

"Ebon"

By

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FADE IN

EXT. SANTROPOL BACK ALLEYS - NIGHT

A howling storm scours the city of Santropol with sheets of glittering rain. The lights from a hundred casinos and nightclubs bathe the walls of the back alleys in unearthly hues.

A hulking figure careens through garbage and puddles. His face is white with terror, and his breath comes in gasps as he runs.

EXT. ALLEY INTERSECTION - NIGHT

Four SWAT operatives in body armor crouch around a roadblock and draw their weapons.

The fleeing man rounds the corner right into their line of fire. He does not slow down. An unintelligible command is barked over a loudspeaker, but the man seems so concerned with the unseen pursuer behind him that he barely notices, even after the SWAT team opens fire.

The hail of bullets doesn't even slow the man down. Just as he reaches the roadblock, he leaps an incredible 30 feet over the officers' heads and hits the ground running.

One of the cops continues firing; another yells into his walkie-talkie. None of them notice the shadow behind them until it's too late.

EXT. POLICE BARRICADE - NIGHT

Several blocks away, as spectators crowd around a police barricade, a frustrated lieutenant barks orders into his radio.

On the roof of the police van behind him sits a crouching figure who was not there a moment ago. The crisscrossing police lights reveals a striking young woman with an almost completely shaved head, save for a shock of white hair contrasted against her dusky skin. Her cocktail dress is disheveled and stained, her scowling face etched with grime. She ignores the rain as she studies the events unfolding around her.

The lieutenant turns back in her direction, but the woman isn't there anymore.

EXT. CASINO PARKING AREA - NIGHT

The fleeing man, still panicked, steals a coat from a nearby convertible and ventures into the casino.

INT. CASINO - NIGHT

The casino is packed, smoke-filled and loud. No one pays much attention to the panicky man in the ill-fitting coat making his way to the elevators.

INT. NEAR THE ELEVATORS - NIGHT

The man takes one last wide-eyed look around the mezzanine as the elevator doors open behind him.

Inside the elevator, the bald girl from the police roadblock swings herself into view, somehow hanging upside-down from the elevator ceiling. Her mood has not improved.

She grabs the man by the collar and yanks him violently into the elevator just as the doors close.

INT. GLASS ELEVATOR - NIGHT

The girl pivots herself down from the ceiling, maintaining her grip on the man's collar. He's still breathing hard, and the sight of his captor's face does not reassure him.

RUIZ

Ebon!

Ebon wrenches Ruiz into the glass wall of the elevator so hard it cracks.

RUIZ

You don't understand—

EBON

I understand you just dragged half
the police in Santropol straight
into my little hunting ground...

Her voice is as striking as her face. Despite Ebon's squalid appearance, she speaks in a crisp British accent.

RUIZ

Listen to me—

Crack! She sends him face-first into the adjacent wall.

EBON
—and now you're going to lead
them out again if I have to tie
your corpse to the back of a bus!

RUIZ
Loomis is dead!

Ebon freezes.

RUIZ
So are Jurgan and the others. All
of them. Torn to pieces.

EBON
You're lying.

He's not. She can see it in his terror-stricken face.

INT. CASINO/HOTEL, UNFINISHED 24TH FLOOR - NIGHT

This floor is under renovation. Some windows are missing; dirty tarps flap in the breeze. The only illumination is from work lamps and moonlight. Ebon and Ruiz are crouched near some lumber.

RUIZ
I have to get to the Pool—

EBON
Ruiz, are you even listening to
yourself? You can't possibly
believe one man could take out
Jurgan's entire—

RUIZ
It was the Devil! The Devil
himself has come, to take us all
back to—

Ebon backhands him across the face, his saliva trailing out like a whip. Ruiz just sits there and takes it. And then he fixes her with a wide-eyed stare.

RUIZ
All I know is this: when Loomis
saw who was coming for him... he
took his own life.

Ebon stares at him, incredulous, until a nearby sound catches her attention. Frowning, she glances at the fire-exit door.

INT. CASINO/HOTEL, FIRE-EXIT DOOR - NIGHT

A SWAT team bursts into the room, weapons drawn.

Ebon and Ruiz are gone.

EXT. UNFINISHED HIGH-RISE LEDGE - NIGHT

Ebon waits for Ruiz to pull himself onto the ledge. They're in the skeleton of what will undoubtedly be a huge skyscraper. Girders and scaffolding extend out as far as the eye can see.

RUIZ
(out of breath)
You'll be killed if you stay here.

EBON
Where is the Pool tonight, anyway?

Ruiz hesitates, reluctant to answer, but Ebon stares him down.

RUIZ
It's at the Imperial. The old one.
(pause)
Are you coming?

EBON
Just get out of here. And take those goddamned cops with you.

RUIZ
Ebon, please.

EBON
(shoving him)
Go!

Ruiz is too wound up to argue. He takes off for the far side of the building. Before he gets too far, though, he stops to make one last appeal.

RUIZ
If I don't make it—

FFSSSCHHK! A metallic hissing noise resonates through the night air.

RUIZ
Ebon?

EBON
(uninterested)
Tell the Empress I said hi.

Ebon turns to leave. As she does, a skittering sound of footsteps echoes across the I-beams.

RUIZ
(screaming)
Ebon!

His wail is cut short with a sickening crunch.

Ebon whirls around. Ruiz' body, decapitated, collapses to the ground.

His severed head flies through the air, its horrified expression glaring at Ebon accusingly.

Her scowl drains away.

EBON
Who's there?

Silence.

Although the half-finished building framework leaves few places to hide, the intruder is nowhere to be seen.

EBON
(screaming)
Show yourself!

She looks around, frantically. Her surroundings are a panicked blur.

A moment later, she hears a horrible grinding sound, metal scraping on concrete. Then, silence.

From high above, a huge I-beam comes hurtling down on the spot where Ebon is standing. Ebon barely manages to twist out of the way of the beam as it smashes into the floor. She hits the ground running.

EXT. UNFINISHED HIGH-RISE CORE - NIGHT

Ebon dashes for her life, leaping across huge gaps in the unfinished floors. She tries to catch sight of her pursuer, but she's blinded by the worklights and rain. Up ahead, she can make out a humongous hook dangling from one of the construction cranes. Desperate, she reaches the edge of the building and jumps for it.

She bashes into the cable housing, bouncing backwards before managing to grab onto the hook. She struggles with her loosening grip on the wet metal as the whole apparatus swings through the air. The intruder is nowhere in sight.

Suddenly, the entire cable jerks violently. Ebon looks up, just in time to see the bright flash of a blade chopping through the cable. The hook goes down, taking her with it.

EXT. CRANE ARM - NIGHT

Moments later, the half-ton hook smashes into the cab of a lower crane, sending Ebon sprawling onto the crane arm. Her pursuer lands on the smashed cab with a crunch, but all Ebon can see through the glare of the floodlights is a shadow and a glinting sword. She wobbles to her feet and sprints towards the opposite end of the crane arm. Clattering footsteps follow, gaining fast. Ebon reaches the end of the crane arm. She leaps...

...But not fast enough. Something sharp slices through her midsection as she tumbles through the air. Blood arcs crazily around her limp, plummeting body.

EXT. LOADING DOCK - NIGHT

Flashing police lights paint red and blue shapes all over the blood-spattered pavement. Ebon's body lies crumpled near the garbage heap where she landed.

Busy cops flit in and out of the shadows. One in particular, a SWAT cop wearing goggles, is crouching over Ebon, camera in hand.

Flash! The light from the camera floods over Ebon's dead eyeball.

The officer's spotted something. He leans forward.

Flash! Again, the light.

The officer is fascinated. The woman has two elongated incisors, like a vampire. He tightens his grip on his camera.

Flash! A third photo. This time Ebon's pupil constricts in reaction to the light.

Gingerly, the officer extends his fingers, reaching out to touch Ebon's pearly fangs. A crackle from his walkie-talkie breaks him out of his reverie, and he turns to mumble something unintelligible into the receiver.

Ebon claws her way to consciousness. The cop looks like a gray blur to her. Gradually he swirls into focus. He's a strong-looking guy, with a copper-colored buzz cut and thick goggles whose round amber lenses hide his eyes.

He shouts something over his shoulder, but Ebon's hearing is as foggy as her vision. She can only hear echoes and fragments of words, and even those sound like they're underwater.

The officer returns his attention to Ebon's unusual teeth. He reaches out and strokes one with the back of his finger.

Ebon, for her part, focuses on the man's neck. It's only partially exposed, the rest hidden behind SWAT body armor.

The officer hasn't yet realized she's alive. He catches on quick, however, when, with lightning speed, she snatches his arm.

He yelps, but can't break free. Even in her weakened state, Ebon's still a lot stronger than he is. She bares her fangs and slices into his palm with a practiced motion.

The cop strains to break free. Suddenly, he does, having been abruptly released. As he careens backwards, Ebon tears the police-badge wallet from the man's breast pocket. He lands in a heap, his head striking the pavement.

A moment later, grimacing, he sits up, but he only manages to catch a glimpse of the injured vampire, glowering at him from beneath a row of parked trucks. And then she's gone, swallowed into the shadows.

The confused SWAT officer examines his wounded hand under the strobing police lights. There, on his palm, is a strange insignia, carved in blood.