

THE HEART BEAT

Written by

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Inspired by the Tell-Tale Heart by Edgar Allan Poe

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Second Draft

OVER DARKNESS:

RYAN (V.O.)
They're gonna find you...

INT. MOTEL, ROOM 2B - DAWN

The room's a mess. Dirty clothes and fast food wrappers strewn everywhere.

RYAN -- 30s, disheveled, a guy who's done a lot of living in a short space of time -- lies on his back, watching the ceiling fan rotate slowly.

RYAN (V.O.)
I don't know how they haven't
found you already.

INT. MOTEL, BATHROOM - DAWN

Ryan stands at the sink, washing his hands. He cups some water in his palms, splashes his face.

Ryan takes in his reflection. Stares himself down.

RYAN (V.O.)
Look at you -- you're falling
apart.

Ryan turns, flicks off the light. Leaves the bathroom.

EXT. MOTEL, BALCONY - DAWN

Ryan leans against the railing, watching the cars pass on the street below.

RYAN (V.O.)
If you were smart, you'd jump.
Splatter your brains all over the
sidewalk. Make someone else clean
up the mess.
(beat)
Though if I were you, I'd wait
until traffic picks up.

Ryan inches himself closer to the edge, now dangerously close to slipping. He raises one foot, hovering it in the air for a moment. Closes his eyes. Breathing.

Realizing he doesn't have the guts, he turns. Heads back inside.

RYAN (V.O.)
I knew you didn't have the balls.

EXT. MOTEL, PARKING LOT - DAWN

Ryan gets in the driver's seat of an old, beat up car.

SLAMS the door.

He starts the car, throws it into gear. Floors it out of the parking lot.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAWN

Ryan's car is the only thing visible for miles. It's gunning it hard, trying to get out of town fast.

INT. RYAN'S CAR - DAWN

Ryan struggles to stay awake at the wheel. His head keeps lulling forward, ready to drop.

He raises his head, spots his reflection in the rear-view mirror. Turns it away.

RYAN (V.O.)
Why don't you drive this piece of
shit to the police station and
turn yourself in?

Ryan thinks this over. Weighing his options.

EXT. GAS STATION - MORNING

Ryan fills up the tank. Keeping an eye on the other customers, though none of them pay him any attention.

Ryan finishes up, heads back to the driver's side door. As he passes the trunk, he hesitates, staring at it for a beat.

For just a split second, he hears a low THUMP. It's faint, but unmistakable. A *HEART BEAT*.

Ryan remains still, but doesn't hear the sound again. Finally, he shakes his head. Gets into the car.

INT. RYAN'S CAR - MORNING

Ryan sits for a moment, face drained of color. Finally, he starts the car, but doesn't take off right away.

RYAN (V.O.)
Are you just gonna ignore that? I
heard it and so did you.

Ryan wipes sweat from his brow, gives a cautious look around, then heads off down the road.

Ryan watches the gas station disappear from view in the mirror. Looks over his shoulder at the trunk.

He waits, expecting to hear something.

However, all he hears is SILENCE.

EXT. WOODED AREA - DAY

Ryan's car is parked off to the side of the road. Ryan stands behind a tree, pissing onto its trunk.

Ryan finishes, zips his fly. He moves towards the car when he hears something --

A DUCK QUACKING, THEN LANDING ON WATER'S SURFACE.

He stops, raising an eyebrow. Curious.

EXT. POND - DAY

Ryan emerges from the brush to find a small POND. A few ducks swim around, splashing.

As Ryan takes in the pond, a light bulb goes off in his head.

EXT. POND - MOMENTS LATER

Ryan throws the car into neutral, slams the door. He moves around to the trunk. Braces onto it with both hands and begins pushing.

RYAN (V.O.)
Is there no low you won't stoop
to? Now you're pulling a Norman
Bates.

RYAN
Shut up!

RYAN (V.O.)
All right, Jesus. It's your ass on
the line, not mine.

Ryan throws his shoulder into it, giving it all he's got.
Finally, the car begins to move forward towards the water.

The ducks fly away as the car hits the water and begins
plunging deeply towards the bottom of the pond.

Ryan stands on the bank, watching the car slip under the water,
disappearing from view. Relieved.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Ryan walks along the road on the opposite side of the railing.
He whistles, finally at ease.

All seems to be going his way. Until --

HE HEARS THE HEART BEAT AGAIN.

Ryan stops in his tracks, frantically looks around. He scans
the road behind him and on all sides but sees nothing, save for
the handful of cars in the distance.

RYAN (V.O.)
Told you it wouldn't work.

Ryan turns around, trying to look unfazed. He picks up his
pace, trying to speed up without drawing too much attention to
himself.

EXT. CITY SQUARE, DOWNTOWN - DAY

Ryan hurries down the sidewalk, avoiding eye contact with
everyone he passes. He gets a few confused looks, most ignore
him.

INT. IHOP - DAY

Ryan sits in a corner booth, quietly eating a stack of
pancakes. He casts cautious glances around the room, convinced
someone must be onto him.

RYAN (V.O.)
Just turn yourself in. Finish your
pancakes, go the police station
and turn yourself in.

RYAN
(whispers)
Shut up.

Ryan reaches for his water. As his fingers touch the glass, he HEARS THE HEART BEAT. He releases the glass suddenly, watching it like it's going to explode.

WAITRESS (O.S.)
Anything else I can get you?

Ryan JUMPS, letting out a small scream.

The WAITRESS stands beside his table, holding his check. A look of confusion and panic on her face. She gently places the check on the table.

WAITRESS
Sorry. Didn't mean to scare you.

She backs away slowly, careful not to spook him.

WAITRESS
If you need anything let me know.

Ryan grabs his water and downs it. Looks around the room. Now HE IS getting stares from people.

As he takes in the room, he HEARS THE HEART BEAT. Louder. Louder. LOUDER.

Ryan stands.

RYAN
(screaming)
I CAN'T TAKE IT ANYMORE! I CAN'T
TAKE IT! I DID IT! I DID IT,
OKAY?!

Ryan runs from the dining room, SCREAMING.

CUSTOMERS and STAFF watch him go. Very, very confused.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Ryan busts through the door, approaches the DISPATCHER behind the desk. She regards Ryan with apprehension.

DISPATCHER
May I help you?

RYAN
I did it! I did it all right!
(MORE)

RYAN (CONT'D)
I can't stand listening to it
anymore!

The Dispatcher looks around.

DISPATCHER
Listening to what, Sir?

RYAN
The heart beat! Can't you hear it?

The Dispatcher shakes her head.

DISPATCHER
Maybe I should get you some help,
sir.

RYAN
I don't need help! Lock me up! I
killed my wife! I've been driving
around for two days with her body
in my car! I pushed the car into a
pond -- I thought that would stop
it, but it didn't! Lock me up!

INT. POLICE STATION, HOLDING CELL - DAY

Ryan sits on a small cot, his back braced against the wall.
Staring into the darkness.

RYAN (V.O.)
You did the right thing. Now
you're put away where you can't
hurt anyone anymore. Get some
sleep, you've earned it.

Ryan lays on his side, curling up into a ball. A look of peace
comes over him as his eyes close. All is peaceful and quiet.
Until --

-- HE HEARS THE HEART BEAT AGAIN --

-- and opens his eyes.

SMASH TO BLACK:

THE END.