

Hotel Beyond the Veil

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Chapter 1: Awake

He woke up in the woods, his body splattered with mud and leaves. He could feel his hair matted to his head and his clothes draping over his bruised body. He struggled to stand as his knees shook beneath his weight. His mind cleared of the pain as he tried to remember how he ended up in the woods, but nothing came to mind. It was late at night, and he could hear the rustling of leaves and chattering of animals around him as he began to limp through the forest. Pain shot through his brain with every step.

He walked along a steep hill, too slick to climb, listening to cars driving down the road at the top. He stopped as he reached an edge. He could see the bridge connecting the valleys above him, but from where he stood, it was a sheer cliff dropping down into the wild rapids of a river. This was a dead end; he had no choice but to wander further into the woods. He leaned against a tree. Feeling the cold rain against his skin, he debated his options. It was cold; there was no way he'd survive the whole night out here. He had no choice but to find somewhere warm.

The pain in his legs faded as he walked. He wandered for what felt like hours through the desolate forest until he saw lights in the distance. His eyes widened as he saw the lights. He sped up his trek, careful not to trip on the roots and briars of the deep woods. He exited into a clearing in the woods, looking forward, he saw a large building. His eyes adjusted to the sudden light as he read the large sign on the building.

"Finalis Subsisto Hotel" he muttered to himself, his voice shocking him as it broke the silence of the forest. "What's a hotel doing out here?"

The building was tall; he counted over twenty floors at a glance. Its colonial-style architecture was in stark contrast to the memories of buildings he had. There were no roads leading to the hotel, but the hotel still seemed to be bustling with life. The light of the windows lit the clearing. He continued walking. Hoping this hotel would have an open room for the night.

He opened the door, and a cool breeze slammed against him, a stark contrast to the humid summer air outside. The lights felt blinding as he entered the lobby. He dried his feet as best as he could before continuing towards the desk. He reached into his pocket, trying to find any cash he had on him. In his back pocket, he felt his phone. As he checked it, he found the screen completely shattered, and the phone refused to turn on. He checked his front pockets only to find loose change. He looked up at the front desk to see a young man standing in a dark red uniform. The young man smiled as the man approached the desk.

"Hello, sir, I'm Peter. How may I assist?" The young man asked "Do you have a reservation with us tonight?"

"I-I don't have any money." The man stuttered

"That won't be a problem, Sir." Peter assured "People don't end up here by mistake often. What's your name?"

"I don't think I've made any reservation, I just..." He paused. Where was he going? How did he end up here? Maybe he was supposed to be here "I..."

"Your name, sir?"

He paused, he struggled to remember even his own name

"M-Mike..." He Answered "M-Michael."

Peter looked down as he flipped through a guestbook.

“You must be Michael Cooper. You're late, Mike,” The man joked. “You were due here 20 minutes ago. Must've been a hard trip.” The man held out a key to Michael as he flashed an unnervingly toothy smile. “Here's your key. You'll be staying in room 1304 on the Thirteenth floor. Enjoy your stay!”

Michael hesitantly took the key from the man's hand before looking back to see his ominously wide eyes staring deep into his. Michael reluctantly stepped away from the man as he turned to find his way to his room. He found his way to a large antique-looking elevator with a metal gate for a door. The gate let out a loud metallic clank as he slid it open. He reluctantly stepped into the elevator, pressing the button for the thirteenth floor.