

Endgame - the requiem

Eric was terrorized by the carnage that had surrounded him.
He was overtaken by anger and hatred.
How can one seek true justice while being led by such things?

None of this truly mattered to Eric, the voices convinced him that such thoughts were counterproductive.

The voices teach him.
The voices form him.
The voices assure him, vengeance will be had.

“Eric, you can bring the light back to your world....”
“You are a crusader of the light...”
“We know who brings the dark. He carries the dark within him, and death follows him wherever he goes.”

The voices don't lie as one might believe, they tell truths... they tell him these in a manner in which they were more powerful than any lie could have ever been. Eric is a crusader of light... he wants the world to be a better place than it became. He could bring light back to the world. That, however, was sure as hell not what the voices were bringing him to do. They know who brings the dark, and they know who carries it within. And they know why the death follows him.

Eric always wanted to be a hero.
The voices were going to show Eric the form of evil.
A hero is only as good as his villain is bad... and the voices were painting his villain the worst.

The voices chuckle at how simple Eric is. If you give him destructive abilities, and paint them light, and add choral accompaniment... he feels like a holy force.
It is all so archetypal.
Luckily Steven's powers are all accompanied by darkness.
This will further justify Eric's actions.

“The one who carries the darkness.... his eyes are filled with black”
“His gaze can bring death”
“Through will alone he brings bloodshed”

Eric strains to recall when the voices began educating him.
He remembers back to the funeral of his father.
Eric's father had been a courageous police officer, slain by Steven.
Many officers had been slaughtered in that incident...

The funeral had proceeded as usual as any.
His mother's eyes had been full of tears, his were held in.
Eric disallowed himself to be moved by any of it.

For each tear that rolled down his face he became furious at himself for his weakness.
Then the fury at himself became rage at his father's killer, Steven.
'That fucker is my age.' Eric would think, and the thought would echo through his mind.
Then finally, when the church choir began singing a hymn in memory of his father, Eric was touched. Even after the choir had finished, their voices remained in Eric.
They have stayed ever since.

"Justice will be had..." Eric mutters to himself, almost silently.
An awkward tension fills the air. Then Eric's mother walks over to him, and takes his hand in her own.
"Honey... are you awake?" she asks, and then she looks around the room. Her family pulls in closer around them.
"I think he spoke..." says Eric's uncle.
"He is finally coming around... after all these days..." says the only one of Eric's cousins who had come to see him.
And Eric stirred awake.

"The time has come"
"Vanquish the carrier of darkness"

Eric looks around the room, at all of the relatives gathering around him.
He removes his hand from his mother's, and speaks.
"I am better now." he states. Eric then gets up from the hospital bed, and leaves the room.
The befuddled relatives murmur to one another, then leave in pursuit.

Eric feels himself drawn to a white Pontiac Sunfire, and he reaches out his hand.
Light pours out of the lock, and the door pops open.
Eric pulls the door the rest of the way open, and climbs in.
"What are you doing Eric?" shouts his mother, astonished by the sight of her son climbing into a stranger's car. She only made it out in time to see him climb in.
"Being a hero." he shouts back.

"To Lawrence, Kansas"
"Destroy the fiend"
"Avenge your father"
"Save the lives of hundreds, by ending him before he can kill more"

That Sunfire found itself pushing one-fifty on highway 7.
In under ten minutes Eric enters Lawrence.

“We have timed our arrival well” “Slow down to one-ten and he will be in the street”

And so he did.

He watches as a young man steps into the middle of the roadway... not considering the possibility of a car barreling at him at over one-hundred miles per hour.

At quite nearly the last moment, Steven notices the car in his peripheral vision and bounds out of the way.

Much to Eric’s rejoicing however, Steven did not entirely manage to get clear. The car smashes into the back of his uplifted right foot.

The impact spins Steven to the ground, and he cradles his shattered right foot.

Eric slams the brakes, and he impatiently wants the car to slow faster.

Then white light envelopes the car, and it stopped.. without even whipping Eric’s neck.

Eric flings the door open, and charges in at Steven.

“Damn it man, what were you thinking?!” Steven exclaims. “You could have killed me...”

Eric pays no heed to Steven’s whining.

Eric marches right up to Steven, who is looking up at him from the ground.

He then proceeds to drive his heel down on Steven’s broken foot.

Upon impact Steven screams in pain.

“Make him pay”

“End his reign of terror”

Steven stifles his screaming, and from his shocked grimace he looks Eric in the eyes.

“Why are you doing this?”

“My father no longer patrols the streets because of you!”

Eric reaches skyward, and the clouds broke open allowing light to pour through. The area around Eric and Steven becomes illuminated. A faint, shimmering of vocals begins to be heard. It is the hymn from Eric’s fathers funeral. Faint but there.

“My father is no longer the husband of my mother because of you!”

The brightness intensifies, and the vocals rise.

“My father will never get to teach my younger brother to shave!”

Steven’s eyes shut to resist the bright light, and his head begins to pulse from the singing.

Eric grinds his heel in a circular motion on Steven’s foot.

“My father will never get to hear my baby sister say that she loves him!”

Steven’s eyes burn from the brightness through his eyelids, his hair begins to singe. The singing becomes deafening. Steven feels paralyzed, what can he do?

“My father will never tell me he loves me again because of you!”

Steven can not take anymore. He then sheds all remorse, pity, and guilt that he had initially felt. The survivor takes over.

Steven screams, and the street beneath Eric erupts.

Millions of cement shards quickly disintegrate Eric’s left leg.

Steven’s eyes radiate darkness and then, the break in the clouds closes.

The choir subsides.

Steven begins to crawl away from Eric, who is nursing the remainder of his left leg.

Steven, of course, can not see this.... or anything.

Steven can not even hear Eric's blubbering of agony.

There is no outside world, except that which can be felt. However, quite nearly the only thing that can be felt by Steven is his pulverized right foot, and an ungodly headache.

The crawl continues for well over twenty minutes, until Steven can no longer bear it.

He soon passes out.

"He is yours"

"Good always prevails"

"The demon is no match for you"

Despite the terrible pain, Eric is smiling.

He knows all too well the extent of the damage he has inflicted upon Steven.

As his mind clears, a thought occurs to him... he stretches out his hands, and holds them over the abrupt end of his leg. Light begins to pour from his hands, and there is a flash.

Eric passes out.

Eric jolts awake some time later, and looks around.

His leg had returned to its full length.

Steven had momentarily escaped him.

Eric opens his hand, and focuses his abilities.

Light pours from his palm, and a shimmering blade begins to take form.

"Show me where he is!" Eric screams to the sky above, and the clouds part once again.

The sunbeams reveal the location of Eric's demon.

The bright light beams down upon Steven, allowing his body to wake and his vision to come into focus. He does not feel he can stand on that destroyed foot any time soon.

But, much to his relief he can not see Eric anywhere.

Then it dawns on him.

He is in the only patch of sunlight within sight, Eric would not be long.

Steven becomes nervous.

Sweat beads on his forehead, and rolls down his face.

He listened.

He watched.

He waited.

And then on both sides of his peripheral vision he catches movement.

Steven jerks his head right, and sees Eric charging at him.

Steven then looks left, and finds the exact same image.
Then behind him, he sees Eric as well.
Steven tries to collect his thoughts, but finds himself unable.
He instead lashes out at the one approaching from behind.

“AHHHHHHHHH” Steven screams, as he motions to the charging Eric.
The nearest storefront quickly becomes a stream of lethal projectiles, tearing at the Eric at well over two-hundred miles per hour. They too scream as they rip across the distance.
The image shatters.
Steven lets out a scream as the flesh beneath his ribs is seared by Eric’s saber.
Steven slashes jaggedly towards the source of his pain.
‘Impossible,’ Steven thought, ‘he hadn’t been close enough for that,’ and then he turns to face Eric. It appears as though Eric is about thirty-five feet away and still charging.
Steven closes his eyes, and feels the searing heat pierce his belly again. It isn’t getting inside yet, but it would soon. The flesh feels as though it were giving away.

The pain and the smell, were making Steven lose it.
Steven lets out another howl of agony, and leaps to his feet.
Pain darts through his body like never before.
His foot is barely there, but it still holds him up. It is, however, showing its disapproval.

Steven stumbles back a few steps and raises his hands.
A massive whirlwind begins forming on the street. It quickly picks Eric and himself up off of the ground.
Eric nearly loses grip on his sword, but somehow manages to keep his hold.
Eric begins a slow approach towards Steven within the twister.
Steven stretches his hand out towards the nearest tree.
Slowly, it too, is pulled into the tornado.

“You will be destroyed, demon!” screams Eric.
“Quite possibly...”
Then as Eric reaches swinging distance, Steven strikes out towards the tree.
It explodes outwards, pelting both Eric and Steven with hundreds of large wooden fragments. The fading tornado flings both men away.

Steven curls up on the ground and nurses his gut. It is burning and filled with small pieces of wood.
Brightness begins pouring from Eric, and he somehow renews his approach.
“This ends now demon...”
“You are absolutely right.”
Steven then points at the saber wielding right hand, and once more a stream of cement explodes from the ground beneath Eric.

Eric’s right hand is gone.
A tear dribbles down Eric’s cheek, and he continues stepping.
Blood spurts profusely from the end of his right arm, and then trails off.
Steven’s bottom lip quivers, and then blackness pours from his eyes again.

“Goodbye, crusader...”

Hair begins to fly off of Eric’s head.

Skin flakes off next, floating up, and then vanishing.

Eric continues his walk.

Red shows through as the skin comes off.

So much of Steven wants to turn away right now.

So much of him wants to close his eyes.

But he is doing it, some dark part of him.

Steven stares him down.

As Eric slowly loses his face, Steven stares.

What seems like an eternity later, Eric falls to his knees, and then collides face first into the ground. His exposed skull crumbles from the impact.

The patch of light they were in fades.

The chorus is briefly heard again.

Then the voices speak to Steve.

“How low you sank”

“What terrible power you have”

“But, we did not invest all that energy into manipulating Eric for nothing”

“We already have the next crusader lined up”

“What would this fight have been without a witness?”

“And what better witness than Eric’s cousin?”

“Your struggle will never end Steven!”

“Your life will be hell until you concede!”

Steven then catches motion out of the corner of his eye, and he turns towards it.

“You killed my cousin! You will pay! Somehow! Someday!” and the teen began to run.

Steven smirked and glared at the kid. The nearest building collapses at him, crushing him beneath a good deal of rock.

“Fuck you all, I am taking a break.”

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