

The Anglerfish

written by

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FADE IN

EXT. THE ANGLERFISH - NIGHT

A dark night on the Northwest Coast. It's drizzling, and a lighthouse is visible in the distance. The mist is rolling in and a FOG HORN bellows.

A gillnetter boat cuts through the water, the name of the vessel visible on the bow-- THE ANGLERFISH.

The boat is cluttered with crates and fishing nets. Several empty crab pots are stacked towards the back, with buckets of crabs sitting on the deck nearby, filling with rainwater.

ADAM HABIT (30), wiry, weathered, and exhausted, hauls a crate from one side of the deck to the other. He takes a breath and pops his back, flicking his cigarette over the side of the boat.

ADAM

Alright there, Dan?

DANIEL HABIT (27), peaked, shaky, and twiggy, untangles netting on the back deck.

DANIEL

Yeah, I'm alright.

Adam suppresses a yawn and shakes the rainwater from his hands.

ADAM

Do you want coffee?

DANIEL

Sure.

ADAM

Okay. Just shout if you need anything.

Daniel cranes his neck as they head out of the channel. The fog is growing thicker, the lighthouse is now barely visible.

DANIEL

Adam!

Adam looks over.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

Check the sonar while you're in there. Bad weather's coming.

ADAM

We did good for the day, we should
head in, soon.

INT. THE SHIP'S CABIN - NIGHT

A small cabin complete with a little table with a coffee pot, beat-up cushions for sitting, and a steering area. Beside the table is a passage that leads down to the washroom, storage, and the beds.

Adam hangs up his rain jacket, flicks on the coffee pot and settles into the steering seat. He checks the sonar, monitoring the depth of the water.

The monitor flickers. He smacks it. When it flickers back, he sees a large shape looming underneath the vessel.

ADAM

Hm. Rocks?

Adam looks out the window.

EXT. THE ANGLERFISH - NIGHT

The boat floats serenely in the middle of the channel. There is no coastline anywhere nearby.

INT. THE SHIP'S CABIN - NIGHT

Adam looks puzzled. He manipulates the steering wheel, moving the boat away from whatever is underwater.

As he watches, the monitor beeps. The shape is a hundred feet below them... then eighty... then fifty.

Adam smacks the monitor again. The screen goes to static, then it returns to normal. Whatever it was, the object is gone.

Adam stares intently at the monitor for a long moment. When the COFFEEMAKER BEEPS, he jumps hard.

He pours coffee into two tin cups and puts his rain jacket back on.

EXT. THE ANGLERFISH - NIGHT

Adam steps back out onto the deck and kicks the door shut with his foot.

ADAM
Hey, Dan, how's it--

Adam looks around the deck. His brother is nowhere to be found.

ADAM (CONT'D)
Dan?

There's a SPLASH off to the side of the boat, and Adam drops the cups with a CLANG. He rushes to the side of the vessel, craning his neck to look at the boat's wake.

In the darkness, Adam can just barely make out Daniel in the water.

DANIEL
Adam! Adam, HELP!

ADAM
Shit!

Adam bolts back inside.

INT. THE SHIP'S CABIN - NIGHT

Adam throws himself into the driver's seat and wrenches the wheel.

EXT. THE ANGLERFISH - NIGHT

The gillnetter veers hard left in the water as the boat turns around.

Adam jumps back out onto the deck, seizing the life preserver from the hook where it's hanging, and he hurls it out into the water. It lands with a SPLASH within arm's reach of Daniel.

ADAM
I've got you, Dan! I've got you!

Daniel reaches for the life preserver. He gets a hand on it...

... But before Adam can pull him in, Daniel abruptly disappears underwater.

ADAM (CONT'D)
DAN!

Adam leans over the side of the boat. The water is quiet and still.

ADAM (CONT'D)

... Dan?

The gillnetter floats serenely on the water. Daniel is nowhere to be seen.

ADAM (CONT'D)

DAN! Dan, where are you? DAN!

EXT. THE OCEAN - DAY

It is early morning. THE ANGLERFISH still floats in the water, but it is now flanked by a Coastguard vessel. Small search and rescue dinghies are being pulled into the larger boat.

INT. THE COASTGUARD VESSEL - DAY

The clean, well-maintained cabin of a Coastguard ship.

Adam sits at a table across from the COASTGUARD OFFICER (40, rugged and feminine). He has a shock blanket around his shoulders.

COASTGUARD OFFICER

I'm sorry, Adam. We have to call off the search. It's been too many hours, there's no trace of him.

ADAM

(shakily)

Something... something TOOK him. I-I saw it. He was fine, he was about to grab the preserver, but... something dragged him under.

The Coastguard Officer gives him a sympathetic look.

COASTGUARD OFFICER

You're in shock. We've already called your family to inform them about what's happened. I'm terribly sorry for your loss.

The Coastguard Officer stands from the table and walks away. Adam clutches the blanket close, staring down at the floor.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

A large church. The insides are clean, but clearly worn down and old. At the front of the pews is an empty casket and a large portrait of Daniel, surrounded by flowers.

Adam sits in the front row, next to his MOTHER (60) and his FATHER (65). His mother sobs into her hands while his father pats her shoulder comfortingly.

The PASTOR (70, stiff and clean-cut) stands at the front of the church behind the podium, reading out loud the Eulogy.

PASTOR

As in a tale, so is life...

Adam twiddles his thumbs, brows furrowed.

PASTOR (CONT'D)

... Not how long it is, but how good it is, is what matters.

Adam closes his eyes.

EXT. THE ANGLERFISH - NIGHT - (FLASHBACK)

Daniel swims towards the life preserver, terrified and frantic.

PASTOR (V.O.)

... My deepest condolences lie with the family of Daniel Habit...

BACK TO SCENE INT. CHURCH - DAY

Adam furrows his brow, breathing heavily. His gaze darts around the room.

PASTOR (O.S.)

... He was taken from us all too soon, at the prime of his life...

Adam fidgets even more, unable to keep his leg still.

EXT. THE ANGLERFISH - NIGHT - (FLASHBACK)

Daniel disappears underwater, thrashing, eyes frantic.

PASTOR (V.O.)
... May he rest in eternal peace
and take his place at the side of
Our Heavenly Father.

BACK TO SCENE INT. CHURCH - DAY

Adam bolts up from the pew, squeezing past his parents, and storms out of the church. People murmur behind him as he does.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Adam bursts out of the church just as it begins to drizzle. He runs his hands through his hair, gasping for breath. With shaky hands, he rummages for a carton of cigarettes and a lighter.

He cups his hands around his face as he lights the cigarette. His boots CRUNCH GRAVEL in the parking lot.

He sighs, hands in his pockets, and looks out towards the harbour.

The boats move together in the wind, CREAKING and GROANING.

Adam stares at them.

He drops the cigarette to the ground and grinds it out with his heel before walking towards the harbour.

EXT. THE ANGLERFISH - NIGHT

The gillnetter cuts evenly through the water, the boat motor HUMMING as it travels.

INT. THE SHIP'S CABIN - NIGHT

Adam drinks a cup of coffee as he sits behind the wheel. He's still wearing his funeral suit. He looks uneasy.

There is a BEEP from the sonar as Adam takes a sip of coffee. He spills it on his shirt when he hears the noise.

The sonar is showing the depth at several hundred feet, but abruptly it changes to fifty, thirty, twenty feet.

There is a sickening BOOM and a SCRAPING sound underneath the hull of the boat. Adam looks around frantically, sticking his head out the window and shining a light downwards.

ADAM
... A log?

EXT. THE ANGLERFISH - NIGHT

Adam's light shines into the water. There is no debris anywhere nearby. Under the water, a shape moves.

ADAM
(whispers)
What was...?

INT. THE SHIP'S CABIN - NIGHT

Adam pulls his head back into the boat and shuts the flashlight off. He puts his hands on the wheel and takes a breath, relaxing his shoulders.

ADAM
God... what am I doing? This is nuts.

There is another THUD, the movement making the coffee sitting on the dashboard ripple.

DANIEL (O.S.)
(distantly)
Help! Heeeeeeeelp!

Adam immediately whips around when he hears his brother's voice. He jumps out of his seat and out the back door.

EXT. THE ANGLERFISH - NIGHT

Adam rushes out onto the deck and to the side of the boat, shining his light out into the darkness.

At first, there is nothing.

Adam shines his light into the dark water. His breath is shaky. In the distance, there is a rock outcropping.

Daniel is clinging to the rocks, eyes wide and frantic, his hair wet and sticking to his cheeks.

ADAM
Holy shi--

Adam jumps back into the ship.

THE ANGLERFISH turns in the dark water towards the rocks.

INT. THE SHIP'S CABIN - NIGHT

Adam grips the wheel with white knuckles.

The sonar goes haywire as the bottom grows closer and closer, but Adam ignores it.

EXT. THE ANGLERFISH - NIGHT

The boat GROANS and SCRAPES as it is beached on the rocks. The wood CRACKS and the boat leans precariously to one side.

Adam jumps over the side of the boat and into the water, about knee deep. He stumbles over the rocks and splashes his way over to Daniel as he clings to the stone. He drops down to his knees next to his brother.

The seaweed has wound around Daniel's body, his arms and legs. The lower half of his body is in the water. His skin looks sickly and clammy.

ADAM

Dan... Daniel, it's me! I'm here. I came for you, buddy.

Daniel says nothing. He buries his face in his arms and sobs, his body trembling.

ADAM (CONT'D)

(tearfully)

Dan, I'm-- I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry. L-let me call Coastguard, they'll come and--

He pats his hip, looking for his VHF radio. He sighs and looks back up at the ship. Through the window, he can see it on the dash console.

Daniel continues to SOB. It's an ugly, wretched, contorted noise.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Buddy, I'm so sorry... Come on, we have to go...

Adam looks down at his trembling brother. He gently moves his hands under his armpits, brushing the seaweed aside.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Come on, Dan... you can walk, can't you?

Daniel goes quiet. The seaweed undulates around them.

Adam starts to stand.

ADAM (CONT'D)
I'm... I'm going to be right back,
I'm gonna get my radio, call the
Coastguard okay? Just--

Before he can stand fully, Daniel's hand snatches his wrist. Adam tries to pry his fingers off, but his grip is inhumanly strong.

ADAM (CONT'D)
Dan... Dan, what..?

Daniel lifts his head to look at Adam. His head turns a little too far for his neck and twists at an awkward angle.

Adam's eyes widen. He frantically tries to pull away.

ADAM (CONT'D)
G-get away from me!

Daniel says nothing. He only GURGLES.

Adam fumbles for his flashlight and shines it into Daniel's eyes.

His eyeballs are pale grey. His hands are clammy and cold and rotten. He opens his mouth and worms and slimy seaweed began to spill out.

Adam SCREAMS. He tries to scramble back.

Daniel's grip is unrelenting. Slowly, without moving his legs, he slithers back into the water as if he's being pulled by his ankles.

Adam is dragged into the sea, still clinging to his flashlight. He thrashes against his brother's grip as he's pulled underwater.

ADAM (CONT'D)
No-- No! HELP!

Adam is pulled into the sea.

The flashlight falls from his hand and sinks slowly into the water.

As it does, the beam catches the rest of the monster: its teeth are enormous and its eyes are luminous.

Its body is constructed from the remains of human beings, Daniel being the latest addition to this disgusting lure.

The bubbles of Adam's last breath float to the surface.

The mist settles on the sea above. A FOG HORN sounds in the distance by the lighthouse.

FADE OUT