

SPOON-FED ADDICTION

by

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Based on the novella by Silvano Williams

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INT. ANGELA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Moonlight cuts across the room.

A stuffed rabbit sits propped against the pillows. One ear is coming loose from the seam.

On the wall: a BEAUTY AND THE BEAST poster. Belle and the Beast mid-dance, her yellow dress swirling. A fairy tale promise.

On the desk: a SKETCHBOOK lies closed, edges worn from use. Beside it, a stack of COLLEGE BROCHURES, University of Houston on top.

A desk CALENDAR shows December 1995. Its surface is furred with dust.

A purple diary sits CLOSED on the calendar.

Something in the corners of the room moves. The faint shadows cast by the moonlight darken.

Darkness bleeds in. It slides across the floor, pools beneath the desk chair, then rises over the chair's legs like strands of fabric extending from the rug.

It takes the shape of a body sitting in the chair: SHADOW-ANGELA.

She holds the same posture Angela used to hold, but her outline won't stay still. Her features soften and reform, a collage of photographs flashing in and out of focus within the shadow's form.

The diary OPENS on its own. The pages flutter, then settle on a water-stained entry.

Shadow-Angela's hand moves across the page as if she's writing, tracing over the words already written.

INSERT - DIARY PAGE

Faded ink on a water-stained page: "December 20, 1995. Dear Diary, "

Shadow-Angela's hand pauses. Her dark form turns toward the diary as if reading what she's written.

It isn't remembering. It's summoning.

Angela's voice rises from the walls and echoes from the ceiling, filling the emptiness in the room.

ANGELA (V.O.)

I have found love, and his name is Adiran. Adiran, who told me he had heard God... that he deserved to die, and I didn't believe him until it was too late.

The diary pages turn backward. They flutter through entries, like portals through time.

An earlier entry catches the light: "September 3rd, 1995. Sent off my application to U of H's art program today. Dad says it's not practical. Jessica says follow your heart. For once, I think she might be right!"

The shadow touches the page.

The diary projects the memory into the room:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL ART ROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Late afternoon yellow light pours through tall windows.

ANGELA STERLING (18, small-framed, paint under her fingernails) stands before an easel, brush in hand.

She's SMILING, genuinely and unguarded as a half-finished painting of a bird in flight takes shape under her brush.

A FRIEND (17) leans over her shoulder, pointing at the canvas.

FRIEND

That's very good, Angie. For real!

Angela laughs, slightly embarrassed. She steps back and studies the painting.

Her embarrassed smile settles into something genuine.

The memory flashes away into a yellow flare.

INT. STERLING KITCHEN - EVENING (FLASHBACK)

Another diary page: November 23, 1995.

A Christmas photo clings to the fridge: a much younger Sterling family. Mr. and Mrs. Sterling stand in the back row, holding each other. The two girls stand shoulder-to-shoulder in front. All smiles. Angela is missing some teeth.

SHERIFF STERLING (late 40s, thick-built, carries his star like a weapon) paces the kitchen floor. The badge shimmers as

it catches the yellow kitchen light.

He slams a newspaper onto the kitchen table. The front page carries a grainy photo of Sheriff Sterling, his face frozen mid-yell at a crowd of reporters.

"Corruption" and "Under Investigation" darken under the light. Shadows trace the letters and leap out from the bold text.

The family portrait smiles from the fridge.

Sheriff Sterling looms over the table, grinding a piece of licorice candy between his teeth.

SHERIFF STERLING
You want to explain this?

Angela stands behind a kitchen chair opposite him. Hands tight on the backrest. Face blank.

JESSICA STERLING (early 20s, hair dyed unevenly, doesn't live here anymore) enters from the hallway, arms crossed, her denim coat folded over them.

JESSICA
Jesus Christ. She's still a kid. She doesn't know what she's doing!

Sterling turns toward Jessica, pointing. Voice rising.

SHERIFF STERLING
You brought that scumbag into our home. And look where we are!

He slaps the paper again. The table jolts. The room darkens.

Jessica's breath catches. But her stare doesn't drop.

JESSICA
Yeah, sure, Daddy. You've preached accountability your whole life. And now the world finally sees you like I do. Like the fucking hypocrite you are!

Unseen by anyone, the shadows spread across the kitchen floor toward Jessica.

They slide across the tile like black water, pooling toward Jessica's feet.

Sterling lunges toward Jessica. He grabs the nearest chair

and shoves it out of his way. The shadow water on the floor parts as the legs screech across the tile.

Jessica steps back from her father's aggression. Her shoulder hits the doorframe hard.

Her foot shifts as she turns away, exposing her ankle. A tendril of shadow water reaches up and brushes her bare ankle. It recoils and vanishes with a hiss.

SHERIFF STERLING
Don't you walk away from me!

But Jessica already has. She stumbles away, sobbing.

JESSICA (O.S.)
Happy fucking Thanksgiving!

The front door opens. SLAMS shut.

The Christmas photo on the fridge flutters from the slam. It comes loose and drifts to the shadow water on the floor.

ANGELA (V.O.)
My sister escaped, leaving me, while
everyone turned against me for
defending Adiran.

The photo shrivels, corners curling in, the colors bleeding out of it.

Sterling's fingers close around the photo. Black water drips from his hand, seeping from the edges as his grip tightens.

He turns to Angela. Slowly bends over the table, looming into her space. Threatening enough that she flinches.

SHERIFF STERLING
(low)
This is ALL your fault!

He holds the crumpled ball inches from her face. Flicks it at her chest.

It bounces off, falls to the floor.

Where it touched her, the darkness soaks into the fabric like water. By the time she looks down, it's gone.

Angela releases the chair. Her face tightens with rage.

She shouts at the top of her lungs.

ANGELA
Like I give a shit!

Sterling's hand comes up fast with immediate, practiced accuracy.

Angela is silenced.

At the kitchen counter, MRS. STERLING (late 40s, thin, never makes eye contact) methodically carves the turkey beside four waiting dishes.

Shadows cling to her like a second skin. They move when she moves. She doesn't notice them anymore. Nothing left in her to notice.

Shadows bleed in from the edges. The room goes dark.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Another page: November 27, 1995. Another diary entry erupts into a projection.

Angela strides past lockers.

Harsh fluorescent lights hum above her. They help hide the bad makeup job covering the red on her cheek.

ANGELA (V.O.)
Back to school Monday... The weekend
passed the way weekends always pass in
our house... in silent fear of
confrontation.

Kids line both sides. Some work at their lockers. Others stare, point, and whisper behind her back.

Footsteps echo behind her.

Each step leaves a dark footprint behind her, lingering on the tile like mud. None of the kids notice.

STUDENTS (O.S.)
"That's her." "With him?" "Didn't he
kill a bunch of people?"

Snickers ripple through the crowd. A guy mutters:

GUY (O.S.)
Fucking psycho bait!

A group of kids roughhouses nearby.

The shadows spread outward from the footprints, engulfing the lockers and the kids on either side.

A locker door SLAMS.

INT. ANGELA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Shadow-Angela stills. The diary lies open as its pages settle.

A glimpse on a page: "Maybe everyone has a beast inside them. Maybe love is what sets them free."

Her dark hand hovers over the line. Lingers, absorbing the words.

The shadows on the ceiling blacken. Stretch toward the window. Drape over it until they cover the window in total darkness.

Then the soft sound of pages turning again as a fog-like memory emerges:

INT. ANGELA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Angela stands at the window. Her breath hitches.

A figure is outside, backlit by streetlight.

Angela opens the window. She steps back.

ADIRAN (20, towering, sharp-tongued dealer) silently climbs through the window. Only his outline is visible, eyes gleaming unnaturally.

ADIRAN

God does not want me alive, Angie, so
I am going to make sure I go to Hell
when I die.

Angela says nothing. His hand emerges from the dark and wipes a tear from her cheek. His other hand rests at her waist, then trails up her back.

Her breath catches. He tenderly pulls her closer.

He kisses her. She reciprocates.

ANGELA (V.O.)

For the first time, I felt like I was
good enough for someone.

Adiran takes her shaking hands in his.

Adiran pulls back from the kiss.

Hot breath on her cheek, then her ear.

ADIRAN
I love you.

Angela cries.

ANGELA (V.O.)
That was all I ever wanted.

He pulls away. She reaches after him. He slips out the window.

She falls to her knees, dragging her diary to the floor with her.

He looks back, almost obscured by the dark. Yet a tear sliding down his cheek catches the light.

ANGELA (V.O.)
Before Adiran told me he loved me, I
had a purpose. Then they took him, and
life itself lost its meaning.

As the memory fades, the diary pages flutter forward to the final entry.

INT. ANGELA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Angela lies in bed. Diary clutched to her chest, pen loose in her hand.

The pen slips from her fingers. Falls to the floor.

ANGELA (V.O.)
Finally, I've understood what his god
had said to him. It's been two months
since Adiran was taken from me. It's
been two months of wanting him more
than anything else in my life.

The shadows above her begin to stir, unfolding downward from the ceiling and walls with each breath she takes.

ANGELA (V.O.)
But I know they can't ever stop my
Adiran. On some nights, I hear him
calling for me. I want to touch him
again, so I whisper to him in the
dark, hoping he sees me in his dreams.
I've felt him, and I know he comes to
(MORE)

ANGELA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
me because I am the only one!

A woman's silhouette forms. Her arms spread. The edges of her arms trail off like wings drawn in smoke.

ANGELA (V.O.)
On those nights, he breathes into my ear, and sometimes around my neck and down my back. Warm, comforting whispers that assure me that when I die, I will be with him.

The shape swells as it takes a deep breath in. Then folds inward until it collapses.

The shadow reforms. This time with broader shoulders. Adiran's outline, but no facial features. The shadow wears what she wants to see.

ANGELA (V.O.)
Because with Adiran's help, I know I'll be able to come back just as he does for me. Whether it'll be in Heaven or Hell, it doesn't matter anymore.

Angela doesn't move. The shadow takes the form of Adiran's face leaning down, just like their first kiss.

Its mouth moves past hers and brushes her ear.

ADIRAN
(distorted, reverberating)
Breathe.

Angela inhales. Sharp and deep.

Her eyes WIDEN in anticipation. A bright yellow light reflects off them.

But something is wrong.

She tries to exhale. She can't. Her hands fly to her throat.

The shadows TIGHTEN around her neck.

Her back arches off the mattress. Fighting for air that won't come. Her fingers claw at the darkness. They pass through nothing.

ANGELA (V.O.)
All that matters now is that I will
(MORE)

ANGELA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
escape this horrible, pointless life
and finally be happy.

Then, stillness. Her eyes stay open. Glassy. Gone. A single tear slides down her temple.

The shadow pulls back from her face. It holds Adiran's shape for a moment.

It dissolves, sliding off the bed, its umbra pooling in the corners of her room.

The diary slips from her fingers. Falls open on the floor. Its pages flutter, then settle on the last page.

Her handwriting catches the moonlight:

ANGELA (V.O.)
(whispered)
No more tears. I have cried enough.
Goodbye, Angela Sterling.

INT. ANGELA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Moonlight cuts across the room.

Total silence of an empty house.

The room has reset. The bed is made. The chair at the desk is empty. The only thing out of place is the open diary on the desk.

Shadows trace the letters, waiting.

The page holds.

Darkness surges off the page past the room. Consumes everything in black.

WATER ROARS: a ruptured pipe and a bathtub faucet, their sounds merging into white noise.

ADIRAN (V.O.)
(distorted, reverberating)
What she knew of me is what I fed her.

Because watching eyes widen with
fascination is easier than admitting I
have nothing real to give.

INT. ADIRAN'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Steam fogs the bathroom mirror.

A low HUM begins vibrating the glass.

Handwritten words form: "SPOON-FED ADDICTION".

Blood sweats from the mirror.

A handprint smears the blood from the other side.

The hum rises in pitch until the mirror shatters.

The bathroom is wrecked. The mirror is obliterated, tiles are cracked.

The sink has been ripped from the wall. Pipes are exposed, water spraying across the bathroom.

Cabinet doors are splintered. A bullet hole in the drywall.

The water spray slows. The hum fades.

A police radio crackles faintly:

POLICE RADIO (O.S.)
Suspect may be armed... Request backup
at location...

Adiran lies motionless in the tub.

Blood swirls in the water. Spreads across the linoleum. In the corners, the dark drinks it in.

The scattered mirror shards on the floor catch the light. Each holds a fragment of Adiran's face. An eye. His jaw. His forehead.

Adiran slumps back against the tub.

His cracked lips part.

ADIRAN
(forcing it)
Whatever... is in me...

His throat closes. He swallows against dry nothing. His lips stop moving.

ADIRAN (V.O.)
...it dies with me tonight.

In one larger shard, his reflection stares straight out.

This reflection is muted, darker than the others, its edges lost in shadow. The eyes are Adiran's, but the expression isn't. It's SHADOW ADIRAN.

A conspiratorial smile spreads across his face, meant for whoever is watching.

Shadow Adiran raises one finger to his lips.

Mouths: "Shhh."

Adiran splashes water onto the mirror shard. The image ripples and snuffs out.

Other mirror pieces glint, one after another.

Faces flicker in the shards: MARY (late teens, Asian/Black, meets people's eyes and holds them) and SETH (late teens, watchful).

A small, nostalgic smile flashes across Adiran's face.

ADIRAN (V.O.)
The truth is... this isn't about my
redemption. This is about the rot I
fed.

Their faces fade.

Adiran's fingers twitch beneath the water. Blood oozes from the vertical cut in his forearm.

He lifts his cut arm out of the water. He tries to pull himself up, looks down at his defeated body. Gives up.

ADIRAN (V.O.)
Regardless, this is exactly how I
deserve it to end.

He sinks back into the bathtub. Blood curls through the water and spills over the edge.

A flicker across another mirror shard: VERONICA (20, fiery-haired, electric blue eyes) is laughing, lit bright in the glass.

Then she's gone.

Adiran closes his eyes.

ADIRAN (V.O.)
She was the last time I was human.

Water laps his mouth.

The darkness in the corner shifts closer. It doesn't rush. It doesn't need to.

His head slips underwater. The world muffles.

His body jerks him back up on instinct.

He gasps. Ragged exhales. Eyes still closed.

ADIRAN (V.O.)
But it didn't start tonight.

Shadows obscure him. The mirror shards flare to life.

INT. JOHN'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Dim light. PRE-TEEN ADIRAN (12, thin, watches the room without moving) sits stiffly on a worn couch.

TV light flickers across his body.

The volume is low. The nightly news covers budget cuts and rising crime.

JOHN (early 40s, lean and wiry, still carries himself like a soldier) watches the TV without blinking.

ADIRAN'S MOTHER (late 30s, thin and twitchy) paces behind them, half-nodding to nothing, words slurred.

A shadow clings to her edges. Moves when she moves.

She mutters, grabs at Adiran's arm.

The shadow stretches toward him with her reach.

JOHN
Hey.

John rises and places himself between them. One firm hand guides her away without force.

The darkness retracts with her, settling across her shoulders as she stumbles off, mumbling.

John sits beside Adiran and rests a hand on his shoulder. He studies the boy for a beat.

Adiran doesn't react. He stares straight ahead at the TV.

John turns back to the news.

INT. JOHN'S BATHROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

TEEN ADIRAN (16, slim, athletic, practiced at this) kneels beside his mother as she vomits into a toilet. The bathroom is yellowed and slick.

She wipes her mouth, shaking. Her eyes snap clear, sharp and focused on him.

For a moment, she's present. Her voice drops, raw and unguarded.

ADIRAN'S MOTHER
Society is a filthy animal, kid. All
they want is for people like us to
die.

She leans back against the wall. The clarity leaves her face. Then she leans forward again, trembling.

In the corner where the light doesn't reach, darkness gathers, thicker than shadow has any right to be.

Neither notices.

Then it swallows the bathroom whole.

ADIRAN (V.O.)
Six months later, she was dead and I
had nothing.

The sound of retching returns, then fades.

ADIRAN (V.O.)
Until I found her...

INT. DENNY'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Fluorescent lights hum overhead. The restaurant is nearly empty.

Veronica sits across from Adiran in a vinyl booth.

Between them: an empty creamer container, a nearly empty carafe, torn sugar packets, and spilled granules.

A coffee cup steams between her hands. Under the ugly fluorescent wash, she glows.

She lifts the cup to her lips, watching him over the rim.

A smile plays at the corners of her mouth, but her eyes hold steady. Waiting.

Adiran doesn't notice. His mouth moves, words swallowed by the diner noise.

She lowers the cup. The smile stays. Her stare sharpens.

Still nothing.

Veronica's hand moves beneath the table and up his leg. His eyes finally meet hers.

Her smile fades. What's left is raw.

Her hand resurfaces and slides a PREGNANCY TEST across the table.

Two lines.

Adiran stares at the test.

INT. ADIRAN'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Adiran's eyes snap open. Water sloshes in the tub. His breath catches, sharp and involuntary.

He squeezes his eyes shut. Forces it down.

ADIRAN

No... Not that.

His bloody hand drags across the glowing shard, smearing it with water and blood.

The memory goes dark.

Another shard catches light: ROOFTOP. NIGHT.

EXT. ABANDONED OFFICE BUILDING - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

SUPER: "TWO YEARS AGO".

Boots crunch on broken ground. Adiran and Veronica crawl through a gap in the chain-link fence.

She laughs, breathless.

They climb stairs and scaffolding to the rooftop.

VERONICA
First time for everything, right?

ADIRAN
You nervous?

She grins.

VERONICA
With you? Never!

They reach the rooftop and find their spot.

She pulls out the peyote bundle, holds it to the starlight.

VERONICA
To new experiences!

He hugs her from behind, pressing his face into her hair.

ADIRAN
To us. Forever, together.

EXT. ABANDONED OFFICE BUILDING - ROOFTOP - LATER

The unfinished rooftop is skeletal: exposed beams, jagged edges, wind blowing through empty window frames.

Adiran and Veronica lie side by side, faces to the sky. Layered jackets. Ripped jeans. Skin damp with sweat from the peyote.

Downtown glows in the distance below them.

A SERIES OF DISSOLVING MOMENTS:

They sit cross-legged, knees touching. Sage and crumpled clinic paperwork burn in a tin can between them.

Smoke rises to the scattered stars across the sky.

Veronica smiles, bright.

VERONICA
She would've been wild. Just like us.

Adiran nods, lips parted.

ADIRAN
She'll come back. When we're ready.

Veronica closes her eyes. Wind on her face.

VERONICA

Maybe this is us saying goodbye...

ADIRAN

Or maybe it's us making a promise.

They lie back, arms folded beneath their heads. Stars swirl above.

ADIRAN

I never pretended with you. Not once.

Adiran takes her hand. No tension. No regrets.

VERONICA

We were never scared of what we saw in each other.

They sit in silence. The city below glitters as the sage burns.

They burst into laughter, bodies curled inward, breathless.

The tin can smolders. Smoke disperses into the dark.

They dance barefoot, swaying slow, faces pressed together.

VERONICA

You ever think... maybe we did things backward?

ADIRAN

No. Maybe?

He slips behind her, chin resting on her shoulder.

VERONICA

We made a soul before we made a life.

Adiran turns toward her. Starlight glitters in Veronica's eyes. A weightless smile.

ADIRAN

You're my angel with wings!

She turns and leans into him. Kisses him. Laughs in his mouth.

VERONICA

Let's fly, then.

She springs to her feet, reaching for the sky.

VERONICA
I want to do the lift.

ADIRAN
The what?

VERONICA
Like in Dirty Dancing. I feel like I
can fly.

She backs up a few steps, arms wide. Adiran slips on his boots but leaves them unlaced.

VERONICA
Catch me.

She runs at him. Adiran braces, catches her at the waist, and lifts her high overhead.

She stretches above him, laughing, her silhouette glowing against the stars. For one perfect moment, she is weightless.

His grip slips. Adiran thrusts her upward, trying to catch her again.

He steps back. His unlaced boot snags an exposed beam.

VERONICA
Adiran--

Veronica vanishes over the edge.

She plummets away from him. Her aura fades as the colors drain to gray. Wings flicker in and out, then vanish.

Veronica hits the pavement with a distorted, echoing THUD.

Below, darkness pools around her body. Something shifts within it, barely visible, then stills.

Adiran stands at the edge, frozen, staring down. Shallow, rapid breaths.

The wind threatens to push him over. He leans into it.

Something moves in the corner of his eye.

Far below, red and blue lights streak past. An ambulance races down the road, siren faint, fading.

Adiran watches it disappear.

He looks down at Veronica. Then toward the fading ambulance.

Panic overtakes grief.

He backs away from the edge, turns, and heads for the scaffolding.

ADIRAN (V.O.)
I destroyed the only person who
should've been a part of me forever.
And I can't blame the drugs for it.

He climbs down faster.

EXT. ABANDONED OFFICE BUILDING - NIGHT

Adiran drops to the ground. Looks both ways. Slips into the shadows.

ADIRAN (V.O.)
Then I abandoned her, making the world
outside of us believe she committed
suicide...

He disappears into darkness.

The memory fades to black.

ADIRAN (V.O.)
Because I'm a fucking coward.

Wind howls through the building openings, then quiets.

INT. ADIRAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Flickering candles throw the apartment into half-light.

Movie posters and industrial band flyers cover the walls, some framed and aligned, others taped crooked. Stickers fill the gaps. Orange Christmas lights sag along the ceiling, held by tape and thumbtacks.

A sagging sofa faces a 19-inch TV on a cheap stand. A VCR and stereo stack beside it. Wall-mounted speakers trail tangled cords, ugly but functional.

From the stereo, "Something I Can Never Have" plays low. Reznor's voice is barely above a whisper.

Adiran sits shirtless on the floor, back against the wall.

On the coffee table: a lighter, a steak knife, and a row of candles burning low.

He holds the steak knife blade over the flames. The metal

glows orange at the edges.

His breath steadies.

He presses the blade to his inner forearm. No hesitation. Practiced. The new burn picks up where an old scar ends.

Skin hisses. He doesn't scream. His jaw locks, eyes fixed on the wound, watching himself burn.

He drags the blade down, slow and deliberate, extending the scar toward mid-forearm.

The shadows creep closer, feeding.

He pulls the blade away. Lets it drop. The blade sings the carpet.

The wound throbs, raw.

A beat. Just him and the shadows as he weeps.

The front door creeps open.

MARY

Are you decent? I'm coming in!

Mary stands in the doorway, keys in hand. A small handmade pendant hangs from her neck, threaded with beads and bone.

She takes in the scene: candles, a knife on the floor, the fresh burn on his arm, Adiran weeping.

The shadows freeze and pull back toward the walls. She doesn't gasp or cry out.

Mary crosses the room. Kneels beside him. Takes the knife from the floor and sets it aside on the table.

Adiran is breathing hard, holding in the pain, fighting to stay conscious. He doesn't look at her. His eyes stay on the burn.

MARY

(quiet)

Does it help?

ADIRAN

No.

MARY

Then why?

A long beat. His voice cracks.

ADIRAN

Because I can't fucking feel anything
else!

Something shifts in Mary's expression.

She touches the skin just beside the burn. He flinches but
doesn't pull away.

MARY

You're not going to find her in there.

His eyes finally meet hers. Wet. Broken.

MARY

Pain doesn't bring people back. It
just turns their memory into
punishment.

She stands. Holds out her hand.

The shadows stay pressed against the walls, dark but still,
held there by her presence.

MARY

You're not doing this alone anymore.

He stares at her hand.

He takes it.

The burn throbs.

The memory dissolves.

INT. MARY'S HOUSE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Soft candlelight flickers over tapestries. Wind slips through
an open window, disturbing only the flame.

Adiran sits on the rug, elbows on his knees, staring at
nothing.

Mary sits on the floor across the small table between them,
folding a piece of stiff paper.

Seth sits on the couch behind her, forearms on his thighs,
fixed on Adiran like someone watching a fuse burn.

Mary doesn't look up.