

Excerpt from “Breathe”:

The storm breaks just in time for Eric to see the sun rising off to his left. Driving south all night, he is just outside of New Orleans. Eric always makes good time, driving at night. Losing his fight with sleep, though, he decides to stop at a rest area to get some badly needed rest.

Climbing into the back of his truck, Eric starts wondering if he is the only one of his college buddies down here. It was just one year ago that they had met up and all agreed to meet at the center of Jackson Square, the night of the start of Mardi Gras. This, now, just two days away. Enough time to get to know the town. But now, sleep.

As he wakes up, Eric’s view outside is disrupted by dew that has settled on his windows. Then he sees it. Written on the rear window. *‘I’M WATCHING OVER YOU!’*

Tim fights himself to do this. He knows that he has to, but the memory of that night, when he was young, still haunts him: Just as the unknown would scare anyone. Once he arrives at J.F.K. Airport, he runs for his car. His old neighborhood is only twenty minutes away with normal driving. Tim makes it in ten. By this time, it is already night. This pleases him. He still has a good relationship with his mother, but he can’t be slowed by seeing her. His stepfather is away on business.

As he walks closer to the tree, the hair on his arms stand up. A chill comes over his body. It sends a shiver down his spine. He stops walking but still moves towards the tree. He looks down to the ground and sees that he is hovering, about six inches off of the ground. He is set down next to the tree.

When Eric realizes what has happened, it is too late. Toshica is gone. All in the house are in shock. They grow quiet, trying to figure their next move when they are startled by the phone ringing.

Lisa answers it and is suddenly disgusted. "How dare you..." She is cut off, as Brad demands to speak with Eric.

Eric takes the phone in his hand, takes a deep breath, regains his composure, and speaks into the phone. "Yes?"

"Eric." Brad says sharply. "You thought had all the answers. You thought that you could solve all the world's problems once you joined with Tim." Eric stays silent. "Well, let me tell you something." Brad continues. "This has only just begun. I will return. I now have the upper hand. I have Toshica. I will have the world."

The phone goes dead. Their world now turns dark.

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