

Cerulean Enigma

written by

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TITLE CARD: "HOLD FAST TO DREAMS, FOR IF DREAMS DIE, LIFE IS A BROKEN-WINGED BIRD, THAT CANNOT FLY." -- LANGSTON HUGHES.

FADE IN:

EXT. MOUNTAIN - EVENING

A beautiful mountain sunset. Look at it from every angle.

BILLY (V.O.)

I look out at the sun setting. This one sun that provides the energy for all of us. The entire world runs on this glowing orb. Every day we get to see it for a few hours then it vanishes again, only to come back. It's like hope. It goes away for a time then comes back.

BILLY HUXLEY, 12, looks out. He's sitting next to JOSH HEGEL, 12. They're dressed in Spider-Man (1995) shirts. It's 1996 to be clear. An important year.

BILLY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I look below at the valley. All of these people's lives are beyond me.

Insert shots of the valley, done in a badass filter. Ordinary, boring lives. Even a child sees it.

BILLY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

They're so small, so insignificant. Up here I am mighty. Up here, I rule.

DISSOLVE TO:

THE CREDITS OVER WHICH RADIOHEAD'S "FAKE PLASTIC TREES" PLAYS. BECAUSE BILLY HEGEL GETS REALITY.

INT. CAR - EVENING

The sun has just set to create a mood of between time because that's where the characters are. Billy and Josh sit in the back while RAND HUXLEY, 30, unshaven and free, drives.

RAND

It's a shame your mom is being such a Nixon and won't let you go to the Warriors of The show tomorrow.

(MORE)

RAND (CONT'D)
We're playing with Imbecile
Peepshow and Kudd.

BILLY
I'll get to go eventually.

RAND
See your mom's not like me. When we
split up and she married that
Republican councilman, she gave up
what made her unique. I'm not like
that. I'm still free.

BILLY
I want to be like you dad. Fun.

RAND
And you will, even though you look
oddly nothing like me. I'm sure
that's not because you more closely
resemble your mother's friend Jeff
who I still trust like a brother.
That won't eventually be a lesson
you'll learn.

Billy nods. Josh looks around, an inscrutable look on his
face. He is anger embodied but ignored.

RAND (CONT'D)
Gotta live life fully. Now let me
throw on the radio.

He does so. Blue by Leeann Rimes hits.

At once everything stops as the song plays. A blue filter
covers everything as Billy listens. It's transcendent,
powerful, real.

There are insert shots left and right. Stock footage. Images
of the sky, pain. A sense that maturity is hitting.

When we cut back, Billy and Josh are wearing different,
nondescript clothes. Josh still looks angry. Billy looks
dazed.

The song ends.

D.J. (V.O.)
That's the new song from 13 year
old Leeann Rimes. 13. Wow. Anybody
even close to that age has truly
got to feel like a total failure!

Billy looks out the window. Is he a failure? He's 12. Not too far off. Damn.

Josh glares. He has such rage in him.

EXT. CITY - EVENING

The car drives through the city, passing a faded Confederate flag mural. In front of it is a sign: future home of Kentucky Fried Chicken.

The car keeps driving through town. A business named Mom & Pop's Drugstore has a for rent sign in the window. A Local Hardware Store is closed for good. A Non-Chain Clothing Store looks abandoned.

The Wal-Mart booms and bustles.

INT. CAR - EVENING

Rand keeps driving. Billy looks out, soaking it all up.

RAND

It's all going to be over when you get to my age, Billy. The South? It'll be one plastic tarp covering the land. Nothing left of the real south!

Josh continues his anger. A bit of growling now.

JOSH

I'm going to die at 32!

They ignore him.

RAND

You'll miss this land. It'll be a version, not the truth.

He turns on the radio again. Blue is on again. Billy looks out as he passes--

EXT. MIDDLE SCHOOL - EVENING

The local middle school. It looks large. There is a sign: Welcome to Your Future!

INT. CAR - EVENING

Billy turns back, shaking. He's scared. Josh continues to look around. He glares at everybody.

RAND

I have to stop off here at this bar to pay a friend back. I know it's irresponsible but it is the person I am and one day you will decide you won't act like me but you will inevitably find yourself in this exact situation because it'll be an ironic parallel that reflects how the son becomes the father.

He places a hand on Billy's shoulder.

RAND (CONT'D)

See you're destined to be unable to outrun your DNA or your upbringing. At some point you will realize this but only after a moment of crisis that makes you see everything clearly.

He leaves.

EXT. BAR - EVENING

Rand gets out of the car and walks up to a bar named The Third Circle. Billy peers out of the car, bars of light giving the illusion he's in a cage.

INT. BAR - EVENING

Rand walks in. Don't Fear the Reaper plays as he walks up to HEPHAESTUS BASTARD, 46, an ugly man if there ever was one. A cane sits beside him.

RAND

Hello Hephaestus Bastard.

HEPHAESTUS

Rand Hegel, my dear friend. What brings you here?

RAND

I come to pay you for your iron work. How is Venus?

HEPHAESTUS

She is out tonight with my half brother Aaron, a soldier from the Gulf War, a dreadful mistake never to be made again.

RAND

And how is your mother?

HEPHAESTUS

She is fine, though she has visions of my father, a man I've never known and never will.

RAND

Find peace, Hephaestus Bastard.

INT. CAR - EVENING

Billy sits still in the car. Josh continues to shake with rage.

BILLY (V.O.)

Am I a failure at my young age? I have done nothing of note. I'm a B-student. Better than average but just barely. The top tier escapes me. I am incapable of greatness. I am ordinary and doomed at this moment. Yet I also sit on the precipice of change. I might yet become something.

On the radio an ad plays. Billy listens.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Do you want the look of the future? To see what will become of the world tomorrow? Then look to us: The Tailors Swift. We take Northern style and bring it to southern fashion. We're the Tailors Swift and we're inescapable!

BILLY (V.O.)

There are signs. Am I feeling them? Will I become something bright and new? I know not.

Josh punches the seat.

JOSH

I feel such anger tonight! Your father neglects us yet you are passive about it! My anger serves to reflect the way you feel even though you aren't outwardly expressing it. I take on your sins in lieu of my own. One of my friends will turn me in for revolutionary behavior mistaken for terrorism.

BILLY (V.O.)

I am unaware of anything tonight but my own mind. My friend reacts to the world but I do not for I am fixated on my own crisis of conscience.

He looks out at the bar.

EXT. BAR - NIGHT

Another cage shot. Billy is trapped in this situation.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Rand sits with Hephaestus as they take shots from a bottle labeled Loesser Whiskey.

RAND

This cheap whiskey tastes awful but feels good.

HEPHAESTUS

The burn reminds me of fire, that which I work in daily at the steel mill. In my off hours, I craft sculptures of steel like the one you purchased.

RAND

I love your sculptures as they reflect my lifestyle, this bohemian transience I love so.

He stands up and walks to the bathroom. He walks in and proceeds to urinate. As he does, there are grunting noises heard from a stall. Loud, aggressive ones.

Finally they stop. ONAN CONSTANT, 23, walks out. He washes his hands.

RAND (CONT'D)
Hello Onan Constant.

He finishes up.

ONAN
I feel uncomfortable speaking in
the aftermath of this moment.

RAND
It is ok, my friend. There are men
such as you in this world who have
urges society disdains. I am wise
because I respect you and embrace
you though I am foolish for I have
left my son in a hot car in June.

ONAN
I express gratitude.

Rand walks out. He greets Hephaestus.

RAND
I gotta take off, but I hope you
have peace with your crises
Hephaestus Bastard though the
universe curses you never to do so.

HEPHAESTUS
Thank you, Rand Huxley.

They shake hands. Rand walks out.

EXT. BAR - NIGHT

Rand walks to the car, passing Billy, once more shot as in a
cage.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Rand gets in the car. He looks in at Billy and Josh.

RAND
Now that I have done my good deed
in a place of sin, who wants ice
cream?

BILLY
I do!

Rand starts the car. Billy looks off again.

BILLY (V.O.)

Will the ice cream soothe this pain
in my heart? I know I am a mediocre
soul who has and will fail to do
more in life. Do I deserve the
sweetness of a scoop of milkfat and
sugar?

The car drives off. Billy turns to look at Josh.

BILLY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I stare at Josh. I watch him, still
incomprehensible to me. I hope I
can know how to ease his pain. For
though he may try to ease my pain,
qui adjuvat adiutores?

EXT. CITY - NIGHT

They drive past a daycare on fire. There is a closeup on the
cartoons of children burning in the flames. On the
soundtrack, throw on Madonna's "This Used To Be My
Playground."

There are no fire engines in sight but there is a crowd
standing by, throwing gasoline on the fire. They cheer at the
sight of each leaping flame.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Billy still looks out.

BILLY (V.O.)

That fire represents so much to me,
for this is my life. My childhood
burns in the flames of time, fueled
by the actions of others.

He looks at Josh who sheds a tear without actually crying
otherwise. Blue comes on again.

BILLY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Again I am reminded I am nothing,
this mere Billy Huxley.

He listens to the song once more.

EXT. ICE CREAM SHOP - NIGHT

They pull up in front of the Ithaca Ice Cream Parlor. Billy
gets out. He touches the walls. Josh joins him.

BILLY

I feel like it's been 20 years
since I've been here.

He looks right at the camera. They walk in.

INT. ICE CREAM SHOP - NIGHT

Billy, Josh, and Rand walk in. There are people sitting around, eating with no expression on their faces. They are deadened.

Billy walks to the front. The guy working the counter is TIMMY ERWIN, age 33, looking old and bloated.

RAND

Aren't you Timmy Erwin?

TIMMY

Yes, I once was known as Timmy Erwin, star of such films as Dogpatch Daze, Spider Monkey Junction, and as a failed adult, Revenge of the Return of Boogiesaurus but now I am but this you see before you, Tim Erwin.

RAND

I remember you! You were awesome then.

TIMMY

I was. But now I'm just me.

He leans in close to Billy.

TIMMY (CONT'D)

But pity me not. I've done more before I was 13 than you will ever do. My life is sad now but I can rest on the glory of my past for I have made something of my life, something you never will do, Billy. You will inevitably wind up working at a mill until an insurance settlement gives you the money to enter film school in your 30s. But you will not succeed. So tonight, gaze upon me with mockery but I have succeeded where you never will!

He backs up.

TIMMY (CONT'D)

Now, what can I get you?

BILLY

Chocolate chip cookie dough!

JOSH

A cone of grape sherbet.

RAND

Go get your seats and I'll bring it.

They walk to the table. Billy spies a girl, VERONICA CALUMET, 12. She's very pretty.

JOSH

Why are you looking at her?

BILLY

She's pretty.

JOSH

You know she'll betray you! Women like her always do. They're rancid, fetid creatures composed of the blackest darkness that consumes the power of the man. In this modern age they think themselves worthy of the throne of man! They think they've ascended to our level through forced social progress but what they really want to do is force us under into a world where we are hunted, we are persecuted for being men. They will call us out in lies and we will have no recourse. We are hated for being us. I say to you my friend we MUST carry the spearhead on!

BILLY

I never thought of it that way.

JOSH

Because you've fed on the lies they teach you. I ask you, have you ever laughed at a woman? Have you loved a film starring one? They tell us to worship their art while they ignore us and this I decry! Be not weak, Billy Huxley. See through the veil cast upon you.

BILLY
But what about her?

JOSH
She will cheat on you! Cast you
aside. Abandon you because you
don't do enough for her. But what
about what she does for you? She
will devour you. Siphon all you
have. Fall not in!

BILLY
I shan't.

Rand walks over with the ice cream.

RAND
Here you go. I'll be right back.

He hands them the ice cream and leaves. Blue comes on again.

BILLY
This song...It hurts my soul. It's
so pretty. It makes me wonder what
could be. What I could be.

EXT. ICE CREAM SHOP - NIGHT

Rand walks out.

BILLY (V.O.)
Am I the sum of my parts? I know
Rand Huxley isn't my forebear yet
he has marked me. I carry within me
the makings of my future self from
his ways of raising me.

Rand walks to the car.

EXT. CITY - NIGHT

Rand drives.

BILLY (V.O.)
Am I fated to be like him, a fool?
I hope not. I listen to this song
and I feel frustration at a life
not lived yet. I think of how he
has fumbled. I hope I can ascend. I
hope I can rise above, make
something of myself.
(MORE)

BILLY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Yes I feel like a failure now and
the universe screams at me I will
become nothing and I expect it, but
will I find myself at 33, a year
past Christ, doing more?

EXT. BRIDGE - NIGHT

Rand walks to the edge of a bridge. He steps to the edge of
it.

BILLY (V.O.)
Blue represents the hope I can be
something more. Just like I know my
dad will.

With his arms out, falling in an inverted cross pose, Rand
dives into the water.

BILLY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I believe in hope in this world,
this cerulean enigma.

FADE TO BLACK.