



## HOW WAS IT FOR YOU?

3,208 Words

*This little story was originated by my writing partner, Michael Cope. He was a fan of the Bret Easten Ellis book — American Psycho.*

*Like with every story we wrote as a partnership, one of us would originate a story and then the other would add to it and it would pass back and forth like a tennis match until it was a completed project.*

*This creative process was exciting and stimulating.*

*The story has its tongue very firmly in its cheek. Essentially written as a black horror comedy, we entered it two consecutive years in a writing competition.*

*The first year the story was highly praised and the reader recognised the original source novel for its inspiration.*

*The second year, a different reader called it a nasty and gratuitous piece of work.*

*This is a typical example of the subjective nature of art.*

## HOW WAS IT FOR YOU?

Cray liked to think he had chosen his victims with great care. This one had almost chosen *him*. It excited him to think that she unknowingly flirted with death.

For the past month she had caught the same morning train to Birmingham. At first, she paid him no attention but then slowly she began to notice him. They shared subtle glances and smiles and gradually she started to court him with her body and her eyes. He knew all the signs from his collection of well-thumbed manuals on body language, all memorised now, down to every last coffee stain and thumb-print. Cray considered himself an expert on the subtle micro gesture, an expression, a twitch or some seemingly inconsequential hand movement, touching the face or a change of posture. All these things were like a subconscious language of their own with a whole lexicon of meaning.

He decided she was next.

She would be his fifth.

Never impulsive, Cray was content to watch and wait, wait and watch. His victims were going nowhere. As they trudged through their banal tedious lives, he liked to think of them as dead already. Walking corpses just waiting for the right time.

And the right time didn't depend on *the voices in his head* or *the full moon* or any of that psychological crap they churned out in all the books on the subject. For Cray it depended on circumstances and logistics. He killed simply because he enjoyed it. He enjoyed the pure artistry of the planning, the stalking and, of course, the final dispatch. He had a pride in his work. He liked to

think of it as his special hobby. His previous diversions, train spotting, stamp collecting and bird watching, had lacked the excitement and imagination provided by his latest hobby but the patience employed in those previous pastimes still came in very handy.

And now he had another flower to press. Another butterfly for his killing jar.

Stoke station in winter was a vision of Hell frozen over. He had liked it better the way it was before the Queen's visit, when the ticket office had been low-ceilinged, dirty and drab. But the wind still howled between the platforms, big sharp December teeth.

She was there as usual, wrapped in a big yellow coat that looked expensive. The coat offered the perfect contrast to her long dark hair that flowed out from under the little black pillbox hat. She looked like she'd stepped out of the pages of Vogue magazine. He was spellbound by her.

Standing now only a few yards from him, she turned her head casually, her lips slightly parted, her eyes seemingly unfocused, and she looked at him and smiled. Before now he had wondered if she wasn't just a little short-sighted, so that she couldn't make out exactly what he looked like, but now he was sure.

It was him she was looking at. It was him she wanted.

The thought brought a sheen of sweat to his forehead. In his black sports holdall were four three foot lengths of Kevlar weave mountaineering cable, a small pair of wire-cutters, a Pifco mini-burner with adjustable flame, a hunting knife he'd bought in London, and his particular favourite, a Swiss Army knife. He liked its compact and changeable nature although, regrettably, this did present him with problems when trying to remove blood stains from the nooks and crannies of the twenty five functional accessories. He was loathe to soak it in soapy water. The last one had rusted badly and he had had to throw it away. The hunting knife was all he needed really, but the Swiss

Army knife did satisfy his penchant for gadgets to some extent and he always enjoyed the challenge of finding something for each of the twenty five implements to do. The corkscrew was particularly good for eyes and the small scissors coped well with soft tissue but sadly failed with fingers. For those he'd once tried the serrated saw blade. It worked okay but was time consuming and the effort always left him with cramp in his hands. Unfortunately, finding a surgical use for the compass did pose a problem and the implement meant to remove stones from horses hooves just confounded him.

He'd stuffed all these things into the big end pocket of the bag, his work equipment and his sandwiches were in the centre pocket.

Although he had been using a black sports holdall for the past two years, this one was new but looked exactly the same as the previous one. He congratulated himself on his subterfuge. He thought that a different bag would have aroused suspicion. He was forced to get rid of the old bag after putting Cathy Crawford's head in it to take to the canal. The smell had adhered to the inside of the bag, getting on his sandwiches and making him feel sick. Still, it had briefly amused him that the manufacturer's huge red letters on the side of the bag cheerfully proclaimed its contents to would-be detectives everywhere

HEAD.

He smiled to himself, a reflex action, but looking up he saw the woman smiling back.

Bingo.

Their train arrived. When she got on, he followed her, sitting in the next row of seats but on the opposite side so that he could still watch her. All the way to Birmingham they exchanged eye contact, fake casual glances and those sweeping movements of the eye that pretend to be looking

around at everything else other than the subject. She was like a fish wriggling on the end of his line. It would soon be time to wind her in.

The train went into the tunnel before Birmingham New Street and Cray quickly wrote a note at the top of his Guardian saying: *'I'd love to meet you. I'll be in Gregory's Wine Bar in Hanley tonight at nine. My name is Nigel'*.

Of course, his name wasn't Nigel. Nigel was a shit name, Farage and Mansell notwithstanding. But it was a name that said I'm harmless. He'd done a web search on how many serial killers were named Nigel and there hadn't been any. Other contenders had been Kevin, which surprisingly had seen several serial killers with that name. Cyril seemed too dated and, his other option, Gordon, still reminded him of the Jilted John song back in the late seventies with the famous lyric, *Gordon is a moron*.

He got up as the train was stopping and put the paper on her table with his message clearly visible.

He smiled.

She smiled.

He got off the train and went to the university. Tonight, he would sit in Gregory's Wine Bar and nurse a bottle of beer until she did or did not turn up. He had been amused at something he'd read in the paper. Apparently, tonight there was to be a full moon.

The police were way behind him. Without solid evidence and legitimate motives, they were like blind men stumbling around. Cray tried to be economical with his kills; six in two years. The bodies still hadn't been recovered. Most were in pieces, bits in Westport Lake, well weighted, or burned and then the bones buried deep. He always pulled the teeth. He hadn't been studying for

three years to be a dentist not to know how the cops loved trying to identify victim's from dental records.

In two years, he would be a qualified dentist, and he was good, fucking good. He already knew where his surgery was going to be. An area ripe for the picking. And within a few short years he would have a computer records and a brain full of his patient's conversations about their lives and friends and families.

He was confident that he could kill forever.

His thoughts drifted back to his half empty bottle of beer. The time was quarter past nine and he had resigned himself to the fact that she wasn't going to show up. He finished his beer and was about to leave when she breezed into the bar twenty minutes late. He had never waited more than ten minutes for any woman. When he saw her, he decided she was well worth the wait. Tonight, she wore an elasticated mini skirt that hugged her shapely hips, black high heels that accentuated the sleek curvature of her calves. Her top was either part of a teddy or a one-piece swimming costume, the black shiny material stretched tight over her chest and showing a nice yet subtle bit of cleavage. Under the skirt she opted for shiny lycra tights. She wore more make up than she did on the train, but it only added to her beauty. She left her hair free. It hung down between the sculptured perfection of her shoulder blades like an ebony waterfall.

Her name was Jacqueline, but like every Jacqueline he had ever known she hated the full-length version of her name. They chatted and laughed and had a few drinks. She was drinking strong cider. Cane chose non-alcoholic lager. He hated the taste but preferred to remain in control whilst appearing to be a seasoned drinker.

“What do you do in Birmingham?” she asked.

“I’m training to be a dentist at the university,” he said. It didn’t matter she knew these details. After tonight, she wouldn’t be able to tell anyone.

“That’s a coincidence,” she said. “I’m doing fashion there.”

He wasn’t surprised by the revelation. Her dress sense was exceptional.

“I’m in a block of flats near here,” she told him. “Why don’t you come back for coffee. You’ve had too much to drink to drive home. You can stay the night.”

“Are you sure?” he said, intentionally slushing his words slightly.

“Yes, of course.”

“I’ll just grab my bag from the car,” he said.

They made their way from the pub carpark to her flat. Cray slipped his baseball cap on and kept his head low to hide his identity from any prying security cams. Nobody was about as they entered the ground floor lobby.

He would disable her here quickly and efficiently in the lift. He had been taking Karate classes twice a week for the past seven years. Then he’d hide her amongst the bins outside while he fetched his car.

Things didn't quite go to plan.

The lifts were out.

“Chase me,” she said, running up the first flight of stairs. “If you catch me you can do anything you want to me.”

He didn't want to be a spoilsport and tell her that he fully intended to do so anyway, so he played the game.

He caught her at her door, or did she *let him* catch her? Despite his relentless training, he was breathless. She was sweating, her top clinging to her breasts, her nipples hard beneath the thin material. She kissed him. Inexplicably, he was aroused by her; her smell, animal and alien; her taste, saliva like a drug; the flow of her hair in his fingers, its impossibly complex shadows and shades. It was the first time he had ever been aroused in the presence of a conscious live body and it both surprised and delighted him.

The opportunity was too good to waste, he decided on a new approach, and it only served to excite him even more. He would kill her in the throes of his own orgasm. His mind raced with the possibilities.

Once through the door, she kicked it shut behind her and kissed him again.

“I’m going to use the little girl’s room,” she whispered, seductively. “Why don’t you make yourself comfortable.” She winked suggestively and disappeared into the bathroom.

Cray went to the bedroom and quickly concealed his cut-throat razor under one of the pillows. The thought of using it always gave him a little shiver of anticipation. It had an aesthetic and tactile appeal, the combination of which he had never found in any other blade, except perhaps his samurai sword, but that was just too unwieldy for this kind of work. The razor was hand made, the handle carved from two pieces of white ivory and inlaid with tiny gold rivets. He loved the way it sliced the flesh and left a pure and clean incision, no ragged ends to the skin. Quite literally like a knife through butter.

While she was still in the bathroom, he stripped naked and slowly traced out the Kata movements of his karate discipline like an elaborate dance. A few agile moves, spinning in slow motion, kick and punch, block, twist, feint, kick and punch. He caught sight of himself in a long

dress mirror, his muscles bunched under the skin, the ridges on his stomach, and allowed himself the luxury of conceit.

She came out of the bathroom naked. Her lithe body glistened with moisture. He noticed how dark her nipples were and something else; she was bare down there, no hair, clean shaven. It was like a wound, the swollen mounds of skin with the soft pink flesh between the lips. The sight was similar in many ways to that very first cut made on a supple body. He felt the ripple of excitement surge through his body.

He stepped up close to her, feeling her nipples hard against his chest. Flowing his hand up her back ,he pulled her hair, tilting her head back, exposing her throat. He kissed her neck and darted his tongue up to her ear lobes. She moaned softly. He twisted her back onto the bed. Her legs sprang open and curled around his waist.

“Fuck me,” she whispered, her breath shuddering against his cheek.

He jammed a pillow under her arse and found her tight and wet. Their fingers intertwined and he forced her arms underneath her, forcing her spine to arch, tilting her breasts up. He bit them making her grunt with a little sweet pain. He entered her firmly, grinding hard against her gyrating hips, her breaths coming fast and abrasive. She likes pain, he thought, there's more where that came from, much more.

*Not yet.*

Her breaths became grunts, became cries. She freed her pinioned arms and seized his shoulders, twisting her hips, throwing him sideways on to the bed, and then onto his back, still holding him inside of her. Then she was up and mounting him, riding him like a horny pony, her fingers tracing the hard lines of his stomach, her hair flailing round her head like medusa coils.

*Soon.*

She reached down behind herself and cupped his balls, stroking them. He gasped and felt the orgasm rise in him.

*Soon.*

He reached back and under the pillow as the nails of her free hand raked his chest in the fever of it. He slid the razor from its home as she began to draw it out of him, gritting his teeth as he began to empty himself into her.

The first spasm came. The pleasure of release and with it the flash of the blade in the dark, going for the sweet flesh of her throat, thirsty for the hot pulse beneath, a ferrous ejaculation.

She caught his wrist effortlessly with her eyes still closed. She held him there despite his futile efforts to free himself from her grasp. He was surprised at the immense strength at her disposal. Still she bucked on him, drawing the second spasm from him and with his ecstasy came searing pain as she twisted his hand violently. He felt the bones in his forearm splinter and erupt from his flesh. He screamed, his balls still tight with orgasm, as she really began to draw it from him. His sac imploded as her fingernails, now like sharp razors, punctured the tissue-thin skin ripping the testicles away from his body. He tried to pull out of her, but it felt like his penis was held in a vice.

In the fever of his agony, he saw her begin to change. Long bony spines burst from her back like an alien spawn. Her eyes became red and swollen, jaws contorting and extending, salivating; skin blistering and cracking to reveal gnarled flesh and exposed muscle as the metamorphose twisted her beauty into this hideous inhuman monster.

“What...” he gasped. “...are you?”

"I am retribution," she snarled.

Her hairless vagina began to change, the bare lips peeling back to reveal rows of sharp gnashing incisors. The mouth bit into his penis, tearing it from its roots like a weed from the soil. The crushing pain strangled the screams in his throat, his tears gathered in his eyes like shallow pools full of despair.

And all the time the voracious vaginal-mouth fed on his sweet-meat, pulling his guts inside her. His bladder burst and shredded, liquefying his kidneys and liver. And still he screamed, the cage of the spell trapping his soul in the body's pain. His intestines unravelled and snapped the oesophagus from his throat. His belly crumpled. His skin pulled tight onto his ribs and the bones splintered as his lungs collapsed. His mouth still screamed silently as she kissed him, her lips spreading and absorbing his flesh, her saliva melting his face, her reptile tongue in search of the soft food of his mind, piercing the roof of his mouth, sucking his brains out fast and pulsing and hot, his ears whistling with the passage of air, his eyes resisting the pressure only briefly before popping out of their sockets to be consumed.

When it was done, she let his soul go screaming all the way to Hell.

She dismounted and stretched, patting her smooth flat belly, his essence very quickly absorbed. She dug out an irritating piece of gristle caught between her teeth and belched once, bringing up his eyes, spitting them on the carpet. She didn't like eyes.

She went to the window and opened the curtains, reflecting on her tally so far. Four of them, all serial killers. She liked them, liked the taste of their pain and fear somehow heightened by their propensity to cause it in others.

Despite being a succubus spit from the bowels of Hell, she liked to think of herself as something of a feminist, to use the mortal term, in her crusade. And no-one could deny that they were all deserving of their fate. She looked down at Cray and wondered at the eternity of pain awaiting him in that other place.

“Karma’s a bitch,” she told the flaccid sack of leftovers.

She thought that she might travel to America soon. There were even more of Cray's kind there. She studied herself in the dress mirror as the bony spines slipped effortlessly back beneath her flesh leaving no scars and the last of the cracks in her face healed, the skin now smooth and flawless. She threw back her long black hair, admiring the mortal shell she occupied. She lit a cigarette, another mortal affectation.

She blew a plume of smoke towards the ceiling before enquiring of the desiccated corpse, “How was it for you?”

She smiled to herself, pleased that he hadn't been any different from the other three in the one thing that she had found linked them all.

Tiny cocks.