

PORCH PIRATES

Written by

Kenneth Quinnell

334 19th St. NE
Washington, D.C. 20002
quinnelk@gmail.com
850-339-4600

FADE IN.

EXT. 19TH STREET NE, WASHINGTON, D.C. - DAY

It's not snowing now, but the ground is covered with nearly three inches. It's fresh enough that no one has shoveled yet. It's late afternoon and the snow came while people were at work. Most of the street parking spots are empty, the snow undisturbed on the ground.

NOEL walks away from the Stadium-Armory Metro station. Downhill, passing several schools on the left side of the street.

Noel is a white man in his late 20s, but you can't really tell, he's bundled up tight in winter clothes, including a hoodie and a beanie beneath it. He's relatively thin.

Each step he takes down the sidewalk leaves a clear print in the snow. But the snow on the street has already started to melt.

Noel crosses C Street and finds himself on a residential block with row houses on either side. He carefully looks at the front doors on both sides of the street. He's clearly looking for something.

Across the street, a medium-sized box sits outside the front door of a row house. It's a recent delivery.

Noel smiles and turns to run across the street. As he does, a car comes barreling down the street and honks a horn. Noel barely jumps out of the way and the car drives on.

Noel checks for more cars, finds none, and crosses the street.

He walks up onto the porch and looks around. Nobody's watching.

He leans down and picks up the box. Looking around once more and seeing no one, he heads back in the direction of the Metro.

No one is around and no one sees him enter the Metro station, but his footprints follow him to the escalator that leads down into the tunnels.

INT. STADIUM-ARMORY METRO - MOMENTS LATER

PASSENGERS board trains on both sides of the station, but Noel keeps walking across the station and heads up the escalator at the far end.

He swipes himself out of the station and heads back out into the city air. He's on the far side of the station now, but the footprints from the porch he stole the package from to the Metro are now a dead end.

Noel walks a few blocks away from the Metro and then turns down a side street. This part of the neighborhood is just as empty as the rest.

Noel walks slowly down the street, burdened by the box, which is very heavy for its size.

He finally arrives home, a nondescript row house only differentiated from those surrounding it by the yellow paint.

Noel sets the package on the table on the porch. He fishes out his keys and unlocks the door.

He grabs the package and goes inside. Next to the front door is a fire axe with a blood-red head.

INT. NOEL'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The front door opens into the living room. A couch faces the door and the 55" TV on the wall. Beyond the couch are a kitchen and a door to the bathroom. Bedrooms open off of the living room on either side.

Noel walks towards the room on the left. The CAMERA stays outside the room while Noel sets the box on the bed and comes back into the living room.

He shivers. He walks to the front corner of the room and turns on a kerosene space heater. He does NOT take off his jacket. Then he walks to the kitchen and grabs a beer from the fridge.

As he walks back into the living room, he flips on a small portable radio. A DISC JOCKEY reports the weather.

DISC JOCKEY (O.S.)
So, since it's going to hit zero
tonight, let's heat things up with
the Crazy World of Arthur Brown!!!

"Fire," by the Crazy World of Arthur Brown plays. Noel bops his head to the music.

He turns on a PlayStation and puts on Grand Theft Auto. He jumps right in and starts shooting random people.

Around him, the room is a mess. Empty beer bottles. Weed and pills on the table. Pizza boxes on the floor. Stains on the carpet.

Books are stacked haphazardly on a makeshift bookshelf of cinder blocks and wooden boards. Everything is horror, Stephen King, Dean Koontz, Anne Rice, H.P. Lovecraft, Edgar Allan Poe, Brian Keene, Robert Bloch.

NOEL

Take that, you bastard!

He kills some pixel person and takes a big swig from his beer.

A fire alarm/carbon monoxide detector goes off. Noel flinches. He's jumpy by nature.

NOEL (CONT'D)

Dammit!

He pauses the game and opens a window. Wind whistles through the screen and Noel shivers. After a few seconds, the alarm stops.

Noel stops to look at the Peyton Manning poster on the wall. He kisses his hand and taps the poster. He looks at a small table in the corner that holds several old football trophies. Most are labeled "Noel Grimley, Participant."

He goes back and starts playing the game again.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Noel sleeps on the couch. GTA is paused and the controller rests on Noel's chest. "Burning for You," by Blue Oyster Cult plays on the radio.

A key slips into the front door slot and the door opens. In walk ERIC and CHARLOTTE. Eric is clearly Noel's younger brother, early 20s, they look very similar. Same brown hair. Same dark eyes. Eric is a little shorter, but is more athletic. Charlotte is early 20s, very thin, pale skin, sickly. Each carries a purloined package.

CHARLOTTE

It's freezing in here.

She sets a small-ish, cube-shaped box on the table.

ERIC

The heater's still broken.

He sets a small, rectangular box on top of Charlotte's box.

CHARLOTTE

Then close that window!

He shushes her. He nods towards Noel.

ERIC

He's sleeping.

CHARLOTTE

So?

ERIC

Put the towel down in front of the door. The one in the kitchen.

Charlotte goes into the kitchen and puts a rolled-up towel in front of the door to the back yard. Eric puts a similar towel in front of the front door.

Charlotte turns the radio off. Noel stirs. He sits up. Looks around. Coughs and clears his throat.

NOEL

You two even split up?

ERIC

Of course we did.

Charlotte glares at Noel.

ERIC (CONT'D)

We met on the front porch.

Eric turns and kisses Charlotte

NOEL

Gross.

He unpauses the game and starts playing again.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Eric has joined Noel on the couch and in GTA, an empty spot between them. Charlotte sits on the room's lone chair, her legs hanging over the arm.

NOEL

Where is she?

He kills some pixels.

CHARLOTTE
How the hell would I know?

Noel grimaces, holding something in.

A key slips in the front door and opens it.

NOEL
About time.

LEA walks in, carrying a box the size of a couple of paperback books in one hand and a kerosene can in the other.

NOEL (CONT'D)
Hey hon. What took you so long?

Lea holds up the kerosene can and shakes it. She forces a smile. It takes a second for Noel to understand.

NOEL (CONT'D)
Good. It's gonna get colder tonight.

She sets the box on the table and walks into the kitchen. She sets the kerosene can near the back door. Eric quickly jumps up from the couch and fixes the towel at the base of the front door, sealing the room tighter.

Charlotte sits up and starts playing with three packages, shaking them, putting her ear up to the side, reading the labels.

CHARLOTTE
Let's go!

Noel pauses the PlayStation and tosses his controller on the table. Eric sets his controller down.

Lea walks into the living room and goes to sit between the brothers on the couch. Noel moves over to the center spot, so Lea isn't sitting next to Eric.

Lea stares at him.

NOEL
What?

Charlotte playfully pushes her sister towards the couch. Lea flops down.

CHARLOTTE
Let's get this party started?

ERIC
Who's first?

They all turn towards Noel, who shakes his head

NOEL
I'm gonna go last.

He smiles deviously. Charlotte shrugs and picks up the box she brought home. She grabs a sharp kitchen knife and guts the box open.

She smiles and pulls out a small, fancy bag of chocolate-covered almonds. And a second with carob-colored raisins. Several other similar treats.

CHARLOTTE
Sweet!

ERIC
Hand me one of those, I'm starving.

LEA
Order a pizza.

Charlotte tosses bags to Lea and Noel and rips the last bag open. She pops one in and starts to chew. Then frowns.

CHARLOTTE
Dark chocolate. Gross. Anyone want to trade?

Lea holds up the carob raisins.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
Nice.

They exchange candies.

ERIC
My turn.

He picks up the small rectangular box and rips it open. Out pour several frilly panties. Not super expensive, but not cheap. Charlotte gets excited.

CHARLOTTE
What size?

Eric fumbles with the tag, trying to read it.

ERIC
Uhh... looks like a... 12?

LEA

Mine!

She holds up a hand and Eric tosses the panties over to her. They fly everywhere and she has to pick them up. He giggles.

LEA (CONT'D)

Ass.

ERIC

Bitch.

Both insults are half-hearted.

Lea looks towards Noel, who is almost bouncing with eager energy.

LEA

What about you? Where's your box?

He laughs. An odd laugh.

NOEL

You'll see.

Lea shrugs and picks up the last box from the table.

LEA

It's a little heavy.

ERIC

Probably something stupid. Like books.

CHARLOTTE

I LIKE books.

ERIC

You would.

She picks up one of Lea's new panties and throws it at Charlotte. It hits him in the face and he fakes acting grossed out.

Lea opens the box and pulls out two books.

LEA

Books.

She twists the first to see the title: "He's Just Not That Into You," by Greg Behrendt and Liz Tuccillo.

LEA (CONT'D)

He's not that into you.

ERIC

Ugh.

She holds it up for Charlotte, but the younger woman scrunches her nose. Lea tosses the book to Eric, but he treats it like a hot potato and it ends up on the floor.

CHARLOTTE

What's the other one?

LEA

"Never Chase Men Again," by Bruce Bryans.

CHARLOTTE

Yo, this chick sounds desperate.

ERIC

Like a pair of sisters I know.

He laughs. Charlotte and Lea throw books and panties on him. He dodges and laughs.

ERIC (CONT'D)

This trip was a bust.

He walks over to the window and peeks outside the shades.

ERIC (CONT'D)

The snow is REALLY starting to pile up now.

He shivers and sits back down on the couch. Noel stands up.

NOEL

Wait till you see this...

He grins and walks into the bedroom. He comes back out with the box and sets it on the table.

ERIC

Jackpot!

Charlotte whistles.

LEA

This looks promising.

ERIC

What is it?

Noel grabs the knife and starts cutting the box open.

NOEL

You know I never peek. But it IS heavy.

Noel opens the top and puts his hands into the box. He pulls out what looks like a high-tech safe. A number pad is the only thing outwardly visible on the box. There aren't even hinges or a visible door.

At the top of the number pad is a digital timer. It's counting down from 24 hours, reading 23:58 now.

CHARLOTTE

How do we open it?

Noel shrugs.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Eric hits the box with a hammer, not for the first time. Doesn't even make a mark. Doesn't open anything.

ERIC

I give up.

CHARLOTTE

It'll never open.

LEA

Or maybe it'll open in...

She leans over to see the timer.

LEA (CONT'D)

...21 hours and 13 minutes.

Noel gets up and gets a beer.

ERIC

Get me one.

LEA

And some chips.

Noel does. It's the last bag of chips.

CHARLOTTE

What are we gonna do?

NOEL

Wait.

They do.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Noel stands at the fridge and grabs enough beers for everyone. He carries them back to the living room and hands them out.

NOEL
Another round.

ERIC
Thanks!

Eric opens the beer and takes a big gulp as Noel hands out the others.

ERIC (CONT'D)
What do you think is in it?

Noel joins him on the couch, sitting in the middle again.

CHARLOTTE
A safe like that? Gotta be some
hardcore shit, right?

LEA
What? Drugs?

Charlotte nods eagerly.

CHARLOTTE
It's been a while. I could get
fucked up.

Lea considers the idea. She's not opposed.

ERIC
Nah, it'd be too obvious to ship
something like that filled with
drugs.

Charlotte laughs and punches him in the shoulder.

CHARLOTTE
Crush my dreams, why don't ya?

LEA
Seems like the kinda thing the Camp
brothers are into.

Noel frowns. Eric dismisses her with a hand.

ERIC
Like one of the Kirk sisters has
ANY room to talk.

Lea shrugs.

LEA
What about you?

She nods towards Noel, but he doesn't respond. Eric leaps in.

ERIC
A safe like that? Much more likely
it's something valuable. Like a
Mickey Mantle rookie card.

Noel frowns.

LEA
That whole thing for a baseball
card?

ERIC
No, like that's just the BEST card,
it's probably filled with a bunch
of cards.

NOEL
You used to HAVE a Mickey Mantle
rookie card. Dad used to have one.

Eric ignores the dig.

CHARLOTTE
Sometimes you gotta raise some cash
in a hurry.

Eric is wounded by that remark and looks away.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
What do you think is in there?

Lea laughs.

LEA
No idea.

Charlotte squints her eyes.

CHARLOTTE
You have some idea. I know that
look. What were you thinking?

Lea laughs louder.

LEA
Well I was thinking about a new,
very powerful vibrator.

Eric is grossed out. Noel gets up and walks towards the bathroom, which is just inside the entrance to the master bedroom. The Kirk sisters continue to laugh.

Just then, the carbon monoxide alarm goes off again.

ERIC
Shut that thing up!

NOEL
It's the battery. It's dying.

LEA
Replace it.

Noel shoots her a "no duh" look.

NOEL
We're out. Put batteries on the list.

Nobody does.

ERIC
They sure go dead quick.

CHARLOTTE
She probably used them up on her vibrator.

The girls laugh again. Noel takes the battery out of the alarm and throws it in the trash.

NOEL
The damned thing doesn't do anything anyway. Waste of money.

CHARLOTTE
It's the law.

NOEL
Yeah, because YOU always obey the law.

Charlotte turns to Eric.

CHARLOTTE
Your brother's a dick.

Eric laughs, Noel doesn't.

ERIC
Your sister's a bitch.

LEA

Hey!

Noel goes into the bathroom. Charlotte and Eric kiss.

LEA (CONT'D)

Boo!

She starts pelting the couple with pillows and beer cans and stale popcorn. They get up and go into Eric's room. They close the door and the sounds of love and lust come through the door.

Lea finishes her drink and gets up and heads to Noel's bedroom. She shuts the door.

Noel flushes the toilet and walks back out of the bathroom. He sees that the bedroom door is shut and he goes and sits on the couch.

A buzzing sound can be heard from Noel's bedroom. Noel frowns.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Eric walks out of his bedroom holding a small bag of weed, a pipe and lighter.

ERIC

Since we're waiting for the big payoff...

Charlotte jumps up and takes the weed and paraphernalia from Eric. She starts getting a bowl ready.

LEA

Get some more beers!

Noel's in the kitchen and he opens the fridge.

NOEL

This is the last round.

LEA

Boo!

Eric grabs drinks for the women and hands them to them. Charlotte sets her beer on the table and lights up the bowl. She passes it to her sister and opens her beer.

Noel grabs Eric by the arm and pulls him into the kitchen, away from the women.

ERIC
We about ready to pull out the
vodka?

Noel frowns at Eric.

NOEL
(quietly)
Why'd you have to bring up dad?

Eric shrugs and opens his beer. He takes a sip.

NOEL (CONT'D)
I've told you not to bring him up
around the girls.

ERIC
Dude, that's your hang up, not
mine. I'm a free spirit, I'm free
to talk about...

NOEL
Fuck that.

Eric is wounded, but he shuts up.

NOEL (CONT'D)
He never shut up about you, the
least you can do is shut up about
him.

Eric takes another sip.

ERIC
I miss him, too, there's no
reason...

Noel stares him down. Eric takes another sip. Noel walks into
the other room and takes the bowl. He hits it hard and long.

CHARLOTTE
Pass that shit!

Lea and Charlotte laugh. By themselves.

Eric walks in and starts fiddling with the box again. Nothing
happens, but the timer keeps counting down.

Noel stands in front of the heater, sipping his beer. Wavy
heat lines rise from the heater, certainly carbon monoxide
does, too.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Everyone else sits on the couch while Eric digs around inside the fridge. It's empty.

ERIC
Dude, I'm starving.

CHARLOTTE
You'll have to wait. Unless you want to go out into the snow.

LEA
Just order something.

ERIC
With what money?

NOEL
Doesn't matter. Delivery drivers aren't out in this mess. Heard it on the radio. Total lockdown during the blizzard.

Eric opens a cabinet and pulls out the last bag of dry saltines. He eats one and coughs it's so dry. He opens another cabinet and pulls out a mostly-full bottle of Svedka vodka. He pours it straight into a cup and washes down the cracker. He eats another and washes it down right away.

CHARLOTTE
Why is this thing taking so long?

The timer continues to tick down.

ERIC
I think I might just go to bed.
It's not gonna open early.

Lea nods, he makes a compelling case. Eric pulls out his phone and sets an alarm. He finishes off his vodka and goes to get more.

NOEL
Gimme that.

Eric finishes his vodka and pours another. Noel leaps up and walks over to him.

ERIC
You never told us what you think is in the box.

CHARLOTTE

Yeah!

Noel reaches for the bottle. Charlotte leaps to her feet to pester Noel. Lea gets up and walks towards the bathroom.

ERIC

I'll give it if you tell us.

Noel snatches the bottle from Noel and stumbles backwards, his elbow smacking Lea in the face and knocking her onto the couch.

She screams in pain as everyone turns to look at her. Charlotte rushes to her side.

CHARLOTTE

Are you okay?

ERIC

Nice move. Dick.

Noel heads into the bathroom, taking the vodka with him.

LEA

I'm okay.

Eric comes over and he and Charlotte help Lea to the couch.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Eric and Charlotte get up from the couch. Eric yawns exaggeratedly. Lea stays sitting on the couch. Noel watches from the kitchen, where he sips from the bottle of vodka.

Eric heads into his bedroom, pulling a sleepy Charlotte by the hand. Eric nods towards Lea.

ERIC

Goodnight.

LEA

Night.

Eric doesn't say anything to Noel as he shuts the bedroom door.

Noel and Lea stare at each other for a moment.

Noel turns and goes into his bedroom silently. He closes the door behind him.

Lea stares after him, then she pulls a blanket from the back of the couch. She wraps it around herself and curls herself into the couch to sleep for the night.

INT. NOEL'S ROOM - NIGHT

Noel wakes up with a start. He gets up quickly and walks into the living room. He sees the box and lets out a sigh of relief. He walks over and traces a hand across the box as the display continues to count down.

He turns around and goes into the bathroom. He lifts the toilet seat and starts to pee.

He stops. Maybe he heard a sound from the tub, but the shower curtain is closed.

He pulls up his pants and flushes the toilet. As he flushes, he whips the curtain back to show Charlotte dead in the tub, a needle in her arm her face pale and lifeless.

He blinks his eyes and she's gone. The tub is empty.

He rubs his eyes, but doesn't see anything else. Noel walks back into the living room and he notices that the door to Eric's door is open and he can hear voices.

He walks closer to the door and listens.

CHARLOTTE
He won't. YOU have to.

ERIC
Yeah, fuck 'em.

Eric gets up and Noel ducks down behind the kitchen counter. Eric comes into the room and walks to the box. He starts typing numbers into the pad.

Noel walks towards the wall and picks up a baseball bat.

ERIC (CONT'D)
(quietly)
Got it!

The box starts to open.

ERIC (CONT'D)
Charlotte, I got it.

Noel rushes across the room and smashes the bat down on his brother's head. Eric falls to the floor. The camera stays on Noel's face as he continues to bash the bat downward.

He blinks again.

When he opens his eyes, he sees the bat broken over the box. But the box is undamaged.

He quickly walks into the kitchen and stuffs the broken bat under the sink.

He rushes back into his bedroom and jumps in bed. He rolls onto his side and closes his eyes.

The CAMERA moves back out into the living room to show that Lea, still on the couch, quietly watched everything.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

In the morning, Lea is still in the same position on the couch, just as scared, just as much awake. Eric walks in and sits on the couch.

ERIC
How are you?

LEA
I couldn't sleep.

ERIC
Why not.

Lea starts to explain.

CUT TO:

Noel lays in bed in the same position as last night. He's awake, trying to hear what Lea and Eric are saying. They talk in low tones and his face starts to look more agitated and paranoid.

As quietly as he can, Noel gets up and peeks into the living room.

He sees Lea bent over the box and Eric is having sex with her from behind. He stares in horror as Charlotte comes out of the bedroom. She makes eye contact with Noel and winks at him. Then she walks over and kisses Eric while he continues to have sex with Lea.

Noel slams the bedroom door and gets back in bed. He pulls the covers over his head.

INT. NOEL'S ROOM - LATER

Noel wakes from a deep sleep. He tiptoes towards the door and opens it a crack. He peers into the living room.

Eric sits in the middle of the couch with his arms around Charlotte and Lea in a VERY familiar way.

LEA
You ready?

CHARLOTTE
Absolutely.

ERIC
It's all for us. He can't have any.

The kerosene furnace shuts off in front of Noel, its fuel spent.

The alarm on Eric's phone goes off.

ERIC (CONT'D)
Let's do this!

On the box, the timer reaches 0:00.

Eric rubs his hands together. Lea and Charlotte exchange a nervous grin.

ERIC (CONT'D)
Here goes nothing.

Silently, Noel slips into the living room, behind them. At some point, he went to the front porch and got the fire axe. He carries it now.

Eric leans in and opens the lid of the box, the top of the box opens towards the CAMERA, blocking our view of the contents. All three of the couch-dwellers' faces grow with excitement and/or greed as they stare at the contents of the box.

Behind them, Noel's face stares blankly. He slowly starts to smile as he picks up the fire axe and loudly smacks the handle in his hand.

Eric, Charlotte and Lea turn to see Noel. And the axe.

ERIC (CONT'D)
(nervously)
Hey man, what's up?

Noel grins. An evil grin.

FADE TO BLACK.

Everybody screams and dies.

CREDITS.

INT. ERIC'S ROOM - DAY

In Eric's room, the three bodies are stacked inside the closet. The Poe book lays open and face down on the bed.

Noel is building a brick wall that covers the entire wall of the room and, once complete, will hide the closet and the bodies.

He scrapes mortar onto the top of the highest row of bricks and places another one in place. He moves it around until it is perfectly aligned with the other bricks.

NOEL

I finally got what I wanted.

He places another brick in the wall.

FADE OUT.