

FIRST FRUIT

Written by

Elliott Maya

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Working Draft

GENESIS 4:6 - 4:9:

And Cain said to Abel his brother,

"Let us go out to the field."

And when they were in the field,

Cain rose against Abel his brother,

and killed him.

INT. FOYER/LIVING ROOM - CABIN - MORNING

We are in a beautiful cabin straight off a middle-aged suburban mom's Pinterest page. As we pan through, we hear <MUFFLED MUSIC> playing in another room.

Backpacking gear hangs neatly in a half-open closet. A woven hemp doormat reads "Keep Calm and Fungus On." A shearling cardigan hangs on a coat hook. Everything is perfect and clean and right where it should be.

Except the muddy, ratty leather jacket tossed over the couch.

A pair of MUDDY BOOTPRINTS cuts through the clean wood floors and wanders into the kitchen.

INT. OREGON CABIN - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The definition of "rustic kitchen." The music from earlier grows louder as we move through the kitchen, but still isn't clear enough to identify.

Torn calendar pages dating back to 2001 are piled beneath a kitschy wall-calendar. One date -- October 29th, 2023 -- is marked by a smear of mud.

A magnetic knife rack is mounted on the wall. The smallest paring knife is missing.

Muddy prints wind to a trashcan stuffed to overflowing. A muddy, dented beer can pokes out of it.

We follow the bootprints to a refrigerator with an orderly row of photographs.

ON THE PHOTOS:

- SHILOH (10, gentle intellectual) laughs as his twin HUNTER (10, future brooding jock) smooshes birthday cake into his face. The cake is decorated with, "Happy 10th birthday!" KALANI (9, Hawaii'an, adorable) stands between them, beaming, covered in cake.

- Shiloh and Kalani, now in their late teens, hug on a university campus beneath a banner reading, "WELCOME UCB MYCOLOGY GENIUS GRADUATES!" Standing at edge of frame is to Shiloh's left is Hunter in a shirt he clearly did not buy that reads "Just Here for More Support." He pats Shiloh's shoulder with a bittersweet smile.

- A polaroid selfie of early 20s Kalani, Hunter, and Shiloh eating burgers in the back of Hunter's banged up 1990 Ford Mustang.

Hunter wears a wrinkled community college sweatshirt beneath his new leather jacket and glittery, homemade graduation cap. Kalani and Shiloh smile at camera. Hunter looks down, distracted by Shiloh and Kalani holding hands. He looks... not upset, but not not upset. Embarrassed, maybe. Kalani's glitter-covered fingers obscure half of Shiloh's laughing face. Scrawled below the photo is "Hunter's Community College Graduation!"

The muddy bootprints lead us out of the kitchen--

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

-- to a door at the end of a hallway.

Light and steam seeps from under a door at the end of the hall. <RUNNING WATER AND MUSIC> filter under the door.

Finally we can make out that the song is James Brown's "I Got You (I Feel Good)" right as a MAN's voice sings along:

HUNTER (O.S.)
(singing)
WHOOA, I FEEL GOOD!

INT. BATHROOM

Steam clouds our vision. As it fades, we are confronted with a man's bare ass. Mud spatters the back of his hairy legs.

HUNTER
(singing)
I KNEW THAT I WOULD, NOW!

HUNTER (28, rugged, thick beard, sharpened from years of rough living) sings and moonwalks in place as he vigorously, yet sloppily, washes way a year's worth of mud.

Hunter scrubs the obvious places: chest, stomach, thighs, ass, but none of the crevices. Judging by the bits of dirt under his fingernails and behind his right ear, Hunter isn't a "detail guy."

Hunter sniffs the loofah, recoils, then sniffs it again. He smiles and drops the loofah into the muddy water around his ankles. He slathers his brown, curly, shoulder length hair into two pigtails and sings like a girl. It's the sort of high-energy performance that edges on manic.

HUNTER (CONT'D)
 I feel nice, like sugar and spice!
 I feel nice, like sugar and spice!
 So nice, so nice, I got --

The music abruptly stops.

SPEAKER (O.S.)
 Disconnected.

HUNTER
 Motherfucker, always fucking me.

He wrenches the shower off, towel dries, and puts on boxers in front of the vintage vanity with twin sinks. One sink is full of water.

Beneath the vintage mirror, a pristine designer portable speaker rests on the counter beside a dingy looking Android. Hunter smacks the speaker irritably.

HUNTER (CONT'D)
 Reconnect to Bluetooth.

SPEAKER
 Reconnecting to primary device.
 (beat)
 I'm sorry. Shiloh's iPhone is out of range.

Hunter examines a photo taped to the mirror. A bearded, smug Hunter noogies a happy, clean-faced Shiloh.

Beat.

Hunter crumples it and tosses it into the trash then roots through the bathroom cabinets until he finds shaving cream and a razor.

HUNTER
 Speaker, connect to Hunter's Android.

SPEAKER
 I'm sorry. Shiloh's iPhone is out of range.

Hunter surfaces with shaving cream and a disposable razor.

He holds the razor to his beard. It's too long. He scowls and reaches into the rusty water in the right-hand sink, pulling out the scuffed up paring knife. He hacks at his beard and begins shaving.

HUNTER
Speaker, set to *Hunter's* phone.

SPEAKER
I'm sorry. Shiloh's iPhone is out of range.

HUNTER
Are you fucking kidding me?

SPEAKER
Would you like me to answer that?

HUNTER
No. Set to standby mode.

SPEAKER
Now on standby.

Hunter makes intense eye contact with the mirror. Going for suave, but he just looks desperate.

HUNTER
(normal voice)
Hi, Kalani.

He frowns and looks at the crumbled up photograph. Shiloh's face peeks up at us, half smudged by stray shaving cream flecks. *Not quite.*

HUNTER (CONT'D)
(too deep)
Hi, Kalani.
(too high)
Hi, Kalani.

<KNOCKING AT THE FRONT DOOR>. Hunter startles and nicks his cheek with the razor. Blood drips onto his hand.

HUNTER (CONT'D)
Fuck! Shitty fuck fuck.

He looks at his hand. The blood, a normal red, somehow growing redder under the naked bulb lights. Less like real blood, and more like artificial. His eyes widen. The smugness leaves them.

SHILOH (V.O.)
Hunter? Is that you?

Hunter grimaces. His eyes grow cold.

<CONTINUED KNOCKING O.S.>

Hunter snaps back to reality. He washes the blood off his hands, grabs the paring knife, and hurries out.

The speaker blinks three times, each pulse illuminating the stray beard hairs on the floor, then powers down.

INT. FOYER - MOMENTS LATER

A half dressed, still-wet Hunter grabs the leather jacket on the floor while struggling to button himself into overalls. Unfamiliar with Shiloh's clothes.

HUNTER

Why're there so many stupid fuckin'
strap things--

<IMPATIENT KNOCKS>. Hunter leaves the overalls half buttoned and throws on the cardigan from the hanging hook to cover the undone buttons. He sticks the paring knife in one of the leather jacket pockets, then tosses the jacket into the closet and shuts the door. He pops some mint gum. Notices his hands are shaking. Clenches them until the shaking stops.

ANOTHER KNOCK. Hunter takes a deep breath, smiles softly like Shiloh, opens the door and steps outside.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. ALLEY - FLASH BACK

Hunter is shoved out of a mechanic's garage shop and into a puddle of water and oil. A MECHANIC in a pulled-up welding mask follows him out holding a wad of greasy bills. He pockets half and throws the other half at Hunter, several falling into the puddle.

MECHANIC

You don't even deserve that much
you smelly little shit. Stealin'
from me after everything I've done
for you. I catch your bitch ass
around here again, Hunter, you're
fucking dead.

HUNTER

(sarcastic)
Gee, you promise?

MECHANIC

Fuckin' psycho.

The mechanic punches a button inside the garage and resumes <WELDING> as the garage door shuts.

Hunter shoves the dirty and damp bills into his leather jacket pocket, then retreats to the corner of the alley where his ride is parked: an old motorcycle that's seen better days.

He gets on, turns on the engine. It sputters and jostles him. He readjusts his clothes, pauses. Where his shirt has ridden up several small tools with a logo for ARTURO'S GARAGE poke out of his pants; one of them is a bolt-cutter.

Hunter looks over to where another, much nicer bike is locked up. The boss's motorcycle.

Beat.

Hunter smirks.

EXT. OUTSIDE ALLEY - MOMENTS LATER - FLASH BACK

We hear a <CLINK>. Metal hitting pavement.

Then an ENGINE REVS.

Hunter peels out of the alley on Arturo's motorcycle.

HUNTER
Fuck you too, Arturo.

Hunter takes off down the street, high on revenge.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT - FLASH BACK

Hunter walks down a dark hallway with garish old wallpaper.

We pass occupied apartment doors. Each has a towel shoved under the door. Hunter does not notice them.

The overhead light flickers once, twice.

He stops by a beat-up door right as the light flicks off and stays off.

Hunter pounds a fist on the a small circular spot on the wall where the wallpaper has worn away; perhaps he's done this before.

The hallway light flicks back on.

A notice is posted on his door: EVICTION NOTICE. Fuck.

A super-lock has been bolted over the doorknob. Double fuck.
 Hunter huffs, unsurprised.

HUNTER
 Get a new trick, old bitch.

Pulls out the boltcutters.

<CA-CHINK!> The lock falls away. Hunter jams his shoulder against the sticky door and shoves his way inside.

INT. HUNTER'S APARTMENT - FOYER - FLASH BACK

A pitch black apartment. We see only Hunter and his immediate vicinity.

Hunter rests his forehead against the door as it shuts. He drops the crumpled eviction notice onto the floor and watches it roll over to a pile of similar crumpled balls.

HUNTER
 (soft)
 Come on, cowboy.

He turns. Stares into the impossible dark. Something <SKITTERS> in the void. Hits a light switch.

And nothing changes.

Then:

Hunter steps to the right. And suddenly we see.

The ceiling light is almost totally blocked by massive piles of hoarded items, all painted with thick black paint. Lamp shades, spare tires, laundry hampers, rubber chickens, literal rotten garbage: an assortment of goods organized without rhyme or reason, with no unifying feature other than each and every one has been painted black and glued together into towering, misshapen, hedge-maze like piles and walls.

He smiles. Sighs. Relieved to be here. To be home.

HUNTER (CONT'D)
 Pspsp.

KITTY (O.S.)
 <MEOW>

Hunter steps into a gap between two piles. We see that the piles around him have been positioned to meld into dense walls. He sidles between them, disappearing from view.

HUNTER

Here, Kitty, Kitty, Kitty...

AERIAL POV: Hunter sidles, ducks, crawls, and squeezes through a winding narrow path from the front door to the kitchen. An ant trapped in its own deleterious maze.

As he moves, we periodically hear the forlorn, impatient yowls of a cat. And the skittering of many insects.

INT. HUNTER'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - FLASH BACK

Hunter exits the maze and steps into the kitchen. Or something that would be a kitchen if it weren't piled with garbage. And if there wasn't a soiled twin mattress shoved against the sink cupboards.

Waiting for him on the mattress is a tiny ball of fur. It <MEWS>. Hunter sits on the mattress and scoops the tiny furball onto his shoulder.

HUNTER

Hey, Kitty. Hungry?

Kitty nuzzles against his cheek.

INT. HUNTER'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - LATER - FLASH BACK

Hunter sits on his mattress eating a microwaved frozen dinner. His leather jacket is folded on the mattress into a little bed for Kitty. He eats half the frozen dinner, then sets the other half in front of Kitty who eats with gusto.

In front of him and to the left, is a large white repurposed bucket that looks like it used to hold cat litter. The labels have been ripped off. On top of the bucket lid is a pair of white tongs.

Hunter pulls out his cell-phone and checks the cracked screen. A blurry picture of a slightly blurred house in the woods set as his lockscreen. The date is October 27th. Set to airplane mode.

He clicks off airplane mode.

PING! PING! PINGPINGPINGPING! Notifications flood his phone. Texts, emails, voicemails -- dozens, maybe hundreds of them.

CLOSE ON PHONE SCREEN

Hunter selects all texts and deletes them. Switches to voicemail.

He sets his phone on his knee and hits "Play All." Voicemails play as Hunter lays stolen items from the mechanic garage on the filthy floor in front of him. A wrench, handful of screws, hub cap bolts. Small odds and ends no one would miss.

VOICEMAIL (V.O.)
Playing all voicemails. <BEEP!>

LANDLORD (O.C.)
Hunter you are in violation of your
tenant agreement and--

<BEEP!>

VOICEMAIL (O.S.)
Voicemail deleted.

Hunter removes the bucket lid. Inside is black paint -- the same impossibly black paint covering the maze we saw before.

WOMAN (O.C.)
Sorry about your mom. Are you going
to ignore me forever? You said--

<BEEP!>

VOICEMAIL (O.C.)
Voicemail deleted.

Hunter stares into the bucket. The paint reflects nothing. It seems to swallow his reflection entirely.

SLEAZEBALL (O.S.)
Yo H-P, caught your bro's
documentary last night. Think he'd
ever review mushrooms of a more
magical variety? 'Cause I just got
these new spores in and--

<BEEP!>

VOICEMAIL (O.C.)
Voicemail deleted.

ARTURO (O.C.)
Hunter you miserable little pissant
did you steal my fucking bike?!

<BEEP!> <BEEP!>

VOICEMAIL (O.C.)
Voicemail saved.

HUNTER

Heh.

One last voicemail. Hunter freezes. A familiar name, the only one in a sea of "DO NOT ANSWER"s. *Shiloh*.

Hunter stares at that name. Finger hovering between PLAY and DELETE. Hits PLAY.

Hunter tong-dips items into the paint. Voicemails play.

SHILOH (O.C.)

Heeey, big man, it's me. I know you didn't RSVP to my little get together, but I know you're like, an old grandpa with technology, so I've decided you forgot how to use the laptop I gave you instead of ignoring me.

Hunter hangs the dip-dyed items from a clothesline to dry.

SHILOH (O.C.) (CONT'D)

Mom's place is a work in progress, but your room is basically how you left it. Why don't you come up? We'll catch up, watch the documentary, talk about whatever's wrong with you these days or whatever. <LAUGH> Come on, H-bomb. It's not like you're doing anything, right?

The voice message clicks off.

VOICEMAIL

If you'd like to save (RECORDING)
Shiloh's voice message, press one.

Kitty bats at a dip-dyed book of matches.

VOICEMAIL (CONT'D)

If you'd like to save (RECORDING)
Shiloh's voice message, press one.

Illuminated by the eerie glow of his cellphone, Hunter picks her up and pets her as he looks around the apartment, almost as if he's seeing it for the first time. The filth. The squalor. The eviction notices. The unpaid bills.

His jaw tightens.

VOICEMAIL (CONT'D)
If you'd like to save (RECORDING)
Shiloh--

A surge of anger. Hunter HURLS the phone at the kitchen cupboard. The screen CRACKS and the voicemail cuts; the screen's light reflects strange and broken around the room.

Hunter breathes hard, staring at something in the maze we can't see.

HUNTER
Fuck it.

He throws on his riding gear and scoops Kitty into a cat backpack.

He storms to the window and opens the blinds to iron bars.

Hunter pulls a loose bar free, climbs out onto a fire escape, and disappears.

We linger on the cracked cellphone as its light fades.

Darkness swallows everything, but the light catches on something sticking out of the maze's heart --

A laptop, broken and black.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - EARLY MORNING - FLASH BACK

Hunter drives alone up a winding mountain road.

His jacket is drawn tight over his middle. Wind whips his hair. He pulls down his jacket a bit. Kitty <MEWS> at him from the backpack. His bike lilt into the other lane.

Hunter smiles at her. For a moment he is a different man. A free one.

<HONK!> Hunter jerks the bike onto the shoulder just as a truck screeches past. A trucker yells at him from the window.

TRUCKER
Get out the street, faggot!

HUNTER
(pissed)
The fuck did you say to me?

Kitty <YOWLS>. Hunter turns off the bike and leans against a structure, catching his breath. He looks at it. It's a sign.

WELCOME TO OCHOCO**MALHEUR NATIONAL FOREST, 115 MILES EAST**

Hunter grimaces. The shadows return to his face, deeper this time.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. OREGON CABIN - PRESENT

Hunter, smiling softly like his brother Shiloh at camera.

KALANI (O.S.)
Shiloooooh!

HUNTER
Kalani! C'mere you goof.

KALANI, a short, plump H'awaiian with a brilliant smile and a small suitcase, embraces him.

KALANI
Who're you calling goof? You're wearing socks with sandals.

HUNTER
So are you.

He points down at her feet where there are, indeed, socks and sandals. While she's distracted he quickly sniffs her hair.

KALANI
Takes one to know one.
(shivers)
Damn, Oregon gets cold! Inside, inside!

Hunter grabs her bags. Kalani playfully elbows him aside and disappears inside.

Hunter closes the door, but pauses and peers suspiciously through the crack. It's a normal day. He watches the tree line, then shuts the door.

INT. OREGON CABIN - ENTRANCE HALLWAY

Hunter slides THREE DEADBOLTS in place. Kalani notices.

KALANI
Are you expecting company?

HUNTER

Eh, you never know out here. There
are bears.

KALANI

Coming through the front door? Like
Yogi Bear?

He steers her away and toward the living room.

HUNTER

(a la Yogi Bear)
Excuse me miss, may I have a bite
of your organs for my pic-a-nic
basket?

KALANI

<LAUGH> Grooooooss.