

Midnight Vail

written by

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EXT. HIKING TRAIL - NIGHT

Four BOYS sit on their bikes. They check their phones and smartwatches. Silence, as if waiting for something. JACKSON (11) finally chimes in.

JACKSON
Are...are we gonna make it through
in time?

HENRY (13) and LIAM (12) laugh.

HENRY
You can just go now, if you're
scared.

Jackson is offended.

JACKSON
No, I'm just saying that...

LIAM
If you can't clear it in a minute,
you deserve to be caught.

AIDEN (13) chimes in to defend Jackson.

AIDEN
I didn't see either of you badasses
trying this at 11. Jackson, get a
head start.

Jackson looks ahead, into the mouth of the lit VAIL TUNNEL.

JACKSON
Are...are you sure it's--

AIDEN
Just clear it before midnight and
you won't see them.

Jackson checks his watch. 11:58. He tears into the tunnel, pedaling like a maniac.

HENRY
Who's next?

They stare at each other. Smiling. No one budes.

LIAM
Who are you more afraid of? The
little girl or the--

AIDEN

Her killer. Girls ain't scary.

Jackson is at the far end of the tunnel. 441 feet away. He waves his arm in victory. A tiny figure a long ways away.

They slowly scoot to the tunnel entrance. Check the time.

11:58 turns to 11:59. No one wants to go first. Standoff.

Finally, Henry pedals. Liam next. Then Aiden.

INT. TUNNEL

A furious mountain bike race against the clock.

Henry clears the far end. Liam right behind them. They turn--

Aiden stands in the middle of the tunnel, holding his bike.

The boys stand, shocked. Aiden offers both middle fingers.

AIDEN

Pussies!!!

They check the time. 11:59 turns to midnight. A FLASH, then--

EXT. TUNNEL

Henry, Liam, and Jackson stare. Frozen. Shaking. View of--

The long tunnel. No Aiden. His standing bike falls to the concrete trail.

Henry begins to run in. Liam grabs him. Shows him the time. Still 12:00. They all wait at the tunnel's edge.

INT. TUNNEL

Aiden stands. No bike. No friends at the end of the tunnel.

He seems shaky. Dizzy. Begins breathing hard.

The overhead lights flicker. Then, darkness.

The sound of his breathing increases. Broken by a whisper--

GIRL

Quiet or he'll find ya.

Aiden jumps. Freaks out. A slight scream. High-pitched now.

Occasional flickers illuminiate sporadically.

AIDEN

What? Who are you? What do you--

GIRL

Shhhhh...the track man is in here.
Take my hand.

Aiden reaches out. A small hand grabs his. Pulls him towards the end of the tunnel.

GIRL (CONT'D)

Don't be afraid. Here, take one.

She hands him something. Closes his hand.

GIRL (CONT'D)

Licorice. It'll keep you quiet.

Aiden tears a small bite. Squeezes the rest into his palm.

Just as he begins to relax, the sound of footsteps. Heavy footsteps. Faster. Running.

GIRL (CONT'D)

Hurry! The track man is--

Some light flickers. A little more as the tunnel exit nears.

Aiden looks back to see the TRACK MAN (50M). Tall, dirty. Scraggly hair. Disheveled overalls. Holding a spike hammer.

TRACK MAN

I told you, you little bitch.
Don't ever--

They sprint. Steps from the edge of the tunnel, then--

The track man tackles them. Aiden covers himself as the track man raises his weapon. Yells as he drives it down, as--

The girl lunges. Attacks track man like a mountain lion.

Aiden's eyes widen as the girl devours track man. She turns, smiles. No longer a girl, a demon. White eyes. Sharp, bloodied teeth. Aiden screams.

GIRL

He's always trying to stop my fun!

Aiden stands, backs towards the end of the tunnel. The girl steadies herself, prepares to pounce.

Aiden dives out of the tunnel, crashing at--

The feet of his friends. They drop their bikes. Hug Aiden.

HENRY

Oh, what the fuck, man?

LIAM

Where were you?

Aiden turns to point at...an empty tunnel. Only his lonely bike on the ground 200 feet away.

Aiden stands. Dirty. Bloody. Opens his palm. Licorice.

He laughs. Nervous, relieved. The others still in shock.

AIDEN

Which one of you pussies is getting
my bike for me?

All eyebrows raise in unison. Absolutely fucking not.

They walk their bikes down the trail away from the tunnel.
Aiden walks without his. As he looks back--

The bright tunnel lights flicker. A flash of a girl's
silhouette waving, then-- gone. The lights return.