

Carnal (First Ten Pages)

written by

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FADE IN.

EXT. DENSE FOREST -- NIGHT

A full moon catches the slivers of mist in between fir boughs as pulsing of a bass gritty rock song cuts through heavy air.

The shadows are an endless maze between trunks and shrubs.

SNAPPING BRANCHES. Preppy white shoes stumble over roots and lichen covered ground. CHOKED PANTING.

GRACE BAKER: 22, tears streaming from soft rosy cheeks lopes forward aimlessly. Her unassuming wool cardigan steadily steepens in her blood from a gut wound.

GRACE
(out of breath)
God Please. Please.

Grace flails past some shrubs, catching on a stump and crashing. She withers trying to push herself upright.

Shadows mask the source of crunching foliage, steady rhythmic steps matching the beat of the distant music. Grace sobs staggering onto her feet finally.

HEAVY BREATHING, animalistic, the condensation escaping from the obscuring shrubs catching a glint of moonlight.

Grace's expression contorts into a mix of anguish and anger, facing the assailant. She opens her mouth for a silent scream.

INT. UNIVERSITY AUDITORIUM -- DAY

Grace's close up beaming face, photocopied onto a large poster. Stapled to a memorial, with two other youthful faces.

"They Are With Us", a sign strapped to the table in sympathetic script.

The auditorium shifts with students and staff, drifting, lingering in and out of a somber atmosphere.

The droning voice amplified by a cheap microphone on top a stand blocks out most of the whispers.

PROFESSOR
-Miss Baker not only excelled in
her academics, but excelled in
community, in kindness.

'BECK' ESTRADA, 22, A scrappy woman dressed in baggy grunge, eyes regularly stained dark with rubbed mascara. Obscured partly by shadow at the top of the auditorium, distant.

Like a dog, Beck's eyes subtly reflect the sunlight from the windows as she glares down at the memorial.

PROFESSOR (CONT'D)

A role model we should all strive
to live up to, in honour of her
memory.

Beck rubs her reddened nose with a palm roughly, letting out a strained sigh before turning her back and ducking out of a doorway.

PROFESSOR (CONT'D)

It's important now more than ever,
we lean on one another, as
colleagues, friends-

INT. FOWLERS OFFICE -- DAY

The blinds block out most of the bright daylight from entering the office, carving lines on to an organized setup.

Taxidermy of two pheasants perch on display next to a few well tended to plants.

DR. FOWLER, late 40s, well groomed, greying with small intelligent glasses on the lower end of his nose. He sits on a chair, hands laced together.

FOWLER

Are you feeling scared, Beck?

Beck slouches in a cushioned seat across from him. She stares coldly, stiffly. Her nose twitches before she looks away.

FOWLER (CONT'D)

There's no shame, its a very
reasonable reaction given the last
few months.

Silence grows heavy as Fowler waits, his frustrated sigh splits the tension as he rubs under his glasses.

FOWLER (CONT'D)

I must remind you this only works
with mutual effort. I have. been
persistent thus far, however-

BECK

Hoping she'll make you her world
famous meatloaf?

FOWLER

She is worried about you Beck.

BECK

Shit, postcard must've gotten lost.

FOWLER

You've not been home, yet you come
here, every Tuesday, on time might
I add.

Beck looks back, eyes narrowing. A soft ticking clock keeps
time of the quiet.

BECK

I'm not here for my mom.

Fowler's expression softens in realization. Purposefully he
lurches forward.

FOWLER

You're hurting, and you know she
would want you to talk about it
Beck.

Beck adjusts in the seat, his gaze burning into her. Her eyes
flicker back to him, as she sits ridged like a cornered
animal.

INT. UNIVERSITY HALLWAY -- EVENING

Cedar Edge University is a elaborate cross between a
stonework jail and a fort, with similar occupants.

The flow of traffic is a relentless battleground as students
and staff alike migrate out of their classes, voices echoing
off of weathered brick.

Beck almost invisibly squeaks between a few FRAT BROS
occupied with details of a master party plan.

FRAT BRO RIP

I think a little mystery adds to
the appeal for those freaky chicks.
Should we say the joints haunted?

FRAT BRO TOMMY

Bet you, with a cheap mask and a sack I can scare Badger enough he'll piss himself.

BECK

(under breath)

Fucking asshats.

With a brisk pace she escapes out some doors into the sunlight.

EXT. UNIVERSITY PARKING LOT -- EVENING

Beck struts over to a car clinging to life support. The orange paint compliments the blotches of rust. When the key doesn't work, a swift sneaker to the door and it juts open.

INT. BECKS CAR -- EVENING

With a sputter the engine roars to life as beck sits back in the car. She rubs her face, a loud groan blocked out by rock music as the radio chatters on.

BECK

Get it together, dumbass.

She tugs down the sun visor, the reflection in the mirror shows smudged mascara, self choppily cut hair and eyebags.

Her eyes flutter to the pinned photo next to it. A photo booth series featuring Beck and Grace latched together. Smiles of a better time shine on their faces.

Beck freezes, held prisoner by the photo. Abruptly, she slams the visor close.

EXT. FRAT HOUSE -- NIGHT

A house with a serious infestation problem, fluctuations of coloured light and bodies flicker in broken windows.

Beck slams the car door behind her, drumsticks clenched in a hand as a few chattering CHEERLEADERS stumble towards the bustling lawn ahead of her.

INT. FRAT HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Beck makes her way down a set of stairs, glancing around the room with a unimpressed wrinkle in her nose. A solo cup flies overhead as the room erupts with cheers.

The basement is crowded and weathered with the consequences of degenerate activity and the acidity of split alcohol.

She wanders her way to a raised platform. a set of drums, thoroughly loved on, glint in the dim light enticingly. Beck sighs with some semblance of relief.

JAZ

You're late.

Beck looks up, locking eyes with JAZ, 25, short woman with shorter short dyed pigtails, sporting a critical stare that could make most shy away.

BECK

It's just getting rowdy now. Drunk crowd's a fun crowd.

JAZ

Don't, fuck this up, Beck. You're already on thin ice, and you know it.

Beck climbs onto the platform as Jaz falls quiet, looking over her shoulder with a sigh.

DEXTER WARREN, 26, saunters over to the two of them, cigarette in lip a suitable addition to his stubble and leather jacket.

He drops his lit cigarette to be crushed underfoot, blowing the smoke out at Beck who rolls her eyes.

DEXTER

Ah, our little drummer boy! You look like shit sweetheart.

BECK

What can I say, you have that effect on people Dexter.

DEXTER

Funny you say that, I seem to remember quite a different effect a few months ago. I mean, really you couldn't pull yourself off me.

BECK

God, you done jerking yourself off?

JAZ

Shut. Up. I'm setting up with Hudson, and starting in ten, with or without you Dexter.

Dexter watches her go before moving to tower over Beck.

DEXTER

No funny business, got it sweetheart? Pull some shit, and I don't care how fast you hit those drums, or how good you think you are. This is my fucking band.

Dexter bumps Beck's chin upward with a finger, to which she moves as if to bite it off. He retracts quickly, staring at her emotionless a moment before a slow chuckle escapes him.

DEXTER (CONT'D)

Hm. Still a biter.

Beck storms towards the drum set, on her way snagging an abandoned bottle of alcohol, taking a large swig and dropping it further along.

INT. FRAT HOUSE -- MOMENTS LATER

The basement roars to life as the amplified sounds of rock shakes the foundation, a new surge of crowd eagerly cram their way down into the junkyard set up.

Dexter sings into the mic with a raspy grit, supported with Jaz' quieter melodic back up. The base and guitars howl together like a pack of underground wolves.

HUDSON, 26, with his sleeves ripped from his flannel shirt sticks out his tongue as he shreds.

The drums with feverish pacing pull it all together Beck sweating with rapid movement, projecting new levels of severe hearing loss.

The drunk, high, and lord knows what else crowd starts to move in beat, moving like a wave pool in the streaks of colour, cheers muffled by the bands own sound.

Beck pounds her instrument harder, her hair a sweaty lashing mess as she pushes the song faster. Jaz and Hudson eye one another as the pick up their pace in tune.

Beck looks up, to see Dexter staring back at her in challenge. Without stopping, she spits off to the side.

The song drives faster as this time Dexter picks up the pace, bellowing into the mic, the crowd following the new energy. Beck, not to be outdone, pushes it faster, and faster.

This continues, until Jaz and Hudson have to yield, watching the remaining two battle now holding each others glares

Dexter manages one last surge forward, spinning letting out a loud perfectly rock scream into the mic.

Thrashing like an animal She doesn't notice she's moved into a solo, letting out her own scream ring out as her drums thunder a violent riff. She slams down the final note.

The crowd leaps and cheers, although Beck hardly responds to that, lifting her eyes to a fuming Dexter.

BANG The drum set up is suddenly sent sprawling by a sudden kick, Beck standing in sudden protest. It's still a show but now its a fight.

Beck and Dexter tangle up in a rage fuelled grapple, unable to get a proper hit on one another.

Jaz tears the two apart from their scrap, hooking Dexter by the collar and shoving Beck away.

The crowd is devouring whats turned into a badly acted grunge gladiator fight.

Beck looks at Jaz, who's mouth is moving, yet no words are heard, she turns to Dexter, now distracted having been grabbed by the leather jacket. THUD.

After a clean strike to the nose via Beck's left fist, Dexter crumples The crowd erupts. Licking her bruised lips Beck cracks a wide grin. Her canine teeth look larger then most.

EXT. FRAT HOUSE -- NIGHT

The party raves on, radiating out under a clear night sky

Jaz and Beck stand outside on a less then structurally sound patio, a small dribble of blood trickles from the drummers nose to her lip.

JAZ

You're out. You're done. If I catch your mangy ass near my house, if you even consider asking to sleep on my couch, I swear to god Beck.

Beck grimaces, furrowing her brows as she's scolded.

BECK

The crowd loved it.

JAZ

I don't care what the crowd loved. I don't care. You're impossible, and you're fucking lucky you knocked him out.

BECK

Jaz-

JAZ

Get out of my sight.

Beck stands ridged, before she pivots, stumbling out and around the corner of the house.

She grips her hair, spinning and throwing her drumsticks out into a scatter crowd of lawn goers. Beck turns and punches the wall, much to her own suffering.

BECK

Fuck! Fuck!

After her fit Beck slithers down the wall with her back, plopping onto the grass and glaring at the shadowed forest beyond the fence.

BECK (CONT'D)

(whispering)

Fuck.

Beck slowly taps the back of her head against the wall as her eyes flutter shut. FOOTSTEPS sound in the grass a short ways away

VAL

Excuse me? Ma'am?

Beck's eyes remain closed.

VAL (CONT'D)

Beck? Sorry, did I catch that right?

Beck suddenly shifts upright, staring up at 'VAL' VON DUTCH, 23, a well grown out mullet and wide glasses accompanying a crooked boyish smile.

BECK

Did you just call me ma'am?

Val offers her a hand. Beck stares. He retracts it.

VAL

Yes! You, are a ma'am, right?

Beck tips her head, jaw dropping almost indignant at such a response. Val swallows and cracks a nervous smile.

VAL (CONT'D)

My name is Val. Saw your, performance tonight. It was, wow, I've seen some good choreography but-

BECK

The fuck are you talking about.

Val blinks, his eyes drifting to the blood smeared under Beck's nose. He goes a bit pale, clearing his throat.

VAL

Would you.. like a tissue?

Beck process, before in realization wipes off the stain with a sleeve, climbing to her feet and briskly going to move past him.

BECK

Not interested. I need a fucking drink.

VAL

Wait-

Val turns grabbing her arm. In a violent overreaction Beck spins, ripping her arm away and shoving Val roughly against the side of the house.

BECK

I don't know what the hell you want but I'm going to give you five seconds to spit it out.

VAL

Gosh you are, so, so much stronger then you look. You were the last one to see Grace Baker alive.

Beck freezes, her breath catching in her chest as she jerks away from Val, letting go of his shirt and stepping backward.

Val brushes himself off and straightens his glasses, rosy in his cheeks.

VAL (CONT'D)

I'm a journalist major.. an intern, for Cedar Point's magazine? I was hoping you could help me.

BECK

No. No I don't want anything to do with that shit.

VAL

You could change that! Three people now missing. Writing you off was the biggest mistake the department made.

Beck breathes heavily, staring at Val with a conflicted expression. She rakes a hand through her hair.

VAL (CONT'D)

All I need- All I have is three weeks. Then you'll never have to speak to me again

Beck grimaces, shifting on her feet as she rubs her face tiredly.

BECK

You got a place?

VAL

I... have a dorm? Don't see what that has to do with this?

Beck shakes her head, twitching her nose before nodding.

BECK

Fucking dorm. Good enough. Ever had to bargain for your information, Val?

VAL

Crash? With me? I've never had anyone stay- over that was working on a story with me. I sorta pride myself on being a professional.

Having long stopped listening, Beck starts walking away.