

Doppelganger

It was during the cursed year of 1948.

When I went to bed that night, I was not feeling well. My forehead hurt, and I was feeling terrible nauseas. I did not remember what happened that night, as the effects of alcohol were still 'stimulating' my body.

-Shannon came... -We had a party with all the guys... -We drank a lot. -Those were the only thoughts I could barely picture, as I was falling into a profound sleep.

I awoke at 2: 30 PM.

The lights in my room were still on. I feared dark places... I used to say I feared what was 'in' those places. And I was not completely sure I did not smoke herb that night, so I was just being cautious.

The blades of the fan were making a disturbing clanking sound, and the binds of the windows danced and hit against the shutter now and then.

I sat on my bed, and took my hands to my forehead. It was still aching awfully. As I stared at the floor planks of my bedroom, the blood lingering in my veins brought a beating sound to my head. It was almost unbearable.

I stood up, and felt the sweat coming down my spine. As the creaking sound of my footsteps followed me to the bathroom, I could see the whole apartment room covered in a crimson light, coming from the outside.

The bathroom was the only room still covered in white-- or grey, as the tiles on the wall had already lost their shine.

I looked myself at the small mirror...

It was then that the signs of my sickness began to unveil.

I was starting to have hallucinations again. This time, I was not seeing myself in the mirror, but instead there was a big black shadow, resembling a human shape, with two brilliant deep scarlet circles where the eyes should be.

-¡God! -I shouted, and staggered back to my bedroom.

I sat on the bed once more, and tried to soothe.

A picture of Shannon, my ex girlfriend was placed next to the bedside lamp. I stared at it for minutes.

Shannon was a beautiful blond girl with a dazzling smile.

We broke the day just before the party, but I remembered she accepted to come... as a 'friend'.

-What worries you, Joseph? -Shannon asked in a very sweet way.

-It's none of your...

...Business? -She said.

I was being rude. But that former love soon turned into a feeling of anger, rancour.

She looked for my sight, and gazed at me.

-I want to help you, Joseph.

I stopped looking at the picture. I lied down in the bed once more.

The clinging sound of the fan was now beginning to scare me.

My eyes began to close...

I woke up by the sound of falling rain. I turn to the small clock on the table: 5:30 PM

I felt I was now sober, but my forehead was still in pain. "And what is that awful Smell!?" –A putrid odour was covering the air.

-“You are sleepy head.” –Someone said suddenly.

I got up hastily from the bed, as I heard that disturbing grave voice. My blood froze for an instant. Right in front of me was a man, sat on the sofa next to the television. He was wearing a raincoat and holding a pole in his right hand. He seemed familiar somehow...

-We finally met each other. –He muttered while facing a sinister smile.

-Who are you?! –I was very anxious. “Was it another hallucination?” –I wondered.

-I’ve been observing you for a while. I did not want to disturb your sleep.

-Wha-- What are you talking about?!

The man stood up, and took a deep breath. Then he said:

-I am William Jerry Thompson, I’m a detective. I am in charge of... an investigation, which might involve you in some way.

As I heard the word ‘detective’ I felt both relief and fear. Relief of him being a real person, and fear of something I might have done the day before and did not remember...

I sat on the right side of the bed and picked some cigarettes from the night table.

For a while I remained silent.

-Does your ‘investigation’ gives you permission of entering private property, inspector? I started to wonder where I put the matches.

-The situation requires... That we take these kind of measures, Mr. Rogers.

-This is truly wonderful. What kind of ‘situation’ if I may ask? –I found the matches in one of my pockets. –How does it involves ‘me’ anyway?

The man took a few steps and stared at the window. It was now closed, and a heavy rain was seen through the dusted glass.

-A person you knew well Mr. Rogers... died yesterday.

I put it aside my cigarette and lit it off.

-What?!

The detective started walking towards me, and his shadow begun to draw a black monster on the bedroom wall. He stopped right in front of me with a photograph in his hand.

I opened my eyes widely; I could not believe it...

There it was the face of Shannon, bearing cuts all over her skin, with an extreme expression of agony. She was dead, murdered.

-Oh my God! –And I turned away, facing the floor. “What happened to her?!”

-I am sorry.

I frowned at the detective, and trying to hide my tears, I said:

-How did this happen?

-Unfortunately, we do not possess much information. –And he turned to watch through the window once more.

-All we know... Is that she had gone to a friend’s party and...

...Let me guess; ‘never came back’. –I interrupted in an almost ironic way. -This can’t be true.

Thompson stood silent for a moment. And so did I.

My current state was not helping at all. I was sober from the alcohol indeed, but at this point I had no doubt I’ve taken drugs or smoke some herbs the day before. The ‘party’ we made was of course, no more than a reunion for all us university guys to take these things. Josh, Morgan, Kenny, Sarah, and me. Of course, Shannon was among us too.

But there was something else: This creepy “detective” was the weird guy that always wandered near the apartment building, watching us entering. He suspected from the very beginning... And to think, that Shannon was going to invite him in the day of the party...

-Do you consume drugs...? Mr. Rogers?

-Yes –I replied without hesitation.

I feared that more questions were about to put me in big trouble. To my surprise however, the detective suddenly said:

-I need to take care of some paper work now.

I just nodded, still thinking.

-We’ll contact you if we find any more relevant information.

“What? Is he not going to ask me anything else?”

-Don’t go out from the city. –He said to me in front of the room’s door.

“What a cliché” I muttered.

-Excuse me?

-Oh, it’s nothing. I’d be a good boy. –Ironically I answered.

And so he walked down the stairs of the apartment building. I then heard the noise of the rusty door of the entrance, opening and closing slowly.

I still could feel a terrible smell coming from the kitchen. This was the moment to find what it was.

But I was not feeling well. This time something bigger was bothering me.

Since the moment I had seen the picture of Shannon, I started to imagine what could have happened to her. Malevolent visions I had.

“I was drunk... and had taken drugs...” –Tormented thoughts began to rise inside me.

“I was angry... with her”

“Blood... murder... sin”

It was then that I started to feel dizzy, and felt to the floor.

“Am I going to pass out again?”

I stood up in the best way I could, and staggered into the kitchen.

“I must... remember. Need... hint”

Ignoring the putrid smell that was now closer, I opened the tap, and washed my face fiercely.

Silently I stood for minutes...

My heart was beating fast. The visions were not stopping.

It was a curse, becoming stronger and stronger.

I grabbed the fridge’s handle, and tried to maintain balance, my legs were shaking.

“That smell...” –I murmured while slowly opening the fridge’s door.

Without warning, a corpse fell down and spread its arms widely.

My face turned completely pale.

A woman’s corpse was there, right in front of me, covered in dried blood.

It was Shannon...

I thought I was going to puke right in front of that vision, but the sentiment of sadness was the only thing now overtaking me.

Nothing was now left to doubt...

I was the one that killed Shannon the day before. I surrendered to my anger and hate; I took her life with my own hands.

I dreamt for four days the same condemn thing: Shannon stabbed endless times by my hands. It was a continual torment for a sinner like me.

“How could I?!... How could I?!”

“She wanted to help me”

“She was always so sweet and kind...”

“Why”

“What I would tell the others?”

I heard her voice:

-Why... did you kill me? Why you?

A week passed, and I decided to surrender myself to the police.

I was tired of running... running from myself. My mad addictions were not going to help me either;

I was dying in a river of sorrow and guilt.

Without telling anyone about my actions, I left to the police station.

-Please wait here. We'll be right with you –The officer said and turned away.

And she made me sit in a comfortable couch next to a small crystal table.

I tried to put the image of Shannon aside, but the feelings of horror and blame brought me once and again to the unkind reality.

I started biting my nails. “How's prison like?” –My ironic thoughts.

Nervously I looked at my surroundings. My sight stopped at a couple newspaper that were placed the table, which I could not resist picking up. I feared what I was about to read in them...

I picked up one. One of the main articles read: “Mysterious disappearance. Young woman presumable in her twentieths, blond hair and white complexion...”

-Dis... Disappearance?

There was a clear picture of Shannon next to the article; it was indeed “her case”.

I closed the newspaper and looked at the date.

-Last week's edition? But...

I was quite surprised at the fact that not even the word ‘murder’ appeared written there.

I remembered the ‘other’ picture of Shannon...

“What about that detective? Mr. Thompson?...” –I thought. “Is he keeping the information for himself or something?”

I turned the page but nothing else caught my attention, so I immediately picked up the other newspaper and checked the date:

-Today's edition. Let's see...

Among all other monotonous and boring pieces of writing, my eyebrows frown at a picture in one particular article.

“Criminal still fugitive.” “...” “Takes disturbing pictures of his victims...” “...” “His multiple personalities make him one of the most dangerous and fearsome individuals of all times.”

And at the bottom, was a picture of the same man that appeared in my apartment room. The very same, creepy guy.

Mr. “William Jerry Thompson”