

Not Dark Yet

by

RM Weatherly

weatherlyrm@gmail.com
(703)896-8223

EXT. WEALTHY SUBURB - NIGHT

A well-ordered street of cookie-cutter McMansions.

Here, lawns are cut and Christmas decorations are put away on time. It's 3am, and everything is perfectly still and perfectly quiet.

EXT. FOREST - CONTINUOUS

In a forest just outside the town DAMON CAROL, 30s, who stands over a DEAD BODY. He wears matching, monogrammed pajamas under an overcoat.

Silhouetted by even moonlight, Damon stares the corpse. The level of ease he displays would impress a morgue director.

He touches the body with his foot then cringes as the corpse has a phantom reaction.

Damon looks down and TWEETY, his German Shepard, looks up.

DAMON

I thought I smelled something.

He turns his gaze back to the dead body.

Suddenly, at the sight of HEADLIGHTS approaching in the distance, Damon picks up debris to create a leafy sheet over the body.

As the lights SWEEP, Damon waits with bated breath.

He exhales as the lights disappear.

Damon tugs on Tweety's leash and he begins to leave, but the dog stands her ground.

DAMON

We'll come back -

She barks.

DAMON

The po-lice don't get in till 7.
You already got me up too early,
you wanna wake them too?

Tweety growls and it turns into a garbled whine of concession.

As Damon and his dog walk out of the forest, their footsteps are overlapped with the noise of a bustling diner.

VOICE (V.O)
Are you alone?

INT. DINER - MORNING

The voice belongs to a robust, big-boned woman, EVA KEYS, in her late 40s.

Damon takes a sip of coffee, considering his answer before speaking, but Eva has a mill of questions. She continues:

EVA
You're really all that's left?

DAMON
That's right. Damon Carol, the only one in the book.

EVA
I didn't realize things were so bad.

DAMON
Most people would call no crime a good thing, Mrs. Keys.

EVA
Good for us but bad for you, I mean.

The detective takes another sip of coffee.

EVA
Since your line of work isn't exactly operational out here, have you ever think of moving? Maybe somewhere more...

DAMON
Violent?

EVA
I was going to say with a predilection for shadiness.

DAMON
Then where would I be when you really needed me?

EVA
(too cheerfully)
Hopefully we never will!

Eva, realizing what a precarious conversation she's wrought, gives Damon a half-smile then begins to pull out her wallet.

EVA

Consider the coffee part of your expenses, alrighty?

She begins counting out money before putting a few dollar bills on the table.

EVA

I don't think my husband's really up to anything but my sister won't shut up about her theories. Between you and me, I think she's bored.

She giggles as if they're sharing a secret.

DAMON

Maybe she needs a hobby.

EVA

When basic needs are met and you've never wanted for nothing, you can have hobbies. You can fixate on things that don't matter... like Rococo or the infidelity of extended family.

Eva giggles once more and Damon finishes his coffee.

As he slides the cup back onto the table, Eva notices the slight frayed, dirtied cuff of his shirt. She frowns, looks at the detective like he's a foster puppy.

EVA

And since this whole thing is a lot of trouble for no reason, I'd be happy to pay you double.

If he suspected her pity before, now she's confirmed it. His expression shifts from blank to cold.

DAMON

That won't be necessary.

Eva squeezes out of the booth, then rises onto her tremendous legs. She offers her hand and Damon shakes it.

EVA

Tell me if you change your mind. Thanks again for your help, Mr. Carol.

As she exits the cafe, Damon motions to the waitress for another cup of coffee.