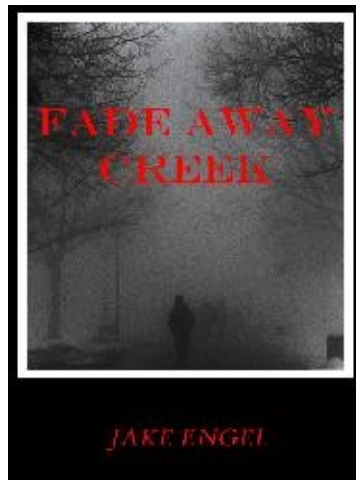


Fade Away Creek

Fade Away Creek

By : jakeengel

John awakes after being in a car accident, he catches a ride to the nearest hotel through Fade Away Creek. The place is dark and grey, the amount of fog could limit your sight. He stays at the hotel and sees things leaving him to think the injuries to his head are causing hallucinations, could they also cause strange dreams? Or is there more to it?



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Chapter 1: Part 1: The Hotel

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Part 1: The Hotel

Driving along the snowy road, John finds himself in a tough situation. His hands are freezing, he can barely see, and the snow storm is getting much worst. As John is driving a deer jumps out in front of the car, John reacts quickly and stamps his foot on the breaks. The car accelerates uncontrollably and causes the car to flip over and run off the road. John sits inside the car passed out with bruises to the head. With the freezing night, John's only hope of surviving is if somebody drives by and spots his damaged car that sits on the side of the road.

John awakens to the sound of a tow truck, as the truck driver pulls over to the side of the road, John opens the car door waving his arms for help. The man approaches, "hey there, you need any help"? John replies "yes, I've been in an accident". The man see's the bruises and lets John know he should see a doctor. John tells him the injuries are minor, he then asked the man for a ride to the nearest hotel. The man says there is one just up the road, so he towed the wrecked car and kindly gives John the ride. As they drive, John notices a sign that reads "Welcome To Fade Away Creek". The place is dark and grey, visibility is low due to the amount of fog. They arrive at the hotel; the man drops John off and continued to drive along the snowy road.

John walks into the lobby where he confronts the woman at the front desk. "Hello, how may I help you?" the woman says. "I need a room for the night, are there any available?" She looked at his head and notices the bruises, "sure follow me". She escorts him to the only room available. As they walk to the room John notices how quiet it was and how nobody seemed to be there but he and the woman. John asked for the time, she says 12:43 p.m. "But it's night out", John says. The woman stops and looks at him, "Not as I see it". John shakes his head and gives her a grin. They reached the room and the woman opens the door. John walks in and immediately notices the fireplace. He takes off his shoes starts the fire and sits in front of it. After being stuck for almost an hour outside in 20 degree weather, it's exactly what he needed.

John awakes to see the warm feeling fire still burning; he felt the dryness in his throat and the need for a nice cold drink. He walks out into the hall searching for a vending machine; as he walks up the hall he sees a little girl holding a red ball. She drops the ball and it rolls towards John. She yelled "car!" and then ran down the hall. John picks up the ball and chases after her, as he turns the corner he sees the girl walk through a door. He dropped the ball, stepped back in shock and found his way back to the lobby. He confronts the woman at the front desk once again. "This place is haunted". The woman looks surprised. "Excuse me?" John moves in closer, with a little hesitation and whispering, "I've seen a girl walk through a door, this place is haunted". She laughed and walked into the room behind the desk. John felt his head and thought maybe he does need to see a doctor, maybe the cuts and bruises to his head are causing hallucinations. As he walked along the front desk, John see's a vending machine, he buys a cold bottle of water and heads back to his room. As he reaches the door, he notices that it's locked and that the woman at the front desk never gave him the key. He walks back down to the lobby and once again to the front desk. He tells the woman that she forgot to give him the key. She turned her head sideways and with a smile and some laughter she says, "We don't use any keys here". John's yells out, "well how am I going to get into my room?!" She replies "You walk through it, like everyone else". She began to laugh and once again, she goes to the room behind the front desk. John doesn't know if she was actually serious or if the woman was making fun of him with the incident about the girl walking through the door. He does know his door is locked and he has no key, so he grabs a card off of the desk and walks back to his room.

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As John is walking toward his room, a man catches his attention. "I've seen the girl too, I killed her, she's dead because of me. The man had a GNC shirt on, blood on his chest and what seems like bullet holes. John's door suddenly opens and then slams shut. He walked over and tries to open it but it seemed as if there was a stronger force pushing it the opposite way. The door opens and John notices the window is open, letting in the cold strong wind. John takes a look at the clock it shows 2:25 a.m. He thinks to himself, "These clocks must be broken". He looks around and next to the burnt out fire place is a red ball. He doesn't touch the ball; instead he feels his head and with a little fright he walks to his bed and lies down.

Chapter 2: Part 2: Shattered Dreams

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Part 2: Scattered Dreams

As John lies in bed asleep, his mind slips off into a strange dream. Unlike most dreams, John isn't actually in it instead he dreams of a man, Michael Glashen who gets a call from his ex-wife. She shares the news with him of his daughter's death. She was 6 years old, her name was Coraline. She was out in her yard playing with her red ball when she dropped it. The ball rolled into the street, Coraline being a 6 year old girl didn't see it coming, the driver in the car didn't stop in time, she died instantly. Michael was devastated with the death of his daughter and he wanted revenge. 2 months after the accident, Michael went on a shootout at a mall where the killer was working at the time. He shot and killed his target as well as 14 other people in the process until he was shot and killed by police.

John awakens from his dream, not understanding anything about it. He notices that it's still night out. He looks at the clock and it shows 2:25 a.m., he shakes his head and says to himself "these clocks broken". He looks around in search for the red ball but it isn't where he left it. He hears a knock at the door. He opens it and rolling at his feet is the ball, he picks it up and examines it. As he rotates the ball around he sees something that looks like letters. He wipes off the dust and reads it out loud. "Coraline", he reads in a shocked manner. He drops the ball and runs back to the lobby. He walks to the desk, but there's nobody there. He rings the bell and the same woman he met earlier comes out of the room behind the desk. He asked her for a phone, she tells him the phones were down. He asked for the nearest hospital, she points across the street. As her head is turned to the side, John notices what looks like a bullet wound just above her ear. John runs across the street and into the hospital. There were a lot of people; most of them looked as if they were already dead. John runs to the front desk where he meets a nurse. He begged for some assistance and shows her his cuts and bruises and explains to her what he's been seeing. She calms him down and takes him to a room where she treats his cuts.

John awakens in a chair, he sees the nurse standing above him. She explains to him that he had deep cuts to his head and was given stitches. She also explains to him that the things he was seeing were hallucinations and gives him a pill that would prevent them from coming back. John sighs in relief and walks out of the room. There weren't as much people in the hospital as before, just a few people who looked pretty normal for the most part. John walks outside and notices a library, he goes in hoping they had computers where he could contact his wife by e-mail. He walks in; it's almost as if nobody else is there. He looks around and notices the computers; he takes a seat and turns the computer on. He's shocked that the internet is up and running while the phone lines are down and the snow is still falling. He opens up the browser, as he's searching through the internet he finds an article about a shootout at a mall. Remembering something similar happened in his dream, he opens the article. As he's reading the article every little detail sounds familiar. Girl named Coraline was killed in an accident, her father Michael shoots up a mall in an attempt to get revenge on the killer. It all happened in his dream. John looks through pictures of the victims, he comes across familiar faces. He notices the woman in the photo is the woman he met at the front desk of the hotel. He's shocked in disbelief, as he is reading, he learns that her name is Elisa Monaco and she died in a hospital from a gunshot wound to the head at 12:43 p.m. John sits in his chair with his arms over his head, a frightened look on his face and a desire to know what is going on. He runs outside, a young woman confronts him and says "nice weather we're having". John walked away and thinks to himself "she was wearing a bikini in 20 degree weather, what's going on?"

John talks to himself "is it a dream? Is the world at its end? Am I dead?" He wants answers but it seems as if everyone is just disappearing. John starts walking back to the hotel, as he's walking he feels something at his

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feet, it's the red ball. He turns to his left and sees the little girl who John now knows is Coraline. He walks toward her, as he got closer, she ran. John chased after her yelling, "Wait I'm not going to hurt you!" As he is running, Coraline disappears; John continued to run after her. Just ahead a shadow of what appears to be a man holding a gun slowly walks toward John. John begins to walk backwards, as the shadow gets closer John runs faster. Faster and faster John runs, looking back and forth. As John is running he hears guns going off, people screaming, police sirens, ambulance. He closes his eyes and continues to run until there is nowhere else to run. He is trapped and the shadow gets closer and closer. Suddenly everything is darkened; he closes his eyes and wishes he were home.

Chapter 3: Part 3: Homecoming

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Part 3: Homecoming

John looks around, everything looks familiar. He looks at the clock to see that it's 7:30 a.m. He sighs in relief "oh thanks god, it was just a dream". He looks to the side of his bed to see that his wife isn't there. He yells out, "Meredith" He walks into his daughter's room, she isn't in her crib. "Meredith", he yells out again, but still no answer. He walks downstairs, "Meredith", he yells out once more. Suddenly he hears a knock at the door, he walks over and opens it but there's nobody there. He looks down and sees the newspaper. He picks it up to see the date, it's December 23, 2011. He thinks to himself "wasn't it just the 18th yesterday?" The phone suddenly rings; he walks over to the living room and answers it. "Meredith?" John says a few times. The woman on the phone doesn't seem to hear John speaking at all. "Meredith? Meredith? Is that you?" the woman says. John yells out, "no it's me John, can you hear me?" The woman hangs up. John looks down at the answering machine, he sees the red light blinking, meaning there's new messages. He clicks the button and plays the most recent message. "Hello, Meredith, I just want to let you know how sorry I am for your lost, call me if you need somebody to talk to". A loud beep goes off, ending the message. Confused, worried and scared is what John is feeling as he listens to the message again. As John is scrambling through the voice messages he hears music coming from the kitchen, it seems to be playing jingle bells. John follows the sound and eventually it leads him to some sort of Christmas box. He opens it slowly; as he's opening it he sees car keys, a pen and a wallet. It seems to be all of his belongings. He dumps everything out, on the floor lies what looks like a brochure. He picks it up, turns it over and reads it out loud. "In Loving Memory of John M. Alexander, August 18, 1971 to December 18, 2011". John falls to his knees and begins to cry out "when will this nightmare end?" As he cries, he continues to read. According to the paper the funeral is held on December 23, 2011. John sits down, puts his hands over his face and cries out for his wife. He closes his eyes and thinks about Meredith.

John opens his eyes and looks around, he notices he's in a church. He sees all the familiar people crying and looks around to see all the pictures are of him. He stands up and begins to walk down the aisle. He closes his eyes and as he gets closer and closer, he feels every emotion possible. He opens his eyes and looks down to see the body of what used to be his own. He thinks about his life and how he feels he wasted it. As John looks at the body he hears a familiar cry. He turns around to see his wife, Meredith. "Don't cry Meredith, honey I'm here", John cries out as he walks toward her. He reaches for her hand but every time he does he just goes right through her. Everything now is starting to come together to John, as he closes his eyes he sees the accident, the deer jumping out and the car moving out of control. He sees newspaper articles of the accident, "Man found dead in car", he hears his wife crying, and he sees the snow falling. He holds his ears and screams out "get out of my head! Get out of my head!"

Suddenly John finds himself on a road. He looks around and sees the sign and notices he's back in Fade Away Creek. In the distance he sees a truck. The truck gets closer and pulls to the side, the driver walks out. "Hey there John". John walks toward him in an angry sort of way, "what is going on?" The man stood firm, "This is the afterlife, John. You're dead and now you're here". John doesn't want to believe it. "That can't be true; I thought the afterlife was supposed to be beautiful, this place is cold, dark and grey". The man sighs, "It is for some people, it all depends on when you die. If you die at 3 a.m. during freezing weather, that's what the afterlife would be for you, there's no changing it". John pauses in disbelief "so this is it for me? I'll be here forever?" The man nods his head, "for all eternity". John sits down in a pile of snow, puts his hands over his face and wipes his tears. "Can I ever go back again?" The man explains to him, "Only when you sleep, you have the power to go back to the life of the living, but as some sort of ghost of course". John stays seated, "So what now? Where do I go?" The man starts walking back to his truck, as he walks backwards he yells out,

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"you wait, for the ones you love will come". John gets up and walks, he doesn't know if there's an end but he walks and never looks back.

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