

MY BROTHERS KEEPER

Written by Ambrosio M Tirado

EXT. GAS STATION - PATROL VEHICLE - DAY

The patrol vehicle pulls into the service Area. Rain TAPS gently on the vehicle windows followed by the slow SWOOSHING sound of wiper blades.

INT. PATROL VEHICLE - DAY

MICHAEL, 23, black and grey military uniform, is staring out the passenger window rubbing a worn-down silver and black charm of an eagle, globe and anchor. The vehicle's sudden stop brings Michaels attention back into focus as he's met by the gaze of his older brother DANNY, 28, black and grey military uniform.

DANNY

Are you even listening to me?

MICHAEL

Yes.

Michael slips the charm into his breast pocket.

DANNY

I am serious, you have to stop causing problems.

MICHAEL

To hell with the Colonel

DANNY

The Colonel will either have us both put in the brig or tossed out of Beaumont!

Michael rolls his eyes then turns his head away from Danny to watch the rain.

MICHAEL

You can't ask me to stand by and let assholes like that get away with beating the shit out of that old man?

Danny scoffs at Michaels remark.

DANNY

Because it's our job! The old man was operating a black-market food store.

Michaels gaze snapped back to his brother.

MICHAEL

That's bullshit. Beaumont's Black Market is no damn secret.

DANNY

What's your point?

MICHAEL

It's the only way the towns folk can keep enough food to feed their families.

There was a brief pause filled only by the soft TAPPING of rain on the vehicle. Michael reaches down for the door handle.

DANNY

Well you're not one of those town folks you are part of H.A.D.E's Deal with it!

MICHAEL

How can you bleed these people dry and call it a protection fee.

DANNY

That's the cost of--

MICHAEL

He was being made an example of, and you expect me to sit back and swallow that? I'm not like you.

DANNY

Well that pretty damn obvious.

Michael gives his brother a disapproving look, grabs his weapon and exits the vehicle into the rain.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

Michael visually scans abandoned station and nearby decaying homes for suspicious activity.

MICHAEL

(Mutters)

He isn't ever going to change.

INT. PATROL VEHICLE - DAY

Danny slams his hand on the steering column, picked up his weapon then followed suit slamming the door behind him.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

DANNY

Hey!

Michael stops a few feet from the patrol vehicle with his back turned to his brother.

MICHAEL

Yes... Sargent?

Danny strode up to Michael, grabs him by the shoulder and turns him around.

DANNY

You do know everything isn't about you! Sacrifices must be made so we can all survive.

Michael yanked himself away from his brothers grasp.

MICHAEL

Get your hand off me. We aren't kids no more.

Michael shoves Danny who quickly recovers. The brothers face one another under a dark ominous sky.

DANNY

You are either the sheep or the wolf, and if it's a choice between you and me living or dying, I rather be the fucking wolf!

A sound of metallic objects CLATTERING from the gas station interrupts them. They both immediately raise their weapons and move in unison towards the derelict building.

MICHAEL

This isn't over.

DANNY

Both our asses are on the line. Just do your job. We'll settle this back in Beaumont.

INT. GAS STATION - SALES FLOOR - DAY

Danny and Michael turn on their weapon mounted flashlights scanning the room for threats.

MICHAEL

I don't smell anything do you?

DANNY

No, but keep your head on a swivel.

MICHAEL

Something happen?

DANNY

We lost someone to ferals in this sector while you were vacationing in the brig.

The brothers carefully avoid rotted beams, overgrowth and broken shelving scattered about the floor. The sound of water DRIPS through collapsed holes in the roof.

MICHAEL

Well, this can't be ferals. You can't miss the funk those things let off.

DANNY

I don't think so either. But if someone is here, it's our job to take care of it.

Michael spots a broken door at the far corner of the room and signals Danny. Danny nods then directs his attention towards the far end of the sales floor.

Michael adjusts his grip on his weapon then disappears through the door leading to the loading area.

INT. GAS STATION - LOADING AREA - DAY

Michael leads with his weapon surveying the room. Light reflects off pieces of broken glass which CRUNCH under his weight. Moss and vegetation grew in wild patterns throughout.

MICHAEL

What's the chance I find a beer or maybe some wine?

Michael ducked, squeezing himself through a narrow opening between a fallen beam and overturned freezer. The beam suddenly shifts, Michael panics and forces his way through.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Shit... that was close.

DANNY (V.O.)

Michael! You ok back there?

Michael collects himself and wipes the sweat from his brow.

MICHAEL
Yea, I'm Goo--

A shadowy figure darts from a nearby corner deeper into the loading area.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
This is scout 3419. Identify yourself.

There is no response. Michael navigates around a filing cabinet as his flashlight began to dim.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
Great, just what I need.

Michael approached the location he last saw the shadow, he could make out the silhouette of a small thin figure. Michael smacked his light revealing a thin dirty little boy.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
(Lowers voice)
What are you doing here little man?

Michael raises his hands in a non threatening manner. The thin boy does not respond, his gaze rapidly shifting to the half opened back door.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
Don't be afraid... are you from nearby? Beaumont perhaps?

The little boy opened his mouth to speak just as Michael was hit over the head by a piece of wood knocking him forwards onto the ground. The boy and another figure dart out the back door with a loud BANG.

DANNY (V.O.)
What the hell was that! Michael, you still with me bro?

Michael groans and rolls over on his back reaching for his head.

MICHAEL
I'm OK. I got knocked on my ass by someone. We're definitely not alone out here.

There was a THUD then the rapid CRUNCH of glass under boot. Danny turns the corner surveying the room weapon raised.

DANNY
 (Concerned)
 Are we clear?

MICHAEL
 Yea, they ran out that door.

DANNY
 Damn it Mike. Get your shit
 together man.

Danny rushes out the door in pursuit of the BOY (8) and stranger.

MICHAEL
 Screw you Danny.

Michael collects himself from the floor, then pursues Danny out the back.

INT. DERELICT BLUE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

The faded red door crashes open. Against the aged drywall, Danny holds four thin, dirty, terrified trespassers at gunpoint.

MAN
 Don't shoot! Please!

Michael maneuver's around Danny getting a better line of sight on the MAN, late 30s, woman, and two boys, blocking the direction towards the kitchen.

DANNY
 On your knees and face the wall!

MAN
 Please, please don't shoot my
 family.

MICHAEL
 You are in violation of code 8743
 illegal trespassing of a restricted
 area.

DANNY
 Not to mention code 4528 for
 assaulting H.A.D.E's personnel.

The man centers himself in front of his family hands raised in the air.

MAN

Please let them go. Take me, I made them come. Please!

MICHAEL

Why are you here? And where did you come from?

Danny jabs his barrel into the man's chest.

DANNY

The rules are clear. Trespassing is punishable by Death.

The family is now hiding behind the man holding onto one another. Michael uneasily shifts his gaze to Danny then back to the man.

MICHAEL

Answer me.

MAN / ARNOLD

S-sir, my name is Arnold. Behind me is my wife KRYSTI (early 30's) and my sons NATHAN (13) and JAKE (8).

Arnold nervously watches Danny's demeanor.

DANNY

That's not what he asked you.

ARNOLD

We are just starving and trying to leave Beaumont in search for food.

The family's clothes are tattered and dirty.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

This zone is the quickest way to the next settlement.

MICHAEL

Which one of you hit me in the gas station?

Nathan shifted position from behind his mother to block his little brother from Michael's view. Nathan was no longer crying and exuded an uneasy sense of duty to his sibling.

DANNY

Let's just finish this. Once we return the Colonel will put all the shit you have done behind you.

Michael remorsefully pats the charm in his breast pocket then shifts his gaze between the boys and the father.

MICHAEL

This is wrong --

DANNY

Shut the hell up this is what has to be done!

ARNOLD

Please...

Michael reaches over towards Danny's weapon who lines up his shot at the family, then shoves the barrel towards the roof.

MICHAEL

No!

A three round burst narrowly misses the family leaving bullet holes trailing up the wall.

DANNY

What the fuck are you doing?

MICHAEL

Danny Stop. Look at them!

Michael pulls out the worn eagle globe and anchor charm from his breast pocket placing it into Danny's palm. Danny is visibly shaken by the sight of it.

DANNY

T-this was dads.

MICHAEL

Look at the boys. That was us 10 years ago.

Danny looks at the elder son shielding his little brother. Then shifts his gaze towards the still terrified father pulling his wife and sons close. Danny drops his weapon as tears begin to well up.

DANNY

What am I doing?

MICHAEL

I have been selfish. I always put my wants, my desires, before anything else. You never had that option.

Michael motion to the family to exit out the back. Then embraces his brother.

DANNY

Everything I have ever done has --

MICHAEL

I know. I am sorry, but this, this is not living. We're dying inside one day at a time.

DANNY

You saw me changing and tried to warn me.

MICHAEL

No. We both made mistakes. But, we can choose to live and die on our own terms.

Michael removes the charm from his brothers palm and places it in Danny's breast pocket. Michael picks up Danny's weapon and they walk together out the back door.

END