

The Package

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FADE IN:

EXT. HOUSE OF BLUES JAZZ CLUB - NIGHT

The streets are wet, it just rained. A black cat runs across the street after a rat. Lucky rat gets away.

People exit the club, discussing the show they just saw. It's a mixed reaction.

JOE, 60's, African American, overweight with gray hair wears a bright blue suit, holds the door open for people. He smiles as each one passes by, then snarls in disgust as they leave.

INT. HOUSE OF BLUES JAZZ CLUB

Joe walks over to the stage. He waves goodbye to a waitress and bartender, they leave hand in hand.

JOE

Don't forget to lock the damn door on your way out.

Joe sits at the stage, takes out a cigarette and lights it. He takes a few drags, each time he sighs with relief.

A baby grand piano sits on top of the stage, a saxophone is beside it.

BOY (O.S.)

Hello?

The sound of another person startles Joe. He looks up and sees a young BOY with a package. The boy looks not a day older than 12 and is dressed poorly with a dirty hat on. Strands of red hair are visible underneath the hat.

JOE

How da hell you get in here boy?

BOY

The door was unlocked.

JOE

Okay then, how about why you in here?

BOY

I have a package for you sir.

Joe stands up and ashes his cigarette.

JOE
Package? Me? You don't even know who I
am.

BOY
I was given this address and was told to
give it to the man smoking by the piano.

Joe's confused.

JOE
You tryin' ta play me boy?

BOY
No sir.

Joe, hesitant, walks towards the boy.

JOE
You look familiar, do I know you from
somewhere?

The boy shakes his head no. Joe reaches out and grabs the
package. It's a traditional brown cardboard box, no
visible markings, writings or any indication as to where
it came from.

JOE
Mind tellin' me who gave this to ya?

BOY
Open it.

Joe eyes the boy up and down. He looks harmless.

JOE
Well, I ain't never been one to turn down
a free gift.

Joe's about to open the package when he sees, in tiny
letters, the words NO RETURNS etched into the side of the
box. Easy to miss.

He shrugs it off and continues.

Joe looks inside, his eyes widen.

JOE
This some kind of joke kid?

Joe looks up, the boy is gone. He looks around the club.
He's alone.

JOE
Da hell is goin' on?

Joe reaches into the box, pulls out a picture frame. Inside the frame is a dead butterfly, pinned. It's bright yellow, beautiful. Two big blue dots, which look like eyes, are on the wings.

Etched on the frame are the words NO RETURNS. Joe's eyes are fixated on the butterfly.

FLASHBACK:

EXT. CREEK - DAY - 1963.

Two African American kids, 14 or so, stand in the creek, one is chubby while the other has a very distinctive scar on his forehead.

They throw rocks at a young kid with red hair, not a day over 12. They call him names and laugh.

The red headed kid cries in pain, but they ignore it. Instead with each sound the boy makes, they throw harder.

The chubby kid, picks up a bigger rock and throws it at the young kid. It hits him in the head.

He falls face first into the creek. Motionless.

Blood pours down the creek, towards the two boys.

The two kids stand there, shocked. They drop the rocks in their hands.

The chubby boy walks towards the kid, slowly. He shakes the kid to wake him up. The red headed boy doesn't move.

A yellow butterfly, two blue dots on its wings, lands on top of the red head's body. The two kids stare in shock.

The chubby boy moves back towards his friend, eyes wide.

The butterfly flies over to them and lands on the chubby kids shirt. They both look at it with fear.

END FLASHBACK:

INT. HOUSE OF BLUES JAZZ CLUB - PRESENT.

Joe stares at the picture frame, his nostrils flare up and he scowls.

DING.

A single note is played on the piano. It startles Joe, he turns to the piano. No one is there.

DING.

Another. Joe musters up some courage and investigates.

The piano keys play a beautiful tune. Serene music, it puts Joe in a trance. It's beautiful.

He smiles and walks towards the piano. The keys stop.

Joe snaps out of his gaze. He stares at the piano. Nothing seems out of the ordinary.

JOE

I didn't have nuttin' to drink tonight.

A voice whispers into the air. It whispers Joe's name.

JOE

Hello?

The piano keys THUD. The top slams shut and the noise deafens Joe. He holds his hands up to his ears.

JOE

(frantic)

I didn't mean it. I was nuttin' but a kid back then.

A loud SCREECH grabs Joe's attention. It comes from the piano. He walks over to it. The word KILLER is carved on the top. Joe shakes his head no.

JOE

Nah. Nah this ain't fair. It was Charlie, he made me do it.

He stumbles backwards, kicks over the saxophone. It startles Joe more.

JOE

Please. Please, I'm sorry. I really am. Just leave me be.

Joe hears himself as a kid, laughing and taunting. The laughter grows louder, it surrounds Joe. He tries to escape it, but it's no use.

He turns to run out the door, but trips and falls off the stage. He SMACKS his head on the floor. Cracks it open.

Blood pours down the cracks in the tiles.

The picture frame lies on the stage, unbroken.

Joe's eyes remain open. Cold, lifeless. Joe's dead.

EXT. SUBURBAN HOME - DAY

It's a beautiful day. Kids play on the street, the sun is at its brightest. Very peaceful neighbourhood.

DING DONG.

A door opens. An African American man, 60's, with a scar on his forehead stands in his doorway.

He looks down at his doorstep.

A package.

An ordinary package in a traditional brown cardboard box. No visible markings, address or any indication as to where it came from.

He picks it up and walks inside.

FADE OUT: