

Nice Enough

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Darkness.

A bang.

A flash.

The pain.

Mother always said, “Don’t talk to strangers.”

I should have listened.

It was a pleasant afternoon, not too hot or cold. The sun and some clouds were out but a breeze lingered throughout the day. I don’t like breezes when the sun is out; they give me the chills. I was just taking a stroll through town, minding my own business, when a man came out of nowhere, blocking my path. He was wearing a long black overcoat and his hands were stuffed in his pockets. Even though he was slightly hunched over, I could tell that he was a tall fellow. Well, he was taller than I am. Then again, I’m pretty short for my age standing at a measly 5’ 3” so nearly everyone’s taller than I am. I couldn’t see what color his hair was because of a black fedora perched on his head but he had nice enough eyes. That much I could see.

“Pardon me, miss.” He said with a slight smile.

“Don’t worry about it. It was my fault; I wasn’t looking where I was going.”

The man tilted his head to the side, like he was studying me. I wasn’t really much to look at: brown hair, brown eyes, wearing a white sundress and sandals. His staring was making me

uncomfortable. “You look like a nice young lady.”

I took two steps back. “T-Thank you...?” Before I could get away from this creepy guy, he took out a business card from his pocket and with a leather gloved hand offered it to me. There was a name and address printed on it in black ink.

“Meet me here at 6:00 pm.”

And without waiting for an answer, he brushed past me, walking on like nothing happened.

The few hours I had before the designated meeting time were filled with mental arguments. A voice which sounded a lot like Mother’s screamed at me, begged me not to go, that I would regret it if I went. But an even louder voice that reminded me of my devil-may-care friend Casey said, “Go for it! What’s the worst that could happen?”

She’s right. I mean, what could possibly happen?

At about a quarter to six, I found myself walking down an alley leading to the address. It was in a not so much traveled part of town. In fact, I didn’t know anybody lived down here. It had rained a while ago so I could hear each footfall loud and clear. That’s weird. Each time I take a step, I can hear a second splash somewhere behind me a split second later. Maybe I’m just hearing things. I mean, I didn’t eat dinner after all. There it goes again! I don’t see anyone though.... If I can just find this damn house I can get out of this creepy alleyway.

Oh, here it is.

A few choice words come to mind to describe this place: old, uninhabited, and dirty. It wasn’t much to look at. From what I

could see, everything had a thin coat of dust. A living room that had a chair and side table, a kitchen with a rickety table and chair and an old iron stove in the corner, and a long hallway. The building was barely lit, just a few meager low wattage bulbs suspended from the ceiling. I called out the name printed on the card. No response. As I began to walk down the hall, I felt a chill, like someone had opened the door. But I locked it, I'm positive. I heard Mother yelling at me to get out and run and never look back but still, Casey's voice was just a tiny bit louder.

Nothing on these walls. Absolutely nothing. I had to keep a hand on the wall to make sure I wouldn't bump into anything. I could feel the dust collecting onto my hand. Yuck. Eventually I touched a doorknob. It was cold. When I opened the door, the musty smell only added to my suspicions. No one has been in here for quite some time. This particular room didn't even have a light bulb, only a window to let the light in. I padded my way towards it, wiping my grimy hand on my dress. There was a table illuminated by the light and on it was a candle and some matches. Using a several matches before finding one that would keep its flame for a bit and almost burning myself doing it, I managed to light the candle.

I looked out the window. It was dark outside; I wonder how long I've been out for. You know, the funny thing is, I haven't heard a sound since I got here. No cars, no barking dogs, or people talking, only the ones in my head. Oh God, I think I saw something move. Maybe it's just my reflection or just the candle. I can't tell. If there is someone out there, I should probably put this thing out before something or someone notices. I turn away from the window and almost screamed.

It was the man from before with the nice enough eyes.

He still had that slight smile on his face but it looked dangerous and downright scary in the candlelight. Even more dangerous was the gun in his hand. “Didn’t Mommy ever tell you not to talk to strangers?” He chuckled. It sent shivers down my spine; I was breathing heavily now. “Especially if they seem nice enough. They might want to hurt you.” Another bone chilling chuckle. I could feel hot tears trailing down my face. “And for no good reason too.” His voice petered out to a whisper.

He blew out the candle.

Darkness.

A bang.

A flash.

The pain.

The end.