

THE TALISMAN  
by  
DREW DAYWALT

EXT. OUTDOOR PATIO AT A MOM-N-POP BURGER JOINT - NIGHT

A guy in his 20's, maybe 30's, ED, sits eating a burger and reading the news on his cell phone under the yellow sodium vapor streetlights. Cars buzz past on the highway behind him every once in a while. It's a pretty quiet night.

Suddenly he gets a text from a restricted number. He opens it.

“LOOK UNDER YOUR TABLE.”

He looks around. Is this a joke? Someone watching him somewhere? No one anywhere. It's a quiet night on this lazy strip of road.

He hesitates for a moment, glances around. Still no one in view... Then another text -

“YOU’LL FIND SOMETHING THERE. IT’S FOR YOU, ED.

This frightens him. He texts back.

“WHO IS THIS?”

No response...

He decides to look under the table. There, taped to the underside is a small container, the size of an eyeglasses case.

He opens it and it's an EYEDROPPER. But the little bottle is unmarked.

Another text:

“NOW PUT THE DROPS IN YOUR EYES.”

Ed grimaces at the text. He quickly texts back.

“FUCK YOU”

A text comes back - “IF YOU DO, YOU CAN KEEP WHAT’S TAPED UNDER YOUR SEAT.”

Ed scowls, looks around. This has to be a joke. Checks under his seat. Pulls out a paper bag that was taped there. Inside is a stack of hundreds- \$10,000. Holy shit...

Ed texts them again, “WHAT DO THE EYEDROPS DO?”

Ed's phone rings. A restricted number again.

ED

Okay, who is this?

VOICE

Put the drops in and you'll see for yourself.

ED

What?? Why? What happens if I put the drops in?

VOICE

You'll be able to see me.

ED

Where are you?

VOICE

I'm sitting in the seat across from you.

Ed feels the area over the seat with his hands. Nothing there.

ED

Bullshit. What the fuck is this?

VOICE

You can't feel me Ed. Just put in the drops.  
Once you do, I'll be as real as flesh and blood.

ED

This is fucking nuts.

VOICE

So was fire to the neanderthals, Ed.  
Technology always seems like magic to  
the primitive. Put the eyedrops in or leave  
the money on the table and walk away.  
Your choice. Just either way stop being  
a bitch.

Ed looks long and hard at the drops, then the money. There's a long beat as he ponders the situation and the offer before him.

Finally... fuck it. He puts the eyedrops in. It stings. He recoils in agony. He stands reflexively knocking his seat to the ground behind him. He throws his hands to his eyes screaming for several long seconds.

Finally, slowly, the stinging subsides... he blinks, gets used to it. Rubs his wet, irritated eyes. Looks up.

Sitting across from him is a dark figure in a hoodie, but underneath the dark hood is a hideous, unspeakable abomination of a face. And the thing stares back at him with unblinking eyes. Ed reacts strongly, backing up, staring in shock.

CREATURE

Pick up your chair. I have work for you.

ED

Why me?

CREATURE

Because you're the kind of man who'd kill his brother then still have an appetite for a hamburger an hour later.

Ed looks shocked. No one knew that.

CREATURE

And that's exactly the kind of man I need to make a delivery for me. And if you do, there's another \$10,000 in it for you.

ED

I'm listening...

CREATURE

You will deliver the talisman...

The creature slides a strange looking, ornate, mechanical key to him. Ed takes the alien looking key. Examines the strange artifact.

CREATURE

...to this address.

ED

Just take this to that address and I get another \$10,000.

The Creature nods.

ED  
What's the catch?

CREATURE  
No catch. It just takes a very specific man  
for this job and I'm hoping that man is you.

Ed nods at the offhanded complement and just stares at the thing...

EXT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Ed walks up to a big warehouse and matches the address out front to the one on the paper that the creature gave him.

He goes to knock, but is interrupted by a woman's voice inside.

WOMAN (O.S.)  
It's not locked. Come in.

Ed hesitates, then goes in...

INT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUING

Ed comes in. It's dark. Lit only by candles everywhere.

Across the room from him a twisted, evil WOMAN with a bizarre, twisted unnatural form stands before him in the dim light. Her skin is stretched and rotted and pierced. Her eyes are.... "wrong"... There's something unearthly and awful about her countenance... something otherworldly and repulsive... She's covered in blood, gore, ichor and human waste...

All around her are hung severed heads on chains... eyes rolled back in heads, tongues hanging out desperately.

Ed just looks at the horror before him. He keeps his mind on the money, to stay his nerves. He holds up the strange key for her to see...

ED  
I was sent here to give you the talisman.

WOMAN  
Put that in the door.

He turns, puzzled, and puts the strange key into a hole in the door.

The door locks. He looks worried. He tries the door. It won't budge. She rises and moves toward him.

ED

What is this place? What's going on?

WOMAN

Fratricide was it?

ED

What the hell are you talking about?

WOMAN

You killed your brother, didn't you?

ED

I brought you the talisman... now pay me so I can go...

WOMAN

That's not the talisman, you fool. That's the lock for the door.

Ed looks at her, confused.

WOMAN

YOU are the talisman.

He shakes his head, confused, backing up. She moves in closer.

WOMAN

A talisman of my eternal pleasure...

Her hands end in vicious scythes covered in rust and blood and dried gore.

WOMAN

And your eternal pain...

SMASH TO BLACK ON HIS SCREAM OF AGONY.

THE END