FOREVER AMBER

Written by

Richard F. Russell

Wordmstr007@gmail.com 910-285-3321 Copyright 2015

FADE IN.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

AMBER, 30, classic beauty and poise, sips coffee as she browses on her Ipad, a woman few men would approach.

A large cup hits the table. She looks up at MICHAEL, 39, handsome, charming, a man who attended good schools. Michael sits across from her. He lays a thick file on the table.

MICHAEL

Seat taken?

AMBER

Yes. Sorry.

MICHAEL Should I call you Amber-or Madeline?

AMBER

You may leave. Oh, wait, you didn't ask that, did you. Still, you may leave.

MICHAEL Always charming. Always in control. Would you prefer Doris?

AMBER Do you know what happens to bores?

MICHAEL

Then, again, you might like to try Abigail again. You seem partial to 'A' names.

AMBER Bores lead exceedingly lonely lives. But then, you already know that, don't you?

Michael pulls a photo out of the file and lays it in front of her. It's a wedding photo of an older MAN, and a WOMAN who looks much like Amber. The photo is dated-JUNE 12, 1980.

MICHAEL That's the day you married my father.

AMBER

Please, a photoshopped forgery? You're past boring, you're insulting.

MICHAEL Oh no, that's you. I can see why he married you.

AMBER

Take a look at the date. 1980. That was what, 35 years ago? What do you think that woman would look like after 35 years?

MICHAEL

Just like you.

She laughs.

AMBER

Oh my, coffee must be the fountain of youth.

MICHAEL

History. Madeline, 30, married Willard, 50. Willard told her she was his first wife, which was technically true. He had his first marriage annulled, even though there was a child involved. Money can work miracles. Madeline lived with Willard for 30 years, until he died in 2010. After the funeral, she took the money and disappeared.

AMBER

What will it take to make you leave?

MICHAEL I was nine years old in 1985. Nine years old when mom took me to see Willard. You weren't there.

FLASHBACK

INT. MANSION - HALL - DAY

Michael, 9, wanders the paneled hall of an old-style house, something built by a robber barren. The portraits on the walls are stern and timeless. They scare him.

MICHAEL (V.O.) That mansion was incredible. While mom and dad argued, I wandered. I don't know how I reached the second floor, or how that dog did. I'm still scared of dogs.

At the end of the hall, a Doberman appears, sleek and deadly. Spotting Michael, it attacks.

Michael ducks into a room and slams the door as the dog slides past.

INT. MANSION - MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

The room of your dreams. Huge, adorned, a bed like a aircraft carrier. Michael wanders from bed to makeup table where he picks up a crystal atomizer and sprays the air. He sniffs and coughs. Wow.

He goes to the open windows to breathe before he walks into the closet. Even as the dog SCRATCHES at the door.

MICHAEL (V.O.) I could have played soccer on that bed. And I never knew they made that many perfumes. What a life you had. And that closet, oh that closet.

INT. MANSION - MASTER BEDROOM CLOSET - DAY

A walk-in closet like a small house. Walls of designer clothes and shoes and mirrors, this could be a top-end clothing store. Michael slips along, feeling forbidden fineries. Then he comes to a stop.

> MICHAEL (V.O.) I had never seen so much...silk. Everything amazed me, everything. But the thing that really puzzled me was-

He looks at a row of wigs, all gray, from iron gray through lighter grays to pure white.

MICHAEL That row of wigs.

END FLASHBACK

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Michael sips his coffee and shakes his head in wonder.

MICHAEL What woman buys wigs that make her look older?

AMBER A woman with cancer?

MICHAEL

You were 30, just as you are today.

With deliberate slowness, Amber places the lid on her coffee.

AMBER Do you write fiction? Because you're no longer in the real world.

MICHAEL

It took me a long time to figure out the wigs. I mean, look at it. A woman uses makeup and wigs to look older? Why? Why? Maybe because she never really ages?

AMBER If you will excuse me, I have a date with a leprechaun, or is it the unicorn? I can't remember.

Michael takes a second photo from the file and places it on the table. It's from a newspaper and shows a woman much like Amber with another Man. They wear Halloween costumes.

> MICHAEL Remember that evening? 1955, right, Doris?

> > AMBER

How could I? I wasn't there.

MICHAEL

Facial recognition programs are exceedingly useful. You would be surprised at how sophisticated they have become.

AMBER Do you really think a couple photos-

Michael produces another photo and slams it on top.

MICHAEL 1929. Market crash and bankruptcy, but not for Abigail and Roger. (another photo comes out) 1905. San Francisco. Bon Voyage for Hawaii. (another photo) 1888 You and Oscar Wilde. (another photo) 1873. --AMBER Enough. What am I to make of this insane display. That you're some kind of stalker who has spent a fortune ginning up a whacko dossier? Those women are not me. How could they be? 1872? MICHAEL 1873. AMBER That would make me what, 150 years old? MICHAEL 152. AMBER Sorry, genius. I'm thirty, not an impossible 152. Michael smiles. MICHAEL How old are you really? Two

hundred? Four hundred? A thousand? How long have you been hiding what you are?

AMBER

What will it take to convince you? Birth certificate? School transcripts? Dental records? How can I prove to you I am who I say I am?

MICHAEL You can't buy a new identity? C'mon.

AMBER You think I'm rich?

MICHAEL

Invest a nickel today and in a thousand years what's it worth?

She stares.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

I don't want your money. Willard gave my mom more than I can spend. What I want is what you have-immortality.

A COUPLE, older, sits at the next table.

AMBER Let's go some place where we can talk.

INT. AMBER'S APARTMENT - DAY

What real money can buy. View, furnishings, space, this place signals arrival at the top. Amber hands Michael a drink.

AMBER What is it that you think you know?

She settles on a couch, facing him.

MICHAEL

You don't age. I don't know why you don't age, but you don't. Every generation, you reinvent yourself. But you don't age.

AMBER

Let's say you're right. I don't age. I have been this old and precisely this old for...well, for a long time. How could that be?

MICHAEL

You tell me. It's not science. No one had that kind of science way back when. And I doubt you pulled a Ponce de Leon and found the fountain of youth. If I believed in devils, I'd say you sold your soul. So, I'm reduced to some kind of magic. There are stories about voodoo and necromancy and maleficium and black magic that defy human explanation. AMBER

There is magic. Not voodoo, nothing like that, but magic nonetheless. If I tell you-

MICHAEL I promise to keep your secret.

AMBER

Wait here.

She stands and walks into the bedroom. He regards an opulence he can't match.

She returns, carrying a small box which she sets in front of him.

AMBER (CONT'D) Don't open it. Not yet.

She settles with her drink.

AMBER (CONT'D) It started in the Carpathian mountains, a long time ago.

FLASH BACK

INT. WITCH'S HUT - NIGHT

A WITCH, haggard and scarred, sets a naked wooden doll on a rough-hewn table; the doll is covered with small, cryptic runes. On the other side, stands Amber, dressed as a royal princess. She drops a purse that spills gold coins.

AMBER (V.O.) She had no name. She was just the 'Hag', and she was as ugly as a dog without hair. Rumors said that she offered the gift of eternal youth. I found her high up, in the snow. I was a princess. I demanded.

The Witch holds up a knife. Amber offers her arm. The Witch grabs her wrist and slices open pale skin. Blood drips on the doll.

AMBER (V.O.) Magic demands a price. I paid. All the time I was there I told myself I was a fool. But I paid anyway. The Witch hands a bandage to Amber who binds her wound while the Witch places the doll in a small box.

END FLASHBACK

INT. AMBER'S APARTMENT - DAY

Amber points at the box.

AMBER

Open it.

Michael opens the box. Inside is the small doll, stained with black blood, weathered almost beyond recognition.

AMBER (CONT'D) That's how it happened.

MICHAEL You're lying.

Amber bristles.

MICHAEL (CONT'D) There was no Carpathian witch, no hovel, no blood sacrifice. That's movie BS.

AMBER

Then, how-

MICHAEL Here's what I think.

FLASHBACK

INT. CASTLE - KITCHEN - DAY

A beautiful WOMAN, the lady of the castle, strides through a medieval kitchen where a COOK stirs a pot, and a small GIRL watches.

MICHAEL (V.O.) I'm guessing you lived with her, a servant or something. INT. CASTLE BEDROOM - DAY

The Girl, now 13, helps dress the Woman, and the Woman has not changed. Gorgeous.

MICHAEL (V.O.) Somehow, you noticed that the woman didn't age. You were close enough and bright enough to wonder why.

INT. CASTLE BEDROOM - DAY

The Girl, 30, has become Amber, and she carefully searches the room. In a chest, she finds the old box.

MICHAEL (V.O.) You found the doll, and you put two and two together.

Amber opens the box and sees the doll. With no hesitation, she closes the box and takes it.

MICHAEL (V.O.) So, you stole the talisman.

END FLASHBACK

INT. AMBER'S APARTMENT - DAY

Michael reaches out and touches the doll.

MICHAEL And lived happily ever after.

AMBER You don't know what you're talking about.

MICHAEL What do you want for it?

AMBER It's not for sale.

MICHAEL You've owned it long enough.

AMBER It's not what you think. MICHAEL It's exactly what I think, and I want it. Don't make me take it.

AMBER It doesn't belong to you.

MICHAEL It belongs to whoever has it.

He closes the box.

MICHAEL (CONT'D) It's leaving with me.

For a moment, Amber merely stares. Before she launches herself at him, long nails clawing.

Michael is ready. He grabs her arms, jerks her off her feet, and tosses her onto the couch.

MICHAEL (CONT'D) Don't make me hurt you.

AMBER I'll call the police.

MICHAEL

No, you won't. There are too many lies to unravel. How many husbands did you kill?

AMBER You can't do this to me.

MICHAEL

(grabbing box) You're going to age, Amber. You're going to be human again. You've got enough money to enjoy what's left of your ride. Get used to it.

AMBER Please, you don't understand.

Michael laughs and heads for the door.

MICHAEL No one likes a whiner. Get over it.

He leaves. Amber picks up her drink and sips.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

In pajamas, Michael looks down at the doll; the box sits on night stand. Then, he climbs into bed and turns out the light. He can't see the doll's eyes burn with internal glow.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT- BEDROOM - MORNING

Drawn curtains cast gloom as Michael wakes. He rolls out of bed and shuffles into the

INT. MICHAELS'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

He stands before the toilet, fumbling. Then, stops.

MICHAEL

What the...

He flips on the light and looks into the mirror.

The face staring back belongs to AMBER.

He spins and feels his body. No, not his body. Amber's body, inside his pajamas. He spins back to the mirror. It's real. He has become Amber.

MICHAEL (CONT'D) How the hell...

He runs out.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Michael turns on the lights and looks into the box. The doll stares back. He feels his new body as if it's foreign. When did he get tits?

He goes to the window and opens the curtains, letting light flood the room. Morning. He looks out.

Below, on the sidewalk stands-MICHAEL. At least, Michael's body. As Michael-turned-Amber watches, the Michael on the sidewalk waves and starts walking.

Michael-turned-Amber watches himself walk away.

FADE OUT.