

Ingrown

written by

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Cesar
Casidy
Boyd
Receptionist
Lead Surgeon
Barber

EXT. RESIDENTIAL CITY STREET - DAY

CESAR, mid-thirties, exits his townhouse and adjusts his hat, wispy brown hair peeking under it. He makes his way down the block, constantly checking his cap, before CASIDY, mid-thirties, waves to him from her porch.

A bandana keeps the dark curly hair out of her face as she waters the planters decorating her stoop.

CASIDY

Cesar! Since when do you work weekends?

Cesar closes the distance, stopping at her front steps so she doesn't have to shout.

CESAR

I'm meeting someone...
(quietly)
It's not like I never leave the house.

Casidy smirks.

CASIDY

Oh? Did you finally get a girlfriend?

CESAR

(blushes)
No! My friend just got back from vacation; I haven't seen him in a while.

CASIDY

Ah, then I can still rely on my favorite homebody to house-sit for me. I dread the day some siren comes and steals you away from me.

Cesar swallows, steeling his nerves.

CESAR

Actually, Casidy, I-

A subtle breeze blows down the street, picking up Cesar's cap and exposing the shiny top of his head. He freezes mid-sentence as everyone on the block can see his shame. He recovers enough to scoop up his hat.

CESAR (CONT'D)

I have to go.

He all but runs away.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Cesar and his friend BOYD sit at a booth tucked in the back. Both wear hats.

CESAR

So, how was Turkey? You were there for, what, a month?

Cesar doesn't fidget while he talks to Boyd, far more confident while hidden from the other patrons.

BOYD

See for yourself.

He removes his cap, revealing a head of blond hair. It's short on top but full. Cesar is taken aback.

BOYD (CONT'D)

They've got this new procedure where they take hair from a donor and transplant them onto you.

CESAR

How much did that cost?

BOYD

That's the best part! It's still experimental, so they're practically paying you to get it. The hotel cost me a pretty penny, though. My surgeon was super intense about post-care, so I opted not to travel until I was all healed.

Cesar deflates a bit.

CESAR

I probably can't be away from work that long...

Boyd waves him off.

BOYD

Then don't. You just need three days for the operation and follow-up. Maybe another for rest. Just be cautious on the trip back.

Cesar looks down at his coffee, thinking.

Boyd reaches into his pocket and pushes a business card for a Turkish plastic surgery clinic across the table.

CESAR

I've never had surgery before....

BOYD

(shrugs)

Small price to pay for your confidence if you ask me.

Cesar thumbs at the card before looking up at Boyd, more specifically, Boyd's hair.

INT. TURKISH PLASTIC SURGERY CLINIC - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE

DAY 1

Cesar walks inside the clinic, head hidden under a knit cap despite the heat. The RECEPTIONIST checks him in and hands him a form.

RECEPTIONIST

Just sign here and make sure we have your current address.

After he signs, she guides Cesar to the exam room.

INT. CLINIC EXAMINATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The room is dimly lit, resembling a barber's shop. Cesar sits in the chair and a flock of LAB COATS swarms him.

Are they stylists? Nurses? Surgeons? It's unclear. They examine Cesar's scalp. Measure it. They whisper amongst themselves like chattering birds.

One grabs a marker and draws Cesar a new hairline. Another wipes it off and marks a new one.

Finally, what appears to be the LEAD SURGEON enters the room, gives Cesar a short glance, and draws his own line. The Lab Coats step back and nod to themselves. Cameras flash in Cesar's eyes.

He has no time to decide if he likes the hairline before they're gone.

He looks in the mirror briefly before replacing his hat.

INT. OPERATING ROOM - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE

DAY 2

Cesar lays face-down on an operating table as the Lead Surgeon numbs his scalp with the large needle. He winces with each poke as he watches the surgeon tap his black Crocs against the floor as he works.

The surgeon extracts hair from a flap of skin in a surgical tray next to the operating table. Once he has enough, the Lead Surgeon uses a pair of jewelers' forceps to seed Cesar's barren scalp with new follicles.

Thin trails of blood drip down Cesar's neck. The Lead Surgeon wipes them up, but a drop lands on the floor where Cesar can see.

The buzzing of the fluorescent lights fades away as a new sound invades Cesar's ears. Something like a trowel plunged in wet dirt.

SMASH CUT

EXT. CASIDY'S PORCH - SUNSET

Casidy scoops dirt from a long planter. She places a bulb in each hole, pushing the soil back to cover them.

Cesar walks down the street with a confident smile. A gentle wind tousles his thick brown locks. He takes a step forward, and Casidy raises a hand to wave before covering her laugh.

Cesar freezes and glances around the block. The rest of his NEIGHBORS are also laughing. He reaches up and touches his hair; a handful sloughs off as he does.

He watches in horror as the thin wisps of his hair blow away like dandelion fluff.

INT. CLINIC EXAMINATION ROOM - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE

DAY 3

Cesar checks out his hair in the mirror while the Lead Surgeon attempts to give him post-op instructions.

LEAD SURGEON
 Some scabbing... Disinfecting
 foam... Ten days...

There's only a thin sheet of peach fuzz atop his bloody, swollen head, but Cesar is transfixed.

LEAD SURGEON (CONT'D)
 I can't stress this nothing. Let
 nothing touch your head. If you
 scratch it at all before it's done
 healing, you'll wish you hadn't
 gotten the procedure.

Cesar finally looks away from the mirror to shake the Lead Surgeon's hand.

CESAR
 Thank you, sir. You're doing great
 work here.

He stands up to leave. The Lead Surgeon watches his back before turning to the Receptionist; they share a nod.

INT. AIRPORT - DAY

Schools of TRAVELERS bustle around. Their conversations bounce off the walls and congeal into one monotonous barrage of noise.

Cesar catches his reflection every chance he gets: windows, the metallic check-in desk, the glasses of the TSA AGENT. Each glance chips away at his self-esteem.

His scalp is still swollen and scabbed, tiny pimples bubbling up where new hairs gestate under the skin. A few Travelers give him odd looks. Cesar reaches into his backpack and fishes out his hat.

LEAD SURGEON (V.O.)
 Let nothing touch your head.

He hesitates. The glances of a few more strangers are all it takes for him to pull it on.

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

Cesar fidgets in his window seat, constantly scratching his head through his hat. Unable to satisfy the itch, he reaches under it to get at his scalp directly. As soon as he feels it, he stops.

He lifts his hat and stares at his ghostly reflection in the plane's window. His hair seems thicker.

Cesar climbs over the PASSENGER next to him and rushes to the plane restroom.

INT. AIRPLANE RESTROOM - CONTINUOUS

Cesar rips off his hat and gazes in the mirror, running a hand over his hair. It's grown substantially since he boarded, short but full. The inside of his hat is filthy.

Crusts of blood and pus stick to his scalp like lava flows from fleshy volcanoes where he scratched at the pimples. He turns on the tap and rinses away the debris.

Examining further, the transplanted hair is darker than the brown horseshoe rimming the transplanted area, a bit redder in hue.

Cesar returns to his seat with a smile, hat in hand.

INT. BARBER SHOP - DAY

The day after Cesar returns home, his hair reaches his jawline. He sits confidently in the styling chair as his BARBER slides a few strands between his fingers and readies his scissors.

Snip! Cesar jolts and squeaks in pain. His Barber chuckles.

BARBER

Nervous?

Cesar offers a nervous laugh.

CESAR

It's been a while since I got a haircut.

The Barber continues trimming as Cesar grits his teeth, fingernails digging into the leather armrests.

BARBER

Hey, did you try dyeing your hair or something?

CESAR

Huh?

The Barber shows him the scissors, blades stained a dark red.

CESAR (CONT'D)

Uh... no.

The Barber wipes his scissors on his apron.

BARBER

Just try to rinse it better next time.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Cesar sits across from Boyd at their usual table. Boyd stares at his new haircut in awe.

BOYD

Was your donor a werewolf?!

Cesar shrugs and takes a bite of his sandwich.

CESAR

Whatever's going on, I'd call it a success.

A beat.

BOYD

Did they change the procedure?

Cesar shakes his head.

CESAR

No, it went pretty much how you described.

He pauses to think.

CESAR (CONT'D)

Does it hurt when you cut your hair?

BOYD

Uh, you got a haircut already? I'm still in the shedding phase.

CESAR

The shedding phase?

BOYD

Didn't the surgeon tell you what the timeline looked like? The donor hairs fall out after about a month, then new ones start growing in.

(MORE)

BOYD (CONT'D)

You look like you got it done a year ago.

Cesar takes another bite of sandwich.

CESAR

Whatever, I'm not complai-

He gags on something and puts down his food. Reaching into his mouth he pulls out a dark strand of hair.

BOYD

Ugh, you should send it back.

Cesar can't respond, still pulling out the hair. It takes two hands, like a magician and a string of handkerchiefs, he tugs the hair from his throat, choking.

After what has to be a meter of hair passes between his teeth, Cesar feels tug somewhere at the back of his head. He yanks one last time and the strand breaks free, the end covered in a sebaceous film. There's blood on his tongue.

Cesar studies it as Boyd watches in horror.

BOYD (CONT'D)

Dude... I think you should call your doctor.

INT. FANCY RESTAURANT - EVENING

Cesar and Casidy sit across a table at a nice restaurant both dressed up for the occasion. Cesar's hair is already grown out again but is well-groomed.

They already have their food and the date is going well.

CASIDY

I'm glad you finally asked me out.
What took you so long?

Cesar blushes, reaching for a hat that isn't there. He runs a hand through his hair.

CESAR

Oh ya know, I-

Casidy laughs shyly.

CASIDY

Oh, you've got something in your teeth.

CESAR

Sorry.

He picks his teeth with a fingernail.

CESAR (CONT'D)

Did I get it?

Casidy reaches into her purse and hands him her compact.

CASIDY

Try this.

He picks his teeth as politely as he can, but whatever's in there isn't budging. A closer inspection in the mirror reveals a tuft of hair growing right through Cesar's gums.

He pales but composes himself enough to hand back the mirror and stand up.

CESAR

I'm sorry. I'll be right back.

INT. FANCY RESTAURANT BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

He runs off to the bathroom and attacks his teeth with a string of dental floss, garroting his canine until his pearly whites are pink with blood.

His skin gives way before the hair does, peeling away to reveal the thick roots coiling up into his upper jawbone.

He can't let Casidy see him like this.

INT. FANCY RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

On his way out of the restroom, Cesar pulls aside a WAITER, covering his mouth with his hand.

CESAR

I'm sorry but I have to leave. Can you get my bill and apologize to the lady for me?

The Waiter gives him a weird look but complies without question.

INT. CESAR'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Cesar sits on the floor beside his home phone, cycling through voicemails from Casidy. They range from concerned to pissed. He deletes each one before it can finish.

His hair flows down his shoulders and pools on the floor, tangled and greasy like an oil spill. His eyelashes are long and bushy and his ears and nose are plugged by a forest of coarse whiskers.

His breaths come in slow and haggard, rustling like wind through dry leaves. He glances down at his hands where thick strands curl out beneath his swollen purple nail beds.

The bathroom light is his only source of illumination. A bloody straight razor glints among the little piles of trimmed hair littering the shower rug.

Cesar stares at it before slowly crawling forward. He wraps his fingers around the handle and lifts it, sawing through the matted ropes gripped in his other hand.

No matter how hard he tries, they won't cut through. He grits his fuzzy teeth, hacking and slashing in vain. Accidentally, he nicks his hairline.

A bead of blood trickles down his forehead, tracing the bridge of his nose. He sits there frozen before pressing his fingers against the scratch.

Suddenly, he pries open the cut with his nails and attacks it with the razor. Pained groans fight their way between Cesar's teeth as he digs the blade into his flesh.

His scalp squelches as he peels it away, steel scraping at his skull. His cries crescendo into screams as the circle of skin tears free; syrupy blood and sinew stick to it in slick strands of gore.

He pants, choking on the hair in his throat as his arms lower to his sides. He lies down, balder than bald, and bleeds out.

Hours pass until the blood coagulates and Cesar's fingers tighten around his scalp, rigor mortis setting in.

The rubber boot of a FIGURE in a hazmat suit steps into the bathroom just beyond the red pool. A gloved hand reaches down and pries the scalp from Cesar's stony grip and places it in a plastic bag.

INT. TURKISH PLASTIC SURGERY CLINIC - DAY

Gloved hands wash, brush, and trim Cesar's scalp before it is placed on a surgical tray and wheeled into an operating room. A MIDDLE-AGED MAN lies face down on the operating table, awaiting his transplant.

END