

“It Can't Get Any Worse”

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[#Fictober18 \(October 2018\) writing challenge](#)

Day 29: “At least it can't get any worse.”

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1988

The car door slamming sounded like a gunshot—too loud and too close. Patrick pressed his bloodied hand against the dashboard. “Go! Go!”

Carter had the keys in the ignition and the engine roared to life. Gravel crunched beneath the tires as he backed out, squealing before the wheels grabbed traction. The car bounced over the bumps in the old dirt road.

Patrick looked back. He couldn't see anything beyond the taillights. Thank God.

“That was—that was a demon.” No question about it. He'd seen it. He believed it. It was everything the horror stories had promised.

“Yeah.” Carter's eyes flicked to the rear-view mirror. There was tension in his shoulders. He knew better than to think they were in the clear just because they couldn't see it. They had only wounded it, not destroyed it.

“That was—” Patrick was at a loss. The thing had almost killed him.

“Yeah.”

The man didn't have much to say, but that was fine. Patrick couldn't think of anything to say beyond a thank you, and something about all of this made him think now wasn't a good time. The way Carter drove, speeding down the bumpy road, eyes constantly flicking to the mirrors—they weren't out of the woods yet, figuratively or literally.

He noticed the blood for the first time, smeared across his hand. He wiped it on his jeans. Carter was bleeding too. A fine trickle ran down the side of his face.

“Hey, man—you alright?”

“Yeah. Fine. It's nothing. I'll check it after we stop.”

“Okay.” Patrick sighed. “At least it can't get any worse, right?”

“Wish you hadn't said that,” Carter mumbled under his breath. With each mile they put between themselves and the demon, the easier he was able to breathe. He relaxed his grip on the steering wheel. There was no way he would let his guard down yet, despite the danger being behind them.

Patrick sank back into his seat. “Are they all like that? Demons?”

“No. That was.. one of the worst. I haven’t seen a demon like that in a long time.” Carter glanced to the mirror again. His eyes widened. “Shit!”

Alarmed, Patrick straightened. “What?”

“Brace yourself!” The warning came only a split second before something impacted the back of the car and sent the vehicle spiraling. Patrick held on as best he could. His head smacked against the window. The world outside spun fast, trees lost in a blur. They came to a stop when the back end hit a solid trunk. The headlights illuminated the road they’d been thrown from.

“What—what the fuck just happened?”

Carter winced, putting his shoulder into the door in an attempt to force open the crumpled metal. His other hand grabbed for his gun. The demon moved in the treeline across the road. He bit the inside of his cheek and tasted blood.

“It got worse.”