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The Rabbit Died - PART THREE

Warning: this thread contains scenes involving body horror, death, gore, gun violence, reproductive abuse, and vomit.

You have no fucking clue where you are. Patient #5 possesses no sense of direction, and honestly, neither do you. Your dad never bothered teaching you to drive and your mom, well, she didn't get the chance.

After passing the same gas station for the fourth time, you and Patient #5 agree to park. She cuts the engine while you climb out of the passenger's side. A stretch, and scratch, and you're ready to do--what? Something? Ask for directions? Scream? Talk to #5?

"I'm going into the gas station," you say.

Patient #5 fidgets with the car keys. "I'll wait here, I guess. With the car. Alone."

You salute her and head into the station. She should be fine on her own in the car. She can twitch to the radio, or cry.

Many different smells hit you when you enter; pizza, hotdogs, cheap gas station burritos stuffed with beef and cheese. The cashier sits behind the counter, watching a screaming loud television, detached. He toys with a half-empty bottle of Coke.

All that grease, all that cheese, all that meat, it all smells delicious. You wipe the drool from your mouth and beeline straight to the warmers. You're pregnant, your baby needs to eat. You need to eat.

A guy steps up beside you. "You look ravenous."

"Believe it," you say, rubbing your belly. It's rounder than it was yesterday, or maybe it's the same and you only noticed now. "I'm fucking starving."

The guy laughs and his smile rips the floor out from under you. His front tooth is chipped and his mouth, his damn mouth. A scar runs from the left corner, cutting a line from his lips to his ear. "I'd say. Never seen anyone get so riled up over gas station trash."

"Yeah."

Your cheeks burn as you go back to checking out the hotdogs. They roll slowly on the warmer, skins glistening as they cook. Jalapeno dogs, cheese dogs, jumbo dogs, veggie dogs, they all look fantastic.

The guy grabs the tongs, "Want one?"

You stuff your hand into your pockets to find that you have exactly...zero dollars. Nothing, nada, a big fat goose egg. You are broke. Wait, how have you been paying for gas? Have you been paying for gas? You will have to ask Patient #5 when you get back to the car.

"I, ah, I can't afford one," you tell the guy. Your stomach rumbles and you try not to think about the baby inside, starving along with you. Patient #5 and her egg must be hungry, too.

He snags the fattest hot dog of the bunch and stuffs it into a bun. "Here, my treat."

"Alright, thanks!" You duck your head, cough, "Um, thanks a lot."

He passes you the hotdog and you cradle it in your hands like a sacred relic. Warm bun, hot meat, you can't wait to take a bite. You look to the warmer and then to him. "Can I get another?"

"Whatever you want."

Nodding your thanks, you fix a hotdog for Patient #5. Your new friend serves himself, licking relish from his fingers after. His tongue is scarred at the tip. He flashes you a grin when he catches your stare, and motions towards the aisles. "Anything else?"

--In National news, the city of Warren, Wisconsin is under quarantine--"

You cock your head, listening. You try to place the name, your lazy bastard of a memory refusing to lift a finger to help. City names fall under directions, and you suck at directions.

--Police were called to the scene of what reports claim to be a double homicide at a privately run clinic--"

Clinic, that word has your full attention. You go to the counter and place the dogs down. The cashier, gaze locked on the TV set, turns up the volume.

The news anchor reads from the prompter, his co-anchor silent beside him. "From there, things took a grim turn. Haha, a grimmer turn."

You rub at your wristband.

"First responders, upon arriving at the scene," the co-anchor leans in, "started to cry."

"That's right," the anchor says, "Uncontrollable crying. Witnesses describe it as hysterical, loud wailing. Those affected cry for hours, only stopping when they faint from exhaustion."

Back to the co-anchor, "The affected officers and EMTs were rushed to--"

"What's up?" your new friend joins you at the counter. The cashier waves him quiet, and he scoffs.

--From there, the crying spread. Warren's Mayor--"

You listen, finger hooked in your medical wristband, tugging, tugging, tugging. The crying spread from the hospital to the neighboring buildings, from there to the streets, and from there, fuck. And the worst of it? The absolute worst?

"The tears appear to be made of milk!"

The co-anchor chuckles, "Now I've heard of crying over spilled milk, but crying milk? That's something!"

The anchor doesn't laugh and neither do you.

"Thank god I'm a vegan," the cashier says.

"What does that have to do with this?" your new friend asks.

Shrugging, the cashier says, "No one cries almond milk."

"You're fucking spare parts, friend."

"What do you mean by--hey!" The cashier swerves around in his chair to lean across the counter. He squints at your wristband. "What's that?"

Indecision locks you tight as a vice. You can't move, you want to move, you want to do something, anything. The cashier grabs you by the wrist and yanks your arm out straight. You hyperventilate, feel dizzy. He is going to see where you came from, he is going to know.

"Hazel--" the cashier starts to read the fine print of your wristband. His brow furrows. "How do you pronounce that--?"

You hear a click.

Your new friend draws a gun from under his leather jacket and sticks it in the cashier's eye. The cashier gapes, you scream, soundless. Your friend, scarred face blank as a shark's, speaks, "It's pronounced bang."

You faint as he pulls the trigger.

END PART THREE.

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