  
Oh, I'm sorry. Did you want this?

CORNELL  
I don't want to play.

BEATRICE  
Play? Play what?

She dances away from him, a devilish smile on her face, the papers held high above her head.

In one fast movement, Cornell reaches forward and *snatches* the paper out of her hand.

CORNELL  
I want to this without your help. Why can't you understand that?

Beatrice hesitates. She lower her chin, her eyes never leaving Cornell's face. She utters a 'tsk, tsk, tsk' and slower walks to Cornell.

BEATRICE  
Now, now. I know that face. That's the pouty face. We don't like that face, do we? No, we like the happy, smiley face of a content son.

She comes to him, her eyes alive with love and caring, her body moving in time with her squared shoulders. She's irresistible.

She reaches out, her fingers touching the page in his hand.

BEATRICE (CONT'D)  
Just a peek?

Cornell is lost in her eyes. She slides the paper from his hands. Suddenly, Cornell pulls them back, as if awakened from a dream.

Beatrice takes a step back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

BEATRICE (CONT'D)

All right. But if you wake me in the middle of the night again, telling me again how it was a mistake not listening to me for advise...

Cornell considers this, then pockets the pages, turns, opens the front door.

Beatrice gently rolls the knife from one hand to the other.

BEATRICE (CONT'D)

I may not wait up.

CORNELL

Up to you.

BEATRICE

I might just take *myself* out.

CORNELL

I think that's a good idea, Mother. You should socialize with people your own age more.

He swiftly kisses her on the cheek, opens the door.

CORNELL (CONT'D)

Goodnight.

And he's gone.

BEATRICE

Con? Ow!

She looks at her hand. A small dot of blood rests in the center of her palm. She cut herself with the knife.

She raises her hand to her mouth, gently licking the blood away.