

Eyes Peeled

written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. SIDE OF APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Silhouetted in shadow, A PEEPING TOM, 40s, props a three-foot tall wooden ladder against the siding.

To the first-floor window he climbs, his navy windbreaker fluttering in the night breeze, rungs creaking on each step.

His ladder is homemade, cobbled from scrap wood, splintery, crooked. Helter-Skelter carpentry.

Carved into the ladder's side: twisted pagan symbols. Old World magic.

The Peeping Tom is lean, wispy-haired. Strapped to his belt: a sheathed six-inch knife.

Keeping his head low, he peers into the apartment window:

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Cards. Rock music. Beer. A few bucks on the table. Two men and two women.

The card players are all mid 20s: MAX, thick forearms; KENNY, fidgety; curly-haired JULIA; CHARLOTTE, delicate, earnest.

The open window provides a summer breeze.

A bottle tips over. Max pushes the cards away from the spill.

MAX

Bottle down.

KENNY

Watch your elbows.

Charlotte snatches a sink rag, wipes the pool of beer.

MAX

Look out. Soggy cards. Wet aces.

KENNY

Who knocked that over?

MAX

Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE

That's not even my bottle.

MAX

Beer musta spilled on its own. A
suicide.

KENNY

Had nothin' to live for.

As the group cleans up, the open window comes into focus.

Clinging to the exterior window ledge: two of the Peeping
Tom's grubby fingertips, barely perceptible from afar.

He's watching.

MAX

I got soggy jacks.

EXT. SIDE OF APARTMENT - NIGHT

The Peeping Tom presses his thumb into the ancient symbols
carved into his ladder. His dark eyes soak in everything.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Julia pushes away from the table.

JULIA

We've gotta go, Max. You work
tomorrow.

Max slaps the table, rattling the bottles.

MAX

Me and my roaches.

Charlotte frowns. Julia, too.

MAX

Trained a new guy last week. They
sent us a to a house and the floor
was all roaches. A roach carpet,
right? The lady that lives there's
hittin' 'em with a broom. A
thousand bugs, but just one broom.

He swigs some beer.

MAX

Well, the new guy loses it. I quit,
he says.

(MORE)

MAX (CONT'D)

Hey, man, I tell him, you've only been at this job for four minutes. Give it a chance. Get to know these roaches.

Shakes his head.

KENNY

Couldn't hack it.

MAX

Thinks he's too good for the job.

Charlotte lightly touches Julia's wrist.

CHARLOTTE

I've got some clothes that might fit you better than me. You wanna check them out before you go?

Julia nods.

CHARLOTTE

We're done playing.

Max waves them off. Good riddance.

MAX

Looks like it's me and you, Kenny boy. My deal.

EXT. SIDE OF APARTMENT - NIGHT

The Peeping Tom watches the women leave the kitchen.

He climbs down, grabs the ladder, slinks off into the dark.

EXT. BACK OF APARTMENT - NIGHT

Wary of onlookers, the Peeping Tom treads with his ladder.

Viewed from afar, he looks harmless. A guy tossing some scrap wood in the trash before turning in.

EXT. OTHER SIDE OF APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

The Peeping Tom moves toward a lighted window and sets his ladder against the wall. The rungs creak as he climbs.

Keeping low, he spies Charlotte and Julia in the bedroom.

Julia holds a dress against her body, sizing it up.
With dark eyes and knotted jaw, the Peeper watches.
He runs his index finger along the symbols in his ladder.

INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM - NIGHT

Julia holds up the dress.

JULIA
I like the fabric.

CHARLOTTE
Then it's yours.

JULIA
I'm sorry that Max is talking about
roach carpeting an' all that crap.

CHARLOTTE
I love exterminator stories.

JULIA
(mimicking Max's voice)
I kill bugs. Splat. Splat. Splat.

Charlotte thumps the bed--a mock extermination. Julia joins in. Thump. Thump. Squish. They're like punk rock drummers.

Just beyond the bedroom window looms the Peeper's shadow.

MAX (O.S.)
What's going on in there?

CHARLOTTE
We're smooshing.

Max whoops in joy: A winning hand.

Charlotte points to her bookshelf.

CHARLOTTE
Hey, I've got a couple paperbacks
for you to check out.

She snatches two from the shelf and hands them off to Julia.

Julia scans the covers and nods. Perfect. She takes a book.

With some hesitation, she sniffs the pages. Charlotte laughs, touches Julia playfully on the nose.

EXT. FRONT OF APARTMENT - NIGHT

Max and Julia head to their car. Max turns and waves goodbye to Charlotte and Kenny. Max calls out:

MAX
Don't let the bed bugs bite.

Grins.

MAX
Seriously. They fuckin' bite.

Julia takes his arm and pulls him to the car.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Max turns the ignition. The engine rumbles.

JULIA
I asked you not to talk about your job. I asked you politely.

MAX
You mean the job that pays for everything you're wearing?

Through the driver's side window, the Peeping Tom is far off, but visible: He stands on his ladder and stares into the apartment.

Neither Julia nor Max notices him.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Getting ready for bed, Charlotte changes clothes, completely unaware that she's being watched.

The Peeping Tom's shadow shifts slightly in the window.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

The discussion continues.

MAX
Are you embarrassed of me?

JULIA
No, our friends don't want to hear the details of what you do.

Max turns his head in frustration. He looks directly at the Peeping Tom, but it doesn't register.

MAX
Aw, Kenny don't care.

JULIA
Can we just go?

Max revs the engine, puts the car in gear.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Max's car roars out of the parking spot and zooms a half block, the exhaust pipe filling the night with exhaust.

The tail lights flash...

Max's car speed-reverses all the way back to the apartment.

Max glares--the earlier sight of the Peeping Tom has finally registered in his brain.

His eyes fall upon the Peeper.

MAX
Fuck.

Out the door he goes.

EXT. FRONT OF APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Max rushes to the front door and pounds.

MAX
Kenny. Get out here! Got trouble.

Max whirls and rushes to get the Peeping Tom.

EXT. SIDE OF APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

The Peeping Tom peers into the bedroom window from his ladder. His hand falls upon his knife.

Max rushes forward with linebacker force.

A scream from inside: Charlotte's spotted the Peeper.

The Peeper scurries down...too late...

Pop! Max smashes into him and his ladder. Wood scraps fly. The Peeper tumbles. Max falls. A dizzying collision.

Kenny comes dashing around the side.

Up on his feet, the Peeping Tom runs. Max follows.

The Peeper dashes through the back yard. The chase is on.

Across the grass.

Over a small fence.

Max clips a fence post and tumbles. Kenny picks him up.

Twenty yards. Thirty. Forty. The Peeping Tom is faster than expected. But Max and Kenny close in.

Flying tackle. Max's full weight comes down on the Peeper. Air whooshes out of him.

The Peeper reaches for his sheathed knife.

Max showers him with viscous blows. His knuckles redden with blood. Kenny joins in.

Breathing hard, his nose dripping with fury-snot, Kenny shouts:

MAX
Gonna kill you.

KENNY
That's my wife you were watching.

MAX
Hold this shithead down, Kenny. I'm gonna pull my car around.

Spits.

MAX
Got ten gallons of roach poison in my trunk. Let's pour it in his eyes.

Snarls.

MAX
The rest will go down his throat.

Blood dripping from his cuts, the Peeping Tom laughs.

MAX

Think this is funny, sucker? Let's
see who gets the last laugh.

The Peeping Tom keeps laughing, but his eyes are stone cold.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Charlotte ends a phone call.

CHARLOTTE

Police are on the way.

JULIA

Should we go out there?

CHARLOTTE

Let's check the windows.

They peer out. The Peeper's broken ladder is on the ground.

INT. BACK PORCH - NIGHT

They scan the back yard, but no signs of anyone.

JULIA

Don't you worry. Max and Kenny can
handle themselves.

CHARLOTTE

What do you think that guy was
gonna do?

A tear falls.

CHARLOTTE

Why was he at the window, Julia?

Julia hugs her.

A noise from outside: Someone shouts in pain.

Charlotte steps toward the back door, but Julia grabs her.

JULIA

Police will get to the bottom of
it. Let's go up front and wait for
'em.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The women wait by the front door for the officers.

Outside the window: Nothing but darkness.

A soft knock on the front door. The women look at each other.

CHARLOTTE

Who's there?

No answer.

Charlotte takes a step forward, but Julia pulls her back.

JULIA

Don't.

Charlotte pulls away, moves to the front door.

There's a peep hole in the front door. Charlotte squints through/catches a glimpse.

It's Max--darkened by night shadows, but definitely him.

Charlotte flings open the door.

CHARLOTTE

Max.

Max hovers in the doorway.

Blood on his shirt. Blood on his face, especially his eyes.

Charlotte reaches out.

Max's eyes are gone, burned/eaten away by poison.

His body falls forward, hits the floor hard.

In his back: A knife. Standing directly behind Max: The Peeping Tom.

The women scream.

The Peeping Tom pulls the knife from Max's back.

His face: bloody, savagely beaten.

He steps into the room, bloody knife in hand.

Julia snatches the nearest "weapon" she can find: a beer bottle. Charlotte grabs one, too.

Blue lights flash in the window: the police. They're here.

The Peeping Tom rushes forward. The women raise their bottles.

CUT TO BLACK:

THE END