

Eternal Canyon

written by

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EXT. DESERT TRAILHEAD - MORNING

The first hint of sunrise reveals a vast desert and mountain landscape. The deep blue sky warms into orange.

A Native American man gathers a hiking group around him.

At the entrance to the trail, a sign outlining the terrain. Sitting on the lone park bench, a hiker. This is ELI (30's M).

He pops a couple pills from a prescription bottle. A swig of water. Glances back at the hiking group. Then the empty trail in front of him. Shakes his head.

ELI  
Fucking people. Everywhere.

He fastens his backpack straps and hits the trail. A hawk circles in the orange sky.

DESERT TRAIL

He navigates the rocky trail with ease. Quickly puts the crowd behind him. Plugs in his earbuds. Smiles.

Lo-fi music starts. NOW he is alone.

He reaches the mountains. Several 'Stay on the Trail' warning signs.

He skips from boulder to boulder at a switchback.

A woman in a RED BUSINESS SUIT vanishes behind a boulder.

He only catches a quick glimpse of her.

He freezes. Hops off his rock. Approaches.

ELI  
Hello? You OK? Careful, snakes and  
scorpions out here. Lots of  
dangerous--

He rounds the boulder. No one. He rubs his eyes. Takes a deep breath.

Grabs his prescription bottle. Pops another pill.

He reaches--

## CANYON TRAIL

The trail is deep, shaded. The sun rises in the valley behind him.

He checks his surroundings. Alone. He smiles.

He steps behind a cluster of boulders. Sets his phone on a rock in front of him. Swipes the screen.

Removes items from his backpack. Checks again. No one.

The sound of him pleasuring himself. Soft moans. Gross.

Emerges from the boulders. Adjusts himself.

He breathes in the cool air. A relaxed skip in his step.

ELI  
That's better.

The trail. The canyon. The shade. The music. This is a complete vibe.

A breeze blows, carries a whisper of "Eliiiiiii"

He spins. No one is there. Takes out his earbuds. Silence.

ELI (CONT'D)  
The fuck? Hello?

Earbuds back in. Vibe returns.

He closes his eyes. Strolls in cruise control.

Behind him, a distant female figure silhouetted against the bright sky of the canyon entrance.

She staggers. Broken. Unnatural.

Eli is oblivious. His eyes open. He grooves with the music.

The female increases her pace. Gaining on Eli as he enjoys the landscape.

Her stagger morphs into a run. A broken, limping sprint.

Gaining on him. Silent. Faster. Closer.

She is steps behind him. Now a clearer look--

She is grotesque. Hollow. Pale. Bloodied.

Her face is shattered. Inhuman.

Her business suit is tattered. A gaudy red broach dangles.

Her arms raise and she leaps into Eli.

He stumbles. She evaporates as she hits him. Dust.

He steadies himself. He is staggered. Eyes wide. His breathing heavy.

He makes a u-turn. Earbuds into his pocket. Shakes his head.

ELI (CONT'D)

Fuck this shit. The people in my  
head are worse than real--

A silhouette forms from the dust cloud. Her head tilted at an unnaturally crooked angle. It straightens with a terrible bubble wrap cracking noise.

He is paralyzed. His mouth drops. His eyes widen.

ELI (CONT'D)

There's no fucking way!

He retreats. Runs towards the far end of the canyon.

A woman in a YELLOW BIKINI emerges from a crevasse in the wall. Pale. Her throat slit. Blocks his exit.

He freezes. Trapped. He turns.

The two women slowly close in.

A small crack in the canyon wall. Narrow. Seems to open to another passage.

He squeezes through the rock walls.

Another breeze blows from behind--"Eliiiiiii"

He can't look backward. Walls are too tight.

Something from behind tugs him. A harder pull.

He screams. Panics. Pulls away and falls onto the canyon floor.

No one in the opening. He leans into the canyon wall.

From nowhere - everywhere- a whisper of "Eliiiiiii"

He spins. Nothing is there. No one is there.

Covers his ears. Each whisper hits him like a gut punch.

"Eliiiiiii"

Atop a boulder, a bloodied woman in yoga pants and a LIME GREEN SPORTS BRA. Stabbed countless times. Sitting comfortably.

Her face is pale, blank. Deep, blackened eyes.

He runs to the canyon edge.

Vast, open desert or a mountain to climb.

#### MOUNTAIN

He climbs. Loose dirt. Boulders. Steep rocks.

ELI  
Want me, bitches? Good luck.

Climbs endlessly. Reaches a shady--

#### CAVERN

He collapses. Drops his backpack and removes his drenched shirt.

He lays on the cavern floor. Head on his backpack. Covers his face with his shirt.

Instantly passes out.

#### CAVERN - LATER

"Eliiiiiii" jolts him awake. He is alone.

He sits upright. Holds his head tightly. Closes his eyes.

ELI  
You aren't real. You aren't real.

He takes a deep breath. Opens his eyes.

Nothing. No one. Still. Quiet. Calm.

He puts on his shirt. Dried but stained from the dirt floor.

Walks to the cavern opening. Takes in the view of the desert floor.

ELI (CONT'D)

You were nothing until you met me.  
I made you famous.

From the cavern behind him, figures appear.

Red business suit. Yellow bikini. Lime green sports bra.

A collective, guttural scream of "Eliiiiiii!!"

He turns. Broken smiles. Dead eyes. His face whitens.

He backs to the canyon edge. Nowhere to run.

They squeeze closer and inch towards him.

They stop. Stare. Take in his fear.

He is frozen. Pisses his pants.

They leap at him.

He screams as he falls backwards.

They dissolve into dust as they hit him.

He tumbles. Breaking and smashing on the rocks below.

His backpack tears open. Contents fly.

A red broach. A yellow bikini top. A lime green sports bra.  
Polaroids of unseen images.

His shattered body rests on a giant cropping of boulders  
halfway down the mountain.

The sun sets.

The items shake.

Roll back to the backpack.

They enter the backpack. It zips closed.

His broken body unbends.

Stands.

Creaks and pops back into human form.

Descends the steep trail towards the desert floor.

EXT. DESERT TRAILHEAD - MORNING

A hiking group gathers. A Native American man gathers them.

Sitting on the lone park bench, Eli. Deja vu.

NATIVE AMERICAN MAN (V.O.)  
Welcome to Eternal Canyon Trail.  
This Thunderclap Tribal area is  
known to trap confused evil  
spirits, forcing them to live in  
eternal fear as punishment for evil  
deeds.

Eli pops a couple pills from a prescription bottle. A swig  
of water. Shakes his head.

ELI  
Fucking people. Everywhere.

He fastens his backpack straps. He stands, revealing a  
marker on the bench-

*Rest easy, Jessica King, Leona Torrance, and Marina West.  
All taken too soon.*

As he hits the trail, a hawk floats above him.

NATIVE AMERICAN MAN (V.O.)  
The innocent souls get their  
revenge, day after day, for  
eternity. Listen closely and you  
may hear their cries in the canyon  
wind.