

THE GENTLE APOCALYPSE

Written by

Adam Cosco

OVER BLACK

A gritty voice.

DRAKE (V.O.)

The one thing you gotta understand about detectives is that we're mercenaries. What counts is what the client wants.

INT. DRAKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Gaping holes line the walls -- pieces of drywall are scattered all along the floor.

DRAKE (V.O.)

I lost sight of that rule.

DRAKE FISHER, mid-30's, disheveled and slightly overweight, sits alone at the kitchen table. He gazes out the window seeing city lights twinkle like distant stars.

INSERT CARD -- ONE MONTH AGO

INT. DINER - DAY

An antique jukebox plays a somber rendition of *Bye Bye Blackbird*.

Drake sits at a booth, wearing a grey overcoat with raindrop-stained shoulders. Across from him is GRACE, 20's, redheaded; a bright aura evident in her warm smile.

GRACE

Come here.

Drake narrows his eyes, confused.

DRAKE

I am here.

GRACE

Closer, silly. I wanna whisper something in your ear.

She wraps her fingers around his wrist, pulling him close. Drake leans in. All at once, Grace's expression becomes serious.

GRACE (CONT'D)

There's something I really need to tell you.

Before she can go on, Grace turns her head to over her shoulder where we see a jet-black Lincoln idling ominously in the parking lot.

GRACE (CONT'D)
But we're not safe here.

Dread spreads across Grace's pale face. Her hands tremble.

WAITRESS (O.S.)
Hey, honey.

TIME CUT -- Drake startles in his seat -- WE CUT WIDE revealing that Grace is gone.

Drake now focuses on the WAITRESS, 30's, wrinkled and worn, her beauty faded like bleached wheat. She senses Drake's distress.

WAITRESS (CONT'D)
You alright?

She touches his wrist in the same place Grace had.

WAITRESS (CONT'D)
(dropping the bill)
I just came to tell ya that I'm gonna go on break, but feel free to take your time, okay?

DRAKE
(himself again)
Sweetie, do something before you leave me all alone?

WAITRESS
For you, honey, anything.

DRAKE
Change this damn song.

Drake dumps a pile of quarters on the table in front of him.

EXT. PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Quarters, again. But this time Drake slots them into a pay phone. Beat. A message plays:

DRAKE (V.O.)
This is Drake Fisher at extension one eight seven, leave a message at the beep...

Before it can beep an automated recording chimes on.

AUTOMATED VOICE RECORDING
(filtered through phone)
The extension belonging to Drake
Fisher has been disconnected.
Please contact Detective "Mason
White" at extension zero seven.

Drake slams down the receiver -- frustrated.

He opens his wallet, stopping at the sight of a crumpled piece of paper. It reads:

*Call the therapist I recommended!
He can help you! 600-578-1275 :)*

Abigail

Drake picks up the phone with the note pressed between his fingers. The DIAL TONE carries us to...

EXT. VICTOR'S HOUSE - DAY

Drake approaches a manila house. He's reluctant and uncertain, looking over his shoulder as he passes a courtyard fountain surrounded by blue moonstones.

He slows at the sight of water cascading over translucent blue orbs. A hummingbird hovers near a feeder. The setting is peaceful, serene.

The front door opens on VICTOR GLADSTONE, 40's. Victor's rosy-cheeked and creamy, like his decor.

VICTOR
You must be Drake.

INT. VICTOR'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Rows of books. PAN FLUTE MUSIC plays in the background. Drake fidgets in his seat at the edge of a long leather couch. The calming music only underscores the men's discomfort

VICTOR
So...tell me about yourself.

Drake takes a cigarette from his novelty case, stops himself with a chuckle when he realizes what he's doing.

DRAKE

(placing the smoke behind
his ear)

OK, before we start, let me say something. Doing detective work, requires a lot of confidentiality, you understand?

VICTOR

Therapists keep secrets. Our businesses are quite similar in that respect.

Drake smirks.

DRAKE

You know anything 'bout detective work, Doc?

VICTOR

I know it's rare for me to speak with one... you usually have internal people.

DRAKE

Yeah. Never went before, can't now.

VICTOR

Why?

DRAKE

I'm not with the force anymore.
(with a smile)
But it was a pretty shitty place to work to begin with.

VICTOR

You encountered problems?

DRAKE

Problems encountered me.

VICTOR

That's very vague.

DRAKE

Thanks doc. 'Cause I'm not s'posed to talk about it on account of an ongoing lawsuit.

VICTOR

What's said in this room, stays in this room.

Drake adjusts his posture on the chair -- trying and failing to get comfortable.

DRAKE

I don't want to talk about it.

VICTOR

OK, I'll leave that tree alone for now.

(higher spirits now)

What brought you to this line of work?

DRAKE

I guess I wanted to be a cop, so I took a ride down that route, but I didn't like the way the blue-suits were handling the streets, so I fell into detective work.

VICTOR

And why detective work?

DRAKE

Wanted more control of the people in my life.

Victor pauses -- giving Drake the opportunity to elaborate.

DRAKE (CONT'D)

I thought if I became a cop, I could help people. No one did that for me, so I felt obliged.

(catches himself)

Shit. Two minutes and you got me telling my sob story.

VICTOR

No, this is good. Would you say that you wanted to help people to leave a legacy behind?

DRAKE

I don't know if I'd call it a legacy, but maybe that's right, sure.

VICTOR

(out of left field)

OK. What scares you?

DRAKE

What?

VICTOR
What's your greatest fear?

DRAKE
(showing a flash of
annoyance)
I don't know, sharks?

VICTOR
Why sharks?

DRAKE
They're sharks. They can eat you.

VICTOR
Not if you don't go in the water.
And other things could eat you, too
...bears, mountain lions.

DRAKE
I was half-joking.

VICTOR
Were you?

DRAKE
Doc, I really was.

VICTOR
What do you think your fear of
sharks symbolizes?

DRAKE
I don't think about it all that
much.

Victor doesn't respond, forcing Drake to go on.

DRAKE (CONT'D)
I guess it's something about being
eaten whole.

Victor slants in, emphasizing his point.

VICTOR
You'd leave nothing behind. Your
work, your ideas... your legacy.
You'd disappear completely? You
think maybe that's what scares you?

Drake's impressed despite himself.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
Well?

DRAKE

Well, maybe you're right.

Drake eases into his chair -- comfortable now.

INT. VICTOR'S HOUSE - AN HOUR LATER

Drake fingers some twenty dollar bills by the door. Victor waits patiently.

DRAKE

Shit, I'm short.

(as he hands off the wad)

Here take this. I'll be right back.

VICTOR

OK, but I have an appointment in...

Victor looks down to his wrist -- Drake notices a tan line where there should be a watch.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

Ah, almost forgot.

DRAKE

What?

VICTOR

Nothing, just a little mystery I've been trying to solve.

Drake's eyebrows knit close together hearing the word "mystery." He takes a step closer -- interested now.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

I had my watch stolen.

DRAKE

You sure it was stolen? You'd be amazed by the things that fall behind the couch.

VICTOR

(sure of himself)

No. I have a good memory. Came home one day, and it was gone. I know I left it right here.

Victor indicates to his table.

DRAKE

Is it a high-end watch?

VICTOR

No, not at all. Truthfully, it's quite ugly, but it's important to me.

DRAKE

Sounds like you need a detective?

VICTOR

Strange how the cosmic forces brought one to my doorstep.

DRAKE

My schedule is open.

Victor mulls it over, then smiles invitingly and exclaims;

VICTOR

Then why not, come in, I'll tell you what I know. This should be fun.

Drake goes to step in, then pauses... squints, searching Victor's face.

DRAKE

Doc, is this some sorta new-age therapeutic thing to get me back to work?

Victor grins.

VICTOR

You have issues with trust. We should talk about that next time. Come back inside. I'll give you the details.

INT. DRAKE'S APARTMENT - LATER

Drake rests a piece of paper beside his laptop. Victor's neat handwriting describes the make and model of the watch.

Drake slips on some headphones -- cues up orchestral music.

BEGIN MONTAGE

Drake scours the internet. He finds a picture of the watch -- prints it -- hangs it on the stucco wall.

Drake makes coffee for himself -- cream & three sugars.

Drake scours Craigslist and other resale sites, looking for the watch listed on the internet.

INT. JEWELRY STORE - DAY

Drake talks with a bald STORE CLERK, 50's regarding the watch. The clerk shakes his head; "no idea."

INT. PAWN SHOP - LATER

Drake peruses the display. Picks up a watch, examines it, searching the tiny numbers engraved on the back.

INT. DRAKE'S APARTMENT - LATER

Drake smokes a cigarette on his balcony. In the background WORKERS erect a billboard.

EXT. CITY STREETS - DAY

Drake pretends to be talking on the pay phone, but his eyes are set on a PUDGY MAN carrying a folded newspaper.

The man places the folded newspaper on the pay phone's inner shell, then leaves in a hurry.

Drake opens the newspaper -- sees a single sheet of loose paper with numbers corresponding to the watch's model number.

DRAKE (V.O.)
Money leaves a trail of bread
crumbs. When all else fails, it
points you in the right direction.

Drake drags his finger across the paper until he finds a recent transaction. The store's name is *Wizard Electronics*.

INT. WIZARD ELECTRONICS - LATER

It looks like the inside of a radio that's been taken apart.

Drake scans the room, his gaze landing on a fashionable ASIAN MAN, 22. His name tag reads: JUNIOR.

Drake takes the paper from his pocket, slides it across the counter beneath Junior.

DRAKE
Someone bought a watch here
recently. Model MXR5.

Junior ponders the paper.

JUNIOR
That must be a mistake.

DRAKE
I don't think so. Says right here
he bought the watch for \$90.00. I
just want to track it down.
(Drake leans in closer)
My client will pay you for the
information.

JUNIOR
That transaction was for
maintenance. Guy just picked it up.

DRAKE
Can you give me a name?

JUNIOR
I can't say...

DRAKE
Can't or won't?

Junior goes silent. Drake leans in.

DRAKE (CONT'D)
Listen here. You sell concealable
electronics here, so that means you
have a relationship with the
bureau, right?

Junior nods.

DRAKE (CONT'D)
The name Drake Fisher mean anything
to you?

JUNIOR
Rings a bell.

DRAKE
I'll tell you why it sounds
familiar. Cause he's the guy who
signs the checks.

Drake holds out his hand.

DRAKE (CONT'D)

Nice to finally meet you. Now, I'll
ask again, and nice. Can I please
have a name?