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Born Onto Night

The cold Oregon twilight had long since faded from her violets and soft pale pinks to the dark blue of midnight. The trees stood as tall silhouettes against the moonlight sky, casting their shadows down upon the paths of asphalt and stone. The night air smelt of Fir and Pine as it cut into Mark's face through the drivers' side window. It thundered against his ears, mixing with the adrenaline charged pounding of his heart as a smile crossed his face. With three hundred and eighty horses under foot and leather steering wheel in hand, he guided the metallic blue 1969 Chevrolet Chevelle down the windy canyon road to cheat death once again.

The roar of the engine drowned in with music pouring through the speakers as he pushed the accelerator all the way to the floor. The adrenaline surged in him, knowing the intersection that labeled the imaginary finish line was not much farther. The tires screamed in agony as he guided it around the last corner and recovered quickly for the slight over steer. His hands shook as the arteries in his neck pounded on each side of his throat, constricting, choking him. Risking a glance at his wrist watch he saw the digital countdown marking time as it slipped into the past. Seven more seconds and it would be over. He forced himself to breathe deeply through his nose as the speedometer climbed steadily. Suddenly his eyes widened in terror as he saw the shape of women standing in the road. Her dark cloak seemed to move in slow motion as she stared emotionlessly toward him. The squeal of the tires under hard breaking came to him like the laughter of the devil, knowing there would be no time to stop the old Chevelle. Pitching the wheel too sharply he swerved and aimed for the shoulder of the road, hoping she wouldn't be there when he arrived. The Chevelle pitched sideways, he countered, then the other, he countered again. The Chevelle skidded toward the embankment, and the world began to move slower and slower. *If I only had three more feet*, he thought.

The Chevelle slid over the side of the road, seeming to almost stop. Mark's world suddenly became a world without up or down. The car rolled, metal squealing and crunching like an aluminum can. He could hear the tie rod ends creaking, the fan ripping into the radiator, and the splintering of the windows around him. The hood crumpled toward the cracked windshield and then smashed back down as the Chevelle's roof touched ground. The lap belt was torn from the floor board, and his hands gripped the steering wheel frantically, the leather scraping up under his finger nails, and then suddenly the wheel seemed ripped from his hands. He was no longer in the car, but somehow flying through the air. His upper back slammed into the large pine, the cracking splintering of his spine and ribs vibrated up to his ears as the sound of the Chevelle's tumble faded down the hill and then stopped. His skull caught a branch as his body fell to the wet foliage of the woodland floor.

He could feel the warm pool growing beneath his head and smell the wet pine needles that pressed into his face. He teetered on his side, and then fell back on his broken spine. The night stars glared down at him, and the road mocked him from far above. Pain called up to him with every gurgling breath, and his lower body lay immobile as his vision spun. Suddenly the pain ceased and his calm returned. He felt as if he floated up, as if someone was lifting him. Looking back over his shoulder he saw himself lying there, his dark hair pooled in blood, his once strait body crooked and contorted in joints he knew he should not have. He spun over wildly, facing the falling earth.

I'm dead. The thought came hard as his body continued to slowly fall away. His arms thrashed and raged as he tried to swim back down through the air toward the broken frame that once was his.

“Noooooo! Nooooo!” His thrashing increased. “Somebody help me!”

His slow and steady rise continued, the top of the tree coming into sight. He raged on in struggle, sobbing as he was lifted, watching his body resign. As his helpless thrashing ceased he saw a dark shrouded figure move out of the forest and approach his body. The figure knelt

by his body's side, and pulled back the hood of its dark cloak. Long red locks of hair fell from the hood's confines and a feminine hand reached out to gently stroke his body's face.

"You will not die this way," her voice but a whisper in his body's ear, but it came to him as if she were with him at this great height. "I'm sorry," she whispered.

She leaned over his body as if to kiss him, and then it was if the hand that carried him upward was suddenly gone. He felt the tearing pain in his neck as he fell, passing through her and slamming back into his body. Mark jerked upward, his eyes opening, the pain returning. Emerald eyes peered down at him from a soft pale complexion, a single drop of blood rolling gently from the side of her mouth. Reaching up with her hand, she through the cloak back over her shoulders and pulled the plummeting neck line of her dress downward, exposing the top part of her right breast. She scraped her finger nail across the top of it with a wince and a crimson trickle appeared. She raised his head to the fresh wound and cradled his broken body.

"Drink my love," her voice was filled with tears. "It is the only way I can save you now."

He felt the warm liquid fill his mouth and he swallowed. His body tingled as he swallowed again, his lower body straitening, his mind swirling in euphoria. Sucking now he swallowed again, wanting her unlike he had ever wanted any other woman. *This is wrong, I shouldn't do this!* He thought. But the inhibition was no match against this new found desire. She moaned passionately as he sat up under his own strength. He embraced her tightly in his arms as he gulped at the flowing stream. She moaned louder and quivered. Taking a hand full of his hair she pulled him from her body. Blood lay streaked across her breast as he licked at his lips, his eyes fixating on her lips.

"Not too much my love." Her voice came through breathing short and deep, not unlike his own. He kissed her hard, the sweetness of his own blood on her lips mixing with hers as she pulled him to her. He kissed down her neck, pulling at her cloak to free her from it. She grabbed his hand, stopping him. She pushed him gently back to the ground and stood, putting distance between them. Her eyes remained filled with hunger. His own hunger faded slowly,

but was like hot embers waiting only for new fuel to give birth to flame. Reality flooded in around him as his passion dwindled. Looking toward where the Chevelle now burned he spoke.

“Am I dead?”

“No,” she answered softly. “You are born.”

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