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Happy Meal

written by

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INT. WINDOWLESS ROOM - VOID OF TIME

A large cockroach emerges from a small drain grate and scuttles across the dusty and rust-stained cement floor in a brightly lit, off-white, windowless room. The cockroach disappears under a rusting wrought iron twin XL bed.

MARK, 19, lays unconscious on the bed's moldy mattress. His hair is neatly trimmed, his runner's body is lean and fit. A trail of dried blood from a large gash near his hairline stains his face and the front of his heather gray t-shirt.

Mark begins to stir uncomfortably, regaining consciousness. He struggles to open his blood-shot eyes in the bright space and moves to reach for his bloodied forehead. His hand stops short of the gash, his wrists cuffed and chained to the bed.

Mark forces his eyes open to take in the cuffs. His eyes follow to the chain connecting the cuffs to the bed frame and move beyond, absorbing the windowless space, glancing a metal bucket, and resting his gaze on a singular steel door.

Mark sits up in a panic, now wide awake, and begins to frantically pull at his restraints.

The doorknob begins to JINGLE, and Mark freezes mid-tug, staring wide-eyed and slack-jawed at the steel door.

EVAN, 37, hesitantly enters the space, his blue eyes barely visible through the two uneven eye holes cut into a green pillowcase that covers his head. He carries a McDonalds Happy Meal in his left hand and casually offers it to Mark.

Mark leans over the side of the bed and VOMITS profusely.

CUT TO:

INT. WINDOWLESS ROOM - A FEW WEEKS LATER

Mark sits on the floor and rests his back against the foot of the bed frame. He passively tosses a large blue bouncy-ball repeatedly against the off-white, paint-chipped, wall before him and catches it effortlessly upon its return.

His wrists, free of cuffs and chains, are yellow-green with fading bruises and his face is stubbly and blood-free, the large gash now scabbed-over and healing nicely. His heather-gray shirt remains discolored with his dried blood.

A metal cuff on Mark's ankle is connected to a long chain that extends from a steel rebar cemented into the floor in the center of the room.

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18 McDonalds Happy Meal toys rest on the floor next to the bed, ranging from tiny action figures and toy race cars to miniature pony figurines and princess dolls.

The doorknob begins to JINGLE, and before the steel door fully opens to reveal Evan, still sporting his green pillowcase, Mark forcefully chucks the bouncy ball at him. Evan easily catches it with his right hand.

Mark smiles and LAUGHS with Evan as he makes a show of winding up the ball then gently tossing it under his leg back to Mark, who smoothly catches it and sets it aside.

Shutting the door behind him, Evan enters the room and sits before Mark, setting two McDonalds Happy Meals before them.

They begin to eat together, Evan tucks the food under his pillowcase cover, and Mark smiles.

CUT TO:

INT. WINDOWLESS ROOM - MUCH LATER

Mark sits on his moldy bed, hugs his knees to his chest, and rests his bearded chin on his knees. His bloodshot, hollow eyes with dark under-eye bags stare at the steel door across the room. The blue bouncy ball rests on the floor beside it.

His skin has taken on a sickly cool tone making the scar on his hairline barely noticeable as it peaks through his grown-out hair.

The blood stain has faded out of his now loose-fitting t-shirt. The metal cuff remains attached to his bony ankle.

Nearly triple the amount of McDonalds Happy Meal toys rest on the on the bed and surround Mark. Some toys are discarded on the floor, having fallen off the bed.

Mark brings his attention to the wall beside him and he begins to scratch away at the chipping paint with overgrown and broken nails. He makes a new tally mark, the 9th one.

FADE OUT.