

He just sat there

The metallic stench of blood crept up my nose as the stranger next to me took another drag of his cigarette. He seemed to be in complete equilibrium, unbothered by the splatters of red on his clothes and face spreading out onto the bench.

People passed by with absolutely mortified expressions. Many whispered and stared, one even pulled out a phone but let it sink into his pocket again after exchanging looks with the stranger. I kept staring onto the pavement in front of me, in the corner of my eye I could see him glancing at me a few times. My body was frozen in place as if made of stone, the only movement felt was the rapid beating of my heart, pulsating all the way down to my toes.

I startled as he suddenly took a sharp inhale and filled the disturbing silence with his voice; "So, how was your day?". My hands kept fidgeting on my lap. What a weird question for a person drenched in blood.

Trying to seem as calm and collected as possible but inevitably failing I squeezed out a couple of words; "It was okay, the usual. H-how about y-.", the last word stuck in my mouth, unable to get out. What a stupid question for a person drenched in blood.

He just chuckled and pulled the stained, wet shirt off his skin, "No, no that's a justified question. My day was a little messy you see.", he moved some stray hair out of his face, "Sometimes things just don't go well."

The lump in my throat kept me from temporarily asking any questions that might have aggravated him.

Cars passed by, drivers tried to avert their gazes as fast as possible upon seeing blood, bikers quickly accelerated their speed and more passerby followed the same pattern.

The man's calmness was oddly contagious, he seemed so very lost in thought but "there", it was almost fascinating. I could feel an ounce of confidence returning to me, enough to try and converse with him again.

"What is that? On...on your clothes?", he turned his face towards me and raised an eyebrow. "Blood?", he leaned back and placed his arm on the backrest, "it's not mine though.". "Who?", I muttered under my breath. "Father Martin. A...oh so holy man. Funny how unholy he was in his last moments...or his whole life for that matter.", he clenched his fists, for a second it seemed like tears were forming in his green eyes. I couldn't help but to keep mine fixated on him, trying to find any visual clue and figure out my next move. "But...", he declared, "I guess there's a special hell for me in it, too.". He almost seemed sarcastic about the whole situation but also strangely uneasy for someone who just confidently committed murder, "Don't worry about me though, I already called the cops.". I raised my head, "On yourself?!",

"Of course. I can hardly call them on Father Martin right? I'm pretty sure he can't be revived."

I took a deep breath and almost gagged at the still protruding smell, "But why?!", he took a quick glance around and smiled at the police car driving our way. His smile seemed tender but with an underlying sadness to it. Did he regret it? Who the hell is he even?

"Revenge. He killed my friend like a parasite. From the inside out. That's how he slowly planned on killing us all. If not physically, at least figuratively. From the inside...", he clenched his fists before rapidly inhaling and exhaling again, apparently trying to keep any strong emotions from breaking through.

The stranger got up as the car inched closer, leaving behind a faint, bloody imprint on the wood. I almost opened my mouth to say something as he turned around one last time, looked at me from head to toe and nodded, "You know, it's always an eye for an eye unless God is blind in favor of his preachers."

I swallowed and let my head slowly sink down to stare at the pavement in front of me again. The stranger didn't cause any commotion, instead he calmly talked to the officers, even when they took on a stronger tone. I looked up one last time as I heard the clicking sound of handcuffs and the banging of a car door.

"Like a parasite"...I recited his words in my head as if they were a prayer and finally got up.