

Chapter III

⚠️ CW ⚠️

GORE

SUICIDE

BODY HORROR

ABUSE

⚠️ CW ⚠️

Your hair is soft. It's the same as your mother's.

His hair is clipped short now, juxtaposed to yours, dawning, almost shoulder length.

I thread my hand through, and you sew up the incisors you inherited from me and my husband.

So, you're twelve going on twenty. You've got angry eyes wrathfully watching embedded in your throat. You can't see the invisible social boundaries. You choke on air, sputtering easily. It's my fault, it's your problem.

I knew when I tightened the rope around my neck, that it tightened around yours too.

You depend on me to stay alive. If I died, so would you.

I remember how desperate you were, putting me on suicide watch, mental life support, manually pumping air into my lungs, manually pumping blood into my proto-necrotic tissue.

Grabbing my hand tight, tighter than the call of the void.

Warranted, my void calls softly until the vehicles rush to and fro, pushing pallid papers (Too pale for me to read. I hate reading.)

I've never seen the inside of inpatient. (my patience easily runs out)
Stuck my patient charge's patient (as if it's not hurting you, as if the weight doesn't make your stern spine bow)

I never got to see the turn of a millennium. (Because I was dead.
Because I wasn't born yet.)

It's the small things that make me crumple. It's the small things that piss you off.

You're angry. You got it from your mother, my husband. He's angry too, when he's 19 and older.

You age out of order like him too. You're still twelve and twenty two, both curled up under my arm asleep.

I look at you a lot, the same way you look at yourself. I'm trying to figure out which parts of you were gifts from your mother, and which were curses from me.

You have my tendency towards inexpressiveness. You have my canines. You have my brow.

You carry your power in your worried jaws and your strong hands, and I'm proud of you but I can't pretend it's not my fault you had to be powerful.

It's easy to be straightforward with a document. It's easy to speak to plain paper and uncaring pixels. The paper feels real in a way that meat and flesh of this world has never. I bleed easily onto paper, my jugular milking every quart and cup from this wretched body. I stutter easily, my tongue jutting from my teeth, my teeth scoring my tongue. Our body keeps the score easily but our minds falter and fawn and flinch.

My finch-hearted protector. Oxymoron is your home, juxtaposition in your breath as the soft white puffs fill the air. My baby's breath, our first marital gift. Your skin is so delicate, your flesh easily rendered by teeth, your tendons fraying under the intense stress that shaped your pseudo-childhood, but your bones are blackbone steel.

We may have never known the strength of your spine had you not been reduced to it. When wraithful storm tore the meat from your form, you had naught but bone. You would have died if you lacked determination. So would I.

You're very passive until danger arrives. Even then, you're wonderful at de-escalation. You had to be in order to survive me I suppose.

Now that's a bitter thought. To be the storm against which others brace. I already know I'm a bittersweet man. It's still something that strikes me. It's still something that kills me. (Again.)

I know what it's like to be considered irredeemable and inherently corrupting. The pestilence of my own actions fill my tattered lungs like mustard gas and I choke. I pull your hands around me like a collar and I choke. Neither of us know freedom and I know I fear it. Like trains and angels, I am most powerful when I have no power at all.

Power, intoxicating power, the want for power has always clouded my head. There's power in being the worst possible ending. I'm not like anyone else who's ever hurt you. I'm worse. But I'm your dog, laying across your tiny lap so you can wipe your worry on my fur and bury yourself into my neck. The scars from my teeth are calcified and sharp and you know how to weaponize the burnt nerve endings.

You are a golden child and I am a proud and despotic oil baron showing you off like my favorite trophy. When the golden ichor of your

pain pours down my throat it melds all my soft spots together, my thick skull straining through the vivisection of all your little juxtapositions.

I strain. I always strain. I rip and tear against the inherent chains of my feeble and pestilent existence, I shred my tendons against the basalt walls, assault the cracks in the ceiling. All I can do is strain, and straining is the only thing that eases the counterweight of guilt and pestilent shame. I am a self made sisyphus. I am the boulder you and I strain against.

I am Prometheus reborn, and I will rip out my own liver over and over again because I desperately love unfettered humanity and the only way to express love is to suffer. So I will suffer for you.

You don't have a choice in loving me. It's a means of survival on your end. I have a choice in loving you. And I do. Every day I wake up and I choose to love you. I will build bricks out of days and a home out of years.

I will never be able to be redeemed in a way that matters to those who considered me unredeemable. This is fine. I hope my name leaves scars in their mouths, that it burns and corrodes them. I hope the same name warms your chest and soothes your ragged throat.

I want to be gilded honey casting yellow rays onto your boneless form, casting iron walls ten thousand cubits high.

I am a colorful red strain. I scare away saccharine predators with unconscious warnings of poison. You and I know I can't see where I step. I often don't know how to avoid where to step.

My husband has a lot of empathy but little compassion, I have little empathy and more compassion. I think we all know the dangers of conflating the two.

I can't feel what they feel, but I want to help. He feels what they feel, and it repulses him. That's not to say he can't help, only that he'll only do so at my request or if it will make another loved one safer.

I am a 20" wrench and he is one of those tiny screwdrivers you use for fixing glasses. He's wonderful at gentle nudges, but he can't do shit about heavy cogs, and I'd break a pair of glasses, but I can mentally manhandle problems and people who don't move easily.

You are in between in the best way. However, I do have to warn you that empathy is not kindness, and kindness does not need empathy, not only that, but a fruit tree can only feed others after it has fed itself.

I know there's nothing I can do to erase the wounds I gave you, but I can at least sew them up and slather them in ointment. I can't heal your wounds for you, but I promise I'll do my best to help.