

Bloodlust

The flowers looked lovely this time of year, mum always worked hard to make sure they survived the winter. The water from the tap started to run, the gentle splash in the sink calmed my heartbeat before my hand was tugged and a harsh sting spread across my palm.

“We have a guest coming over tonight.” I looked back at my mother then, careful to avoid the bloody water pooling in the sink, we rarely had guests.

“Who is it?”

“Just an old friend of mine.” I caught the grimace on her face, the way her mouth screwed up slightly and her eye twitched. Clearly she wasn’t too happy to be having this friend of hers round but I wouldn’t push her.

“I’m not feeling too well, I might have to sit this one out.” I didn’t feel like pretending tonight.

“I know, honey, but go and take a nap, I’m sure you’ll feel better later.” Her smile was forced, so forced that I thought her face might crack. I nodded as she reached for a bandage, wrapping it tightly around my palm. When she was finished I grabbed my hand back and nodded as I left for my bedroom, cradling my injured hand all the way.

As I lay on my bed, I couldn’t help but to pick at the loose threads of the bandage, picking until the bandage started to unravel. It was too tight and I could feel the throbbing of my palm as it was suffocated by the material, it made my stomach turn. I wanted to unwrap the bandage, my palm needed to breathe, but I stopped myself knowing it would just start to gush again. My stomach turned once again.

I couldn’t help but to speculate about the guest my mother had invited over. She never invited anyone over, this was our little haven and she would rather surround it in a ring of fire than let anyone inside. My father graced us with a surprise visit not too long ago, obviously without consulting his wife first, he often did things like that, and so he was quickly ushered away by my mother, but not before his wife had tracked him down and started dragging him away by his ear.

My parents never had the best relationship, my mother could barely tolerate my father. I couldn’t blame her though, he was an entitled narcissist who thought the world revolved around him, which I suppose in some aspects it did but I wouldn’t acknowledge that.

When my father was appointed King he believed it was by some divine right and that he was the chosen one, that certainly didn’t help his already large ego. His brothers weren’t much different. My mum hated them all actually.

When I opened my eyes again, it was dark outside. The white bandage that had been wrapped around my palm had started to turn crimson and the throbbing was back. My throat went dry and my vision blurred.

I sat up and stretched my back, relieving the tension in my spine before swinging my legs over and resting my feet on the cold floorboards of my bedroom. As I watched my toes wiggle, it was then that I recognised voices from downstairs. One was my mothers, sounding tense and agitated, and the other was a gravelly voice, obviously a man but I couldn’t place it.

I listened for a few more minutes, prolonging the inevitable of introducing myself to whoever it was my mother trusted enough to invite in. From what I could hear, it sounded more like a hushed argument, like they were trying to keep their voices quiet, probably for my sake.

As I was preparing myself to leave the comfort of my bed, my bedroom door started to push open. I hadn't heard anyone on the stairs, my mum probably thought I was still asleep.

"I'm coming down now, mum, just let me put some shoes on." I announced as I walked over to my desk to pick up the jacket that I had previously thrown over the back of the chair. I swung the jacket round and looped my arms through the sleeves, untucking my hair from the collar afterwards.

Hands landed on my waist. I jumped and quickly spun, my back hitting the chair and rattling the desk behind me. A man towered over me, I recognised him but it had been a while since I'd last seen him. He hadn't changed much though, the murderous glint was ever present in his eyes and his motionless stature was still the same, almost like he wasn't alive at all.

"What are you doing in here?" My voice shook as I tried to press myself further into the desk. His only response was to reach towards me once again. I slapped his hand away and took a step to the side, grabbing the scissors that were lying on my desk as I did so.

"I'm here for you." A shiver ran down my spine, from my head to my toes, a cold hand brushed along my back. I clutched the scissors tighter between my fist, trying my hardest to ignore the explosion of pain on my palm as the blades of the scissors dug into my hand.

My father had warned us about him many years ago, but we paid no notice to him, knowing he was a compulsive liar at the best of times. Why had she invited him over to dinner when she hated him so much?

"I'm not going anywhere with you." My voice shook, revealing the nerves I was trying so hard to hide. It was then that I noticed the smear of red on his collar, my heartrate rocketed and my breathing quickened. He had been downstairs with my mother and I hadn't heard a single thing since he opened my bedroom door. I felt queasy, my stomach lurched and my head became foggy

"That's not something you get to decide."

He grabbed my arm and my vision blurred, my ears rang, and my breath hitched. My hand throbbed as it jolted with the movement of the scissors as I lifted my arm to plunge them into his chest. His white shirt immediately turned crimson as the blood pooled and soaked his shirt.

Our eyes met, he looked at me quizzically, almost as if he expected me to hurt him. He didn't take his eyes off of mine, not until I pulled the scissors from his chest. He looked down and assessed the damage before he looked back at me and smiled.

He staggered back and his grip let up momentarily. I bolted to my door but I tripped and my heart stopped, knowing he'd catch me. I scrambled to reach the door handle, with the scissors still clutched in my fist and ripped open the door, headed straight for the staircase.

I didn't hear any movement behind me as I rushed into the kitchen, only to see my mother hunched over the sink, her hand gushing with blood.

"What did he do?" My voice was breathy but she managed to hear me and turned off the tap to face me, still looking at her hand as she addressed me.

“Nothing, a glass smashed in the sink, it caught my hand is all. It’s nothing to be worried about, just don’t look at it, okay? Your father sent him, I’m sorry honey.” She lifted her head with a smile and moved her hand behind her back, to hide the bloody rag.

I thought I’d feel sick, I thought my stomach would turn, I thought my hands would shake. They didn’t.

Her gasp echoed throughout the kitchen as she rushed to my side and grabbed my shoulders.

“Percy, what happened to you? Where is he? He said he was going to wake you up, what did he do?” Her words tumbled from her mouth as she assessed my body for injury. She ran her hands down my arms, stopping at my hand and softly taking the scissors from my grip. They were still dripping.

I finally took the time to look down at myself, the dress that was once a pale pink was now sprayed with crimson almost like an abstract piece of artwork.

I wasn’t queasy.

“There was so much blood, mum.” I whispered into the room, replaying the moment the blades sank into his skin.

“Why? What happened? Don’t pass out on me now.” Her hands were shaky as she took my face into her hands, worried the blood may have been too much for me.

“She won’t. I saw it in her eyes. She was meant to be Queen. Right, Persephone?” As he stood on the staircase with a glint in his eyes, I realised that what I had been feeling all these years wasn’t fear, it was lust. Bloodlust.

But I’d be damned if I went anywhere with Hades.

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