

The Prey

By Caley Shiota

It's 6:15 am and I can see the sun starting to peak over the mountains. The train will be here in 15 minutes and once I get on, it should be a smooth ride from there. Washington has been a pleasure but with the recent news of a group of people gone this past week, my paranoia and anxiety is at its peak.

The train arrives and I'm the last to get on. As I look around for a seat, I could feel a pair of eyes on me but I can't blame them. I'm the only one with four large suitcases shuffling around trying to find a spot. Once I settle, the train takes off and it's 6:51 am. The stewardess offers water, coffee or tea and I settle for tea. As I hold it up to my face, I blow it gently to cool the edge a bit and the warmth fogs the window. The first sip is hot as it touches my lips but coats my mouth with a mellow herbal sweetness. Looking out the window, the sun was in full view now. I leaned against the window, feeling the cool touch compete with the emerging warmth from the ever rising sun. I give in to the comfort and drift off to sleep.

When I wake up, I'm tied to a chair and judging by the pounding headache, sore wrists and ankles, I might've been tied up for a bit. I had never been drugged before so aside from the kidnapping, that was the best sleep I've ever had. As my eyes slowly adjusted to the dim room, I could make out a few large figures. There was a woman sitting in a chair across from me, just barely out of the light. Behind her was an extremely worn out mattress with some kind of large figure under a battered stained sheet. The light source was a single bulb that flicked every few seconds but had a consistent hum that filled the silence.

I can feel myself sobering up more and that's when the smell hits me. It was raw, putrid and reeked of decomposition. There's nothing unfamiliar about the smell of decaying flesh; an uncanny smell that you just know isn't an animal.

"You're going to bring him back," she finally speaks.

My eyes dart towards her voice and finally get a good look at my capturer. Dirty tangled ginger hair with red bloodshot eyes that matched. Her pupils were a forest surrounded by a fire and I could feel her heat rising.

"You don't want this, trust me" I muttered.

She stands and nearly lunges at me, grabbing my shoulders in a tight grip.

"You're going to bring him back, I don't care if I have to slowly cut you to pieces."

I swing my head down, wondering how I could possibly find my way out of this. I don't know what she knows and with me completely tied up, I don't have any advantage.

She pulls a pocket knife out of her jacket and holds the blade against my left thumb. I gazed downward and for a split second, I let out a look of relief before realizing she caught it.

"What's with the *face*? Think a thumb isn't that bad?" she snaps at me.

She moves the knife to my wrist and looks at me awaiting for some kind of response. When I don't give her one, she grunts in frustration, raises the knife and plunges it into my wrist. I let out a blood curdling scream, closing my eyes in hopes I'd wake up back on the train.

When I open my eyes, I look straight to my left arm and see the disgusting jagged stump in place of where my hand was.

"Had enough? Will you bring him back now?" she says between breaths, "Or am I going to have to cut off more?"

I shake my head in refusal, “I don’t know what you're talking about, I swear, I don’t know anything about bringing anyone back to life.”

She screams in frustration, throwing the knife past me and kicks my chair down. My head hits the ground and all I hear is ringing. I can barely see her shadow moving around in the background when suddenly she comes into focus. She has an ax in her hand and desperation in her eyes. This woman is insane.

“You’re useless then-” a loud cracking crunch followed by a muffled thud.

I’m still on the floor, still waiting for the ringing to dissipate.

“Wha... what,” she stuttered, “why didn’t you scream?”

My ears finally clear up and I try to adjust myself a bit.

“What are you?” she whispers.

She grabs my chair and lifts me back upright. I look down and I can finally see the damage that she did to my right leg. In an attempt to chop off my lower leg, she missed and cut it halfway, exposing the bone and flesh hanging by just a tendon. Clearly exhausted, she walks over to the mattress and lays herself down, carefully avoiding the giant lump, presumably a body, under the sheet.

“I don’t know what you thought this would accomplish,” I sigh, “you think you know everything”.

I stand up from my chair, the rope ties falling off from my wrists and ankles. She sits up in shock, scooting back on the mattress until her back is against the wall.

“What the fuck just happened?? I broke your leg, you shouldn’t be able to..” her voice trailed off and she watched my hand drop her pocket knife. I bend over to grab my hand and it reattaches without a scar.

“What are you?”

My jaw peels down my torso as I walk towards her, her screams drowned out by my oozing saliva. A couple crunches and a guttural gulp filled the air.

“I’m not the prey” I answer.