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WARNING: May contain coarse language, violence, gore or sexual content. Reader discretion is advised.

Chapter 1 - "I Want To Die!"

The sun's rays spilled through the trees. The sound of the babbling river could be heard in the distance accompanied by the sounds of nature. The breeze brought in the smell of earth and the nearby flora. His eyes came into focus upon the ground below as he drew breath after breath into his aching chest. A faint smell of blood wafted into his crooked nostrils as he sent a dry sword strike toward the dirt path. Blood streaked off the end of the battered blade and accentuated a recent work of art.

A small band of thugs had followed him from the last city. They never learn. Not that they could when their spine is the only thing keeping their heads on.

It always starts with the side-eyes. It advances to the trailing. Then comes the, "Hand over everything if you value your life," line. Somehow or another, these types get the thought in their heads telling them, "He's on the road alone...must have something valuable on him," or some nonsense. He never could quite narrow it down, but that was the most possible reason.

"Idiots," he muttered as he stabbed the short sword into the back of his last kill.

The body gurgled out its last breath from the severed neck into the soil. The only fluid it's seen in days. A few final spasms and it finally lay still.

"Don't hunt what you can't kill," he muttered. Words only his ears could hear stated plainly, if not tinged with a hint of sarcasm. His breath caught up in his lungs, but his muscles still voiced their opinion.

"A drink from the river sounds refreshing right about now," he thought.

He quickly glanced at the trio for anything he could or would even want to take along. A few barely used swords. Perhaps there was one that could replace the flat iron stick with dull and chipped the edges he was using. It had served him well. They didn't have any armor on . There were some trinkets that might fetch some coins.

He kicked over the body at his feet and found a decent sized pouch flop over from the waist . He tossed his spent sword to the side and knelt down. He wrapped his tired fingers around the leather. There was a bit of heft to it as he yanked it free.

This one's sword was a shuffle step away. He picked it up and looked at it. At first glance, the only wear on this sword was just a few marks when they blocked his strikes. Barely noticeable considering the force he preferred to swing with. It even fit nicely in the open ended scabbard at his right hip. He pulled free from the neck a gold pendant with some unknown face engraved on it. He tucked it into his new coin purse.

The others had small pouches that carried coins barely worth dinner and a room. One had a silver ring indicating he decided to leave a wife or more behind for a quick score. He smelled of freshly baked bread. The throwing knives in his torso and back were still plenty sharp. A quick rinse and they'll be good as new.

"Not everyone is brave enough to throw that kind of easy life away," he thought.

He started to walk toward the sound of the river. A step on his right foot sent a shock up his leg. He grimaced and looked at the fresh cut on the outside arch of his little toes. The one thug's sword landed next to his foot, but he didn't think it did anything but land in the dirt.

It didn't take long to wash the wound in the flow of the clear water. The other bank was a stone's throw away so it couldn't be terribly deep. He cleaned off the knives and wiped them on an exposed part of his tunic before they returned home behind the shield strapped to his nearly useless right arm.

The ripples settled in the water from the disturbance he caused. He saw the reflection of himself. Something he couldn't recall if he'd done before.

The darker, smoky grey of his fur looked like nothing special. The much lighter grey that peeked out from the neck of the leather armor was a bit harder to see contrasted against the blue shade the water had. So many scars. A crooked nose that nearly faced to the right. There was the lone left ear standing up while its counterpart lay back against his head. The ringing in it hasn't stopped, but it hasn't affected his hearing. Then there was the massive difference in the size of his arms. Lastly, the tail. About a foot and a half until it abruptly ends. Such sights for bleeding eyes. Dull, almost gold colored saucers that only revealed the loss of life behind them.

He sneered and stepped from the water. He unbuckled the straps of the shield and it landed softly in the grass nearby. His new sword unsheathed nice and quick, as it

should. That old one caught on the way out way more than he'd liked. It was a good thing that the young one fell after the knives met their mark. When the sword decided to cooperate, it still cleaved well enough through the soft tissue of their necks. It was more of a cruel bludgeon at that point.

A tug to the rope on his shoulder sent his knapsack over his head and to the ground. He groaned as he began to kneel down next to it. His knee buckled and down he went with a "Gah!" of surprise.

A few seconds to regain his composure and he unbuckled the flap of his bag. He peered inside and found the 'whatever root grass' jar. The cloth bound to the rim with rope popped off easily with a flick of his thumb. A finger dab in the jar and a good swipe across his fresh wound would patch up nicely in a few hours.

Speaking of, a quick nap before continuing sounded amazing. But first, a drink. Perhaps a strip of the fish jerky would tide him over until he arrived at the inn of Dalry.

"Dalry," he breathed out. "First time I remembered the name of a town," he muttered as he wriggled the cloth cap back atop the jar.

It fell into his pack with a clank to signify where the small metal tankard was. He clasped his finger and thumb along the opening and hoisted it out. He shimmied over and scooped out some water. There was more than enough to satisfy his thirst. He walked as a crab back to his pack and brought out the fish. The corn husk wrapper revealed one of his favorite travel treats. It didn't beat a fresh-cooked meal, though.

As he leaned back and rested his arms along the grass, he couldn't help but sigh. The sun felt pretty good in the springtime breeze. The soft grass of the river bank made for a great pillow, too. Another sigh and he closed his eyes.

"Dalry," he sighed heartily, "A good place to die." Calm passed over him with another deep sigh. "I'll be there soon...mother," he thought.

The same blurry image entered his mind of the beautiful woman that raised him. 'Beautiful', that much he knew for sure. The detail lost with the years. Sleep claimed him in a few moments.

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"..shter. ...nisther?"

Something poked his cheek. Small, frail and smelled of sweet bread.

"MISTHER!!!"

He shot up and opened his eyes as he reached for his missing sword. Immediately he went to his side where a small dagger was hiding along the wide belt around his waist.

"HAAWD!!!" A faceless child yelped as it fell back on its rump. "Hell, Mithser, you shared me. I thik I blit my ton."

"Hmph," he grunted. "Every time your jaw moves," he muttered to the creature.

It wore a baker's clothes. A golden earth tone marked the round face with a darker, fertile earth tone backing it. Its blurry face looked irritated.

"Hell, mither, I'm sith yearth olt. My ton is hyoo an I can helfyt," it said as it shimmied to its knees.

"Hmph," he grunted.

Sure enough, when the child allowed the trap to shut, its tongue mushed out of the sides of its muzzle. In typical kid fashion, one ear was folded over on itself. The other stood straight up to a rounded point. Probably a Shepherd of sorts based on color.

He loosed some cracks from a few joints in his wrist, elbow and neck.

"Where'd you learn to curse? Raised in a pub?" He opined shrewdly, words drenched in a bit of condescension.

As if repenting its sins, both hands covered its loose lips. "I'm sawly. Don'd dell mly plapla," it said in sincere remorse.

He sheathed his sword and heft the pack back around his shoulder. The heathen watched in what could be no less than amazement as he moved around. He drained the last swallow of water in the tankard before putting it in the knapsack and buckling it. He moved on his knees over and propped the shield against his useless right arm.

The child's hands slowly dropped from its mouth. With a mix of sadness and curiosity it began, "Mihtser...what happen...."

"What's it matter?" He shouted at the pudgling. He thought, "A fierce stare ought to send this waterskin running."

Sharp eyes trained on the nose of the child. A few moments passed, but the thing wouldn't leave. He saw slow movement out of his peripheral as he grabbed the first buckle of the shield.

"This brave child," he thought curtly, trailing the words off into nothingness.

The shield was being difficult staying put.

"I can help." The creature politely said, almost asking.

"Don't need it," he said and tried to cinch the first buckle.

The shield teetered on the point and nearly fell over. The child caught it and corrected the object. A quick sneer and the child's face looked the other way, but didn't falter in its newfound task. With both buckles in place and a quick rock back and forth ensured it was fastened tight.

"Thanks," he grumbled as politely as he could stomach.

"Mmm. Yort Leclum," the child replied with pride and kindness. "My mame ish Shohkolo."

"Didn't ask," he stated plainly.

"Youl nod vely nithe, smisher."

His knees popped as he hoisted his frame straight. He leaned back and popped several spots in his back.

The child got to its feet and took a step back. Its little hands balled up at its sides as it looked up at the man. It squeaked, but it was definitely an attempt at growling.

He looked down at the child. He didn't realise it before, but now there was no doubt. He could see this child's eyes clear as crystal. Everything else but the ear and the tongue were still hazy. He squinted at the sight and the right side of his lip curled up.

He looked back up and began to walk over into the forest toward the town. "Go home."

"Jerp!" The child cried and ran ahead of him along the river.

The town still wasn't in sight, but it seemed the river bent away from his destination. Though there was still daylight, it wouldn't be for long. It was still a bit warm out and the breeze had died.

His hip voiced its complaint as he moved. A shot of liquor sounded like a good remedy. Maybe more. A bit of pain was still nagging in his foot. Nothing he couldn't handle.

Under the trees was a good way to cool down on the rest of his walk. It was a sight to see with how the light shined through the leaves and branches. There were sights like this along his journey he never could stop and appreciate. No, he didn't appreciate any of them. This was different. This could be the last thing of nature's beauty he laid eyes on. The rest of the walk was uneventful. Until...

"There's a strange smell of smoke," he thought. "Perhaps a bad log in the baker's oven. No. A baker doesn't make bread this late. A home stove, perhaps?"

As he neared the edge of the forest, it became clear.

Black smoke. White smoke. Flames flickering far in the distance.

"This town is being razed?" He thought as he continued forward. "Somebody pissed someone off."

The commotion hadn't reached this side of town yet, it seemed. A bug was making its way toward him along the road. No. Just...away. And quickly. It was that damn child.

"Damn kid," he thought in disgust.

"Whisper?! Mlishper!!!" The thing yelled, head back and tears streaming from his blood-soaked face as he child-ran. "Helf, Lip-fer!"

The child slammed into his knee almost causing it to buckle.

"GAH! WHAT!!!" He yelled.

"Bad-duysh gamne an' nu-hallst-arm ithall buddy an palpa ishellin an..."

"Calm down!" He yelled and looked ahead.

Still quiet here. There was a newer looking house on the path to the right. A small pile of wood large enough for the boy to hide behind was stacked on the side parallel to the road.

"Look," he said and knelt to face the child. "Over there," he said calmly and pointed at a pile of wood. "Go hide behind there. If you see danger, run for the trees. Understand."

The child nodded as it smashed tears from his eyes. The child lowered his hands. Sparkling hazel eyes with a jade explosion out from the pupil met his.

"Those eyes," he thought. Had he ever looked at another person's eyes before? Now wasn't the time for that.

"Save them, mister," the child whimpered.

He stood and pulled the rope of his pack over his head. "Sure." He looked at the path into town. "One good deed," he muttered and began to jog along the path.

"Don't die, mister," he heard the child plead behind him.

He chuckled with both the rising thrill and the irony of the child's words as he freed his pack from his hand and drew his sword. A faint floral scent caught his nose as he passed that first house. He wasn't sure why, but he rather enjoyed it. It made him feel warm and relaxed.

He cleared his head of that nonsense. He noticed all doors along this front were closed and no light from the windows even with the sun nearly down. Screams of battle and pleading cries rang through the air. More smoke. More fire. The first sign of danger was running near.

"A villager? Must be. Looks like a butcher's cleaver," he thought.

A figure ran close behind the first with a torch and sword. It wore the garb of known beast man haters.

"You're mine, human" he muttered.

He ran at the figure with a smile. The villager ran by and steel was met as he swiped down and to the right causing the figure's sword to slap down into the dirt. He arched his sword up and back to the left. His sword sliced at - and broke - the neck of his assailant. He stutter-stepped to turn and he was almost back at full speed.

One figure loomed over another in the town square with a sword being raised. A few more steps, a thrust and his blade pierced through leather, cloth and flesh just under the ribs. He kicked and pulled free the sword. He glanced to the left. He could hear clapping of hooves to the right.

A fire was starting near the next figure. Callus foot pads met dirt and fine gravel as his sword squeezed nicely into the side of this fool.

"Can't look left if that's the arm you hold the torch," he thought as his eyes and smile quivered in delight.

THWIP!

"Akk!" He cried as something found his right shoulder. "I don't need that one!" He declared and turned to the figure on the horse.

He quickly released his hand from the sword and reached behind the shield. He flicked his wrist as a knife found the feral horse's front leg. The horse screamed in pain as it reared back with the armored rider. He quickly turned and retrieved his sword from the pile of flesh. When he turned back, the rider was on the ground gasping for air. The horse landed and the leg gave way. It crumpled to the dirt kicking up dust.

"I'll find him later," he thought as another figure ran his way from the left.

Another figure was just behind the first with a torch and sword. He ran to intercept as the horse tried to stand but couldn't. It laid there to die with it not being able to walk.

The first figure heaved a massive object on a pole his way. He dug his toes in to stop but it was too late. He barely got the shield up in time for a battle maul to strike it.

"FU-," he cried, the force kicking the shield back into his chest.

Leaning back to stop and the force of the blow caused him to lose his footing. He fell to the ground with quite a bit of force.

"GraAH!" He heard as another blow struck his shield.

The force pushed any air in his lungs out. He calmed his mind and looked at the blurry figures stepping his way. The hammer began to swing back as he let go of the sword and pulled out the last throwing knife. This one was a long shot but he heaved with all he had. It must have worked because the figure fell back. Part of the shield fell into his view.

"The bastard broke it nearly in half!" He thought as the chunk fell to the dirt.

A useless thought as a sword found his stomach.

"Gkk!" His breathless mouth loosed.

He found his sword and swung up in an arc. A warm spray of blood covered his face and bare thigh as he took off the new attacker's arm..

"GAHHHHH!" The figure shrieked.

He focused and sat up with the sword plunging into the one arm's chest. He pulled his sword free and made it to his knees.

"Puh. Puh. Mmm-puh. M-puH. HhhhuuuuHH...whoooo. Huuuuuuuh. Hooooowuh." His breath found his lungs at last.

A glint close by. He swung his left arm up and to the right as best he could in this position. More heat sprayed his face as he stabbed his sword up under the arm of the attacker's sword arm. He drew back his sword and stood as fast as his body would allow with it still lacking air.

Darkness filled his eyes as his whole body tingled. His vision returned and he met the side of the person's neck with his blade and twisted. Blood sprayed his whole body this time.

"GAH! HAH! NOW I'M PISSED! WHO'S N-AH" He yelled as he felt the rage build until a sword slashed his back.

The sword cut open his back on the good side and abruptly ended his battle cry. He twisted his body with his sword in tow and released a head from its confines.

"OVER HERE, YOU IMBECILES!!!" The armored figure shouted.

He quickly turned and the armored figure was headed to the right - where he had entered the village.

"Not today," he muttered and gave chase.

He rounded the corner and continued to run before he realised the figure was gone.

He did a quick area check with his ears. He heard double footfalls behind. Quiet footfalls to the left. The armored man was to the right. He slowed to a stop and turned just in time.

"HAAAAH!" The man in armor yelled and swung a long sword down at him.

He could only shrug his body backward and step back. The blade landed with a thud against the bicep of his bad arm. The top buckle sprang free of his arm and the shield bobbed around. He lobbed his sword at the figure to little effect against the armored side.

He carried the recoil of the sword and tossed it to his left. This allowed his free hand to tug the dagger free from his waist belt. He heaved his body toward the figure with the quiet steps. The dagger found the chest of the figure. The figure dropped its weapon and fell to the ground. It didn't look like one of the other attackers.

"Unimportant," he thought.

He narrowly turned away from a swing from the left but it still dug into the flesh of his good arm just below the shoulder. The feeling of familiarity to his right arm enraged him more as he swung his right foot up into the chest of the attacker to send it back. He swung the broken shield as best he could at head level to the one on his left. A *CRACK!* followed by a grunt sent the figure reeling.

Another slash came in from the front. He turned his shield arm down but couldn't move fast enough. The sword slashed his stomach open.

Warmth spilled into his undergarments. He stepped back and allowed himself to fall backwards. His back met the ground as he continued through a rotation and landed in a kneel. He found his sword and took a breath.

"DIE YOU FUCKING DOG!!!" The armored one spat.

He clenched his sword and punched up and to the left at the incoming blow. The base of a blade met between his middle knuckles, but his fist met the chainmail fingers inside of the plated gauntlets.

"FAH!" The armored one yelled and dropped the blade.

He glanced right in time to find a bolt in his chest.

"NNNAAHHH!!" He belted out as he dashed toward the small crossbow wielder and took the hand clean off.

The figure shrieked as he took a quick step back and to the right with his right foot as the armored figure moved in his left eye.

He shifted his weight and tried to slow the armored attacker with a kick to the torso. The kick was slightly slowed by a small blade entering his thigh from the attacker's left hand. It was just enough, though. The large blade that came from overhead in the attacker's right hand meant for his head had now changed trajectory. The tip of the blade didn't cut deep, but it sliced into the top of his exposed collar bone. If it were swung with both hands as intended, the damage would have been more severe.

"RRRRRAAAHHHH!" He roared and swung the kicking leg back and around to his left.

He pivoted on his left foot and pushed off with his right. His sword arm twisted and swung at the handleless one. The face exploded in blood as the blade went through the first half of the mouth and caught on the other side against the inner jaw. A cough from the figure sent a spray of warm blood against his face.

He glanced to the left. A glint came his way and he swayed his body to the right. He couldn't move in time. The blade meant for his head instead traveled along the side of his head and across the length of his muzzle. Hot blood filled his mouth and cool air brushed against his now bleeding and exposed gum.

The attacker stepped in and tried a weak backhand. His slower shield arm stopped the blade near his forearm while he heaved his sword in a short attack to the armored head. An ear-piercing "KLANG!" caved in the side of the figure's helmet and sent it to the ground.

"PlaH!" He spit a mouthful of blood and readied his sword.

The remaining figure on his right came in with a heavy side swipe. He flicked his wrist up and deflected the sword enough to stop a fatal blow. The blade, instead, met with his solid trapezius muscle.

He flicked his wrist and grabbed the sword handle in the reverse position. He forced the blade up and struck the attacker's lower jaw just under the chin. A full arm flex sent the blade in the soft tissue between the chin arches and into the attacker's neck. As the blade fell with the body, he loosened his fingers and regained a proper grip on the handle, then pulled it free.

"FUCKING...!!!" The now helmet-less one yelled as an armored gauntlet met his muzzle and tore more of the dangling flesh.

In a retort, he swung his head to the assailant. The crown of his head met the attacker's nose, flattening it down against the top lip. He gaped his jaw and lunged. His fangs sank into the attacker's throat as he wrenched his jaw closed.

He loosened his grip and his sword clanged on the ground to free his claws. Those claws tore at the figure's face exposing the skull and muscle. He put his full effort into sending his weak claws to rend the flesh of the scalp. Teeth clenched together and flesh tore sending the being to the ground.

He smelled and listened for more attackers as he breathed heavily through his wheezing nose.

"*Crackle-crackle-crackle.*" Fire continued burning in the distance.

"Waaah-haaah-haaah!" Sobs of pain and loss

"*Fuh-whee. Fuh-whee. Fuh-whee.*" His crooked nose that hadn't drawn a quiet breath in years.

"Is it finally over," he thought. "Now...finally...it's time to di-..."

"M-m-mister," came that familiar voice.

He glanced over, his mannerisms still in battle mode as he glared and raised his fist. "*Fuh-whee. Fuh-whee. Fuuuuh.....wheeee,*" came his reply.

The child - with horror in those eyes - drew close with hands clenched in fists at the chest. It was carrying his knapsack.

"Foo!" He spit the flesh free of his teeth to the ground.

"Is...ishit..." the child began and shook his head with eyes clenched. Those eyes on that child met his own again. "Is...it...safe?" It asked timidly.

He looked down and removed the dagger from his thigh. It lazily fell from his throbbing hand. Next came the bolt in his chest. It took a little effort, but it came free.

"I neesh your help, schild," he said and tossed the bolt aside. He turned and pointed to his back at the remaining bolt. "Grab on and phull as hard ash you can."

Those horrified eyes came closer. The child's hands quaked and it looked as if its legs would give at any step. Those hands continued to quiver as it gently set down the pack.

He turned and knelt to his knees. He felt the child grasp the bolt with both hands. Those hands continued to tremble as the child grunted.

"Playsh your phoot on my back. Pull ash hard ash you can," he said encouragingly.

"Uhhnnn," the child grunted and pulled while pushing with the foot. "Gah!" The child exclaimed as the bolt came free.

He could hear the child fall to the ground. He turned to the child. A grimace was on the child's face as it rubbed its back side.

"Thank you, So-," he began. "I remembered?" He thought in disbelief. "Sah-koh-roh...Socorro," he finished.

"Mmm...mmm-hmm," the child replied. Those eyes were still filled with horror, yet slightly less so.

"Go on, now. Get home," he said as he motioned toward the town square.

Those horror-filled eyes turned to concern. Tears began to well up. Suddenly the boy's arms were around him.

"Thankoo misher foh eblythint. Thang blue," the boy sobbed into the man's bleeding chest.

"Go now," he spoke with comfort. "Ish dime foh medoo go...ish dime...", he tried speaking but it became hard with the dangling flesh on the left side of his muzzle.

Soccoro began to giggle causing small tremors in his torso. "We tall alite now, mithther," the child said as it held him.

"Huh," he muttered and pressed Socorro back. "Run homf now, Shocorro," he said.

The boy stepped back and looked up with those pretty eyes. Tears and a smile of relief covered the boy's face. "Whas your mame, ister?" Socorro inquired as only a child could.

He sheathed his sword and brought his pack up around his shoulder. He stood up and turned to the village exit.

"I don't haff a name," the man stated plainly. "If you musht, call me Vfiktor."

An alias, but the truth is: His name has long passed his memory.

Adrenaline was beginning to leave him. He had to hurry out of here. The pain was setting in and soon he wouldn't have the blood to move.

"Bye-bye...Viktor," the boy said innocently.

"Yeah," he said and began to drag his dying body down the path.

He heard Socorro patter away.

"Perhaps by the river," he thought until he noticed a light flicker on in the house at the end of the road. "Shhhiiiiit," he hissed and clenched the sword handle.

Bits of adrenaline were returning. How much he had left was uncertain. The gurgling in his chest being any indicator, it wasn't much longer. He shuffled as quick as he could to the house.

"Perhaps there was another attacker and they started another fire," he thought as he slowed near the window. "Perhaps a sneak made its way here and plotted ambush? Maybe a villager. Only one way to find out."

The curtains were closed, but a silhouette of a being with a really small sword, perhaps a long dagger, in hand took small steps away from the door.

He quietly stepped in front of the door and planted his feet. He slowly unsheathed and clenched the sword tight and readied for a parry - holding it so the handle was near his right hip and the tip was by his left shoulder.

"Mmmmph," he grunted and sent his right foot into the door with a loud *THUD*.

The door violently fell back with a loud *CLACK* against the wood floor.

"WHAAAAH!" A female screamed as he crossed the threshold and into the home.

"Wait...female?" He thought.

The female reeled and fell back against the far wall. The blade was still in hand but was at her side. She composed herself and pointed the knife with both hands at the intruder - him.

"Holding the blade like that?" He thought as it wasn't typical of a fighter. "So blurry. My vision is failing. It's almost time."

"G-g-g-GET B-BACK!" She shouted, the end of the blade was creating mirror images of itself.

He slowly stepped atop the broken door and glanced around. It seemed she was alone based on smell and sound. That floral smell warmed his chest and relaxed him. It made him feel strange. He squinted his eyes, straining to focus.

"I...I said...I SAID GET BACK, YOU BASTARD!!!" She shouted again, audibly quaking in fear.

His vision started to clear. A long dagger was between them.

"For protection purposes, most likely," he thought.

She was only wearing a towel.

"She is a civilian," he thought with relief. "This must be her home."

Her dark, chestnut brown hair draped sloppily along the back and sides with a large chunk opposite the part on the right covering her left eye. She had similar coloring to Socorro, but her ears had developed points. She was mature.

"What the hell does that matter right now? Idiot. LEAVE!" He fought in his head against the sight of her and her smell.

"GEEK!" She shrieked as she flashed the dagger and her eyes toward the noise his shield made - having fallen from his right arm. "GAH!" She shrieked again, eyes and dagger to the sword that he hadn't realised fell to his left. The dagger and her eyes pointed back at him.

Those eyes. It was hard to tell, but it looked like chocolate rings against the white and black highlighted by a honey or, maybe caramel starburst from the iris. Those eyes conveyed horror and shock, her body trembled and the knife looked more like a spatula with how much the blade was flipping.

He peeled off the pack and let it fall to the floor. He never took his eyes off her.

"Her face...isn't blurry. SHE isn't blurry. And those eyes," he thought. "Beautiful," unconsciously escaped his lips.

"What?" She asked in disbelief. "GET OUT OR I'LL KILL YOU!" She screamed with quivering lips.

Her jaw, her body and the knife all violently shook to where it was almost hypnotic.

"Fuh-bl-bl-bl...whee-gur-gur-gur...fuh-bl-bl-bl...whee-glu-glu-glu." It was the sound of his nose mixed with the fluid growing in his chest.

His breathing slowed. His eyes felt heavy. He began to feel numb. It was getting cold.

"I'm...I'm glad you're safe," he whispered and tried to smile. He felt the blood leaking down his jaw and through his front teeth. He could feel the fluid in his chest nearing his throat.

"What the...what? Just leave!" She whimpered, emphasising the last word. "Get OUT OF MY HOUSE, YOU THUG!!!" She yelled, her voice losing its vigor.

"Shhit!" He breathed out as his vision darkened.

"What?" She questioned, now in disbelief.

"*Fuh...glu-gurgle-gurgle...KAF!*" His lungs couldn't take anymore and ejected a shower of red as he fell to his knees with his arms dropping to his sides.

"Kill me...please," he begged the fading image as blood spilled through his teeth and down his jaw. "*I...KAF!*" He started but coughed more blood up. "I want to die," he pleaded and fell forward with a thud only a dead body could make. "I'm ready. I'm so tired," he breathed out as his eyes closed and he curled his lip into a smile.

"Maybe whatever there is out there will have mercy on me. Maybe little Socorro and his family are safe. Maybe this girl, this lady, will lead a happy, healthy life...all because of what I did today," he thought.

He wasn't sure if he was conscious or dreaming, but it seemed he was being moved. He heard footsteps and that lady breathing. He heard her grunt and it felt like he landed on a bed.

"She smells nice and her hands are soft," he thought as he felt his heart slow and breathing labored. "Kind, like mother."

There was the sound of footsteps and other movement when someone suddenly shouted, "Shari! Are you okay!"

"I'm fine, daddy," he heard her say as she quickly walked away.

"What's with all this blood!?"

"Someone kicked in the door, but he dropped his things and ran off...daddy your arm!"

"It's nothing. Val, Nir and Socorro are fine. Everyone else is okay," the man said. His voice turned to sound worried. "Thankfully there aren't many dead or wounded. Just...just all the hou-..."

[Shari](#) belongs to [Celeste](#)