

SCFE セフィクラ KURU

> BY BLAKE PLANTY DESIGN BY DEV <

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>>> GOD, LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT THIS LITTLE RAT IN MY SPLEEN, THE VAPID CUM-SUCKING BOY WHO HAS DROPPED DEAD AT MY FEET AT THE SLIGHTEST WHIFF OF MY COLD-STARE ARRIVAL. MY BOY—J.—IS PASSED OUT FROM EXHAUSTION. HE'S THE GREAT MASTERMIND BEHIND DRAGGING US OUT TO THE CONVENTION, ON THIS ICY SATURDAY EVENING, WHEN WE'D ALL RATHER BE INSIDE. THE RIGOR MORTIS HAS ALREADY SET IN WHEN I CROUCH DOWN, SLAP HIM ACROSS THE FACE A FEW TIMES, AND BEG HIM TO WAKE UP.

WE'RE AT THE CON ENTRANCE, ONE OF THE BIGGEST ONES ON THIS COAST. WE ARE BOTH DRESSED UP AS HEROIC, HORNY PROTAGONISTS WITH BIG SWORDS AND EVEN SMALLER DICKS. SINCE WE'RE OUTSIDE, I DUMP A BOTTLE OF WATER ON HIS FACE. IT DOES THE TRICK. I KICK HIM AGAIN. J. WHINES AND ROLLS AROUND AND FINALLY WOBBLER BACK ON HIS FEET. HE LOVES IT WHEN I HURT HIM ON PURPOSE. FUCKING MASOCHIST.

"OH MAN. I LOST IT. I PASSED OUT," HE GASPS. LIKE A FISH BEING PREMATURELY REELED IN.

WE'RE GOING AS A BIG BLOND-HAIR, BIG SWORD CARRYING TWUNK AND LONG SILVER-HAIR DEPRESSED ONE-WINGED ANGEL. I'M A PHARMACOLOGICAL/BIO-WEAPON/EMO WITH MOMMY ISSUES WITH OR WITHOUT THE WIG ANYWAYS, THOUGH. THERE'S A PARTY WE'VE BOTH COMMITTED TO CRASHING BECAUSE OF A MUTUAL FRIEND, SO I KICK J. AGAIN AND TELL HIM TO FUCKING HURRY.

THE HOTEL ROOM IS PRETTY SMALL. A GIRL OPENS THE DOOR FOR US. SHE'S SKINNY, AND ALMOST SIX-FOOT TALL. WE'RE STILL IN COSTUME. EVERYONE ELSE IS, TOO.

MY BOY MAKES HIMSELF COMFORTABLE ON THE QUEEN BED, STARTS UNDRESSING, AND DELICATELY BEGINS STROKING THE BUSTER SWORD SUGGESTIVELY BEFORE I BEG HIM TO PLEASE PUT THAT EMBARRASSING SHIT AWAY. HIS CHEST SCARS ARE VISIBLE AND HE'S ACTIVELY MAKING HIMSELF LOOK LIKE MEAT IN FRONT OF PROFESSIONALS. HE DOES THIS EVERY DAMN TIME AND I HATE IT.

THE GIRL'S NAME IS PENELOPE. SHE SAYS I LOOK EPIC.

THE REST OF THE CONVENTION IS A WORLD APART: TOO MANY BODIES, TOO MANY VOICES, AND THE BATHROOM SMELLS AWFUL. WE NEVER GOT TO DO CONS AS TEENS, BUT NOW IN OUR TWENTIES IT FEELS ALMOST SAD AND TOO MUCH. I DON'T KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO ALL THOSE YEARS IN-BETWEEN TRANSITION AND NOW, WHETHER OR NOT WE LOVED BEING BLISSFULLY NAIVE OR FULLY LIVING OUR FINAL FANTASIES. I DON'T RECOGNIZE ANY OF THE STRANGERS THAT START WALKING IN. SOON ENOUGH, THERE'S FIFTEEN OF US CRAMMED INSIDE A ONE-BEDROOM ROOM WITH NO CLEAR WAY OUT. J. AND I ARE SQUEEZED TOGETHER, HIP TO HIP, UNABLE TO BREATHE UNTIL THE LIGHTS COME UP.

PENELOPE PULLS OUT A PIECE OF PAPER, ASKS ALL THE OTHER GUESTS TO RAISE THEIR RIGHT HAND, AND REPEAT A MANTRA AFTER HER:

*> I PROMISE I WILL ONLY
DO EVIL.
THERE IS A DARK MOON
WAITING SO LONG,
SO DARK,
FOR MY SWEET
COMRADE'S RETURN. <*

A BALD MAN TURNS TO ME AND GIVES ME HIS HAND. I FREAK OUT, SLAP HIM, AND TELL HIM TO PISS OFF.

PENELOPE STARTS READING MORE: RESPONSIBILITIES, EXPECTATIONS, LOVE AND RESPECT FOR OUR FELLOW COMRADES, BUT NONE OF THAT MATTERS TO ME. BY THE TIME SHE GETS TO THE SECOND PAGE, MY BOY AND I ARE ALREADY BORED OUT OF OUR MOTHERFUCKING MINDS. NOW THERE'S CANDLES. NOW THERE'S ARMBANDS. I'M SO SICK OF IT. IT'S AS EASY AT TAKING OUT MY LIGHTER, PICKING OUT A BEDSHEET, AND DIALING UP THE FLAME TO ELEVEN.

THE FIRE ALARM WAILS ONCE THE SMOKE BEGINS CRAWLING LIKE

A DARK TENDRIL UP THE CEILING— FORCING EVERYONE TO SQUIRM OUT, GETTING BOTTLENECKED OUT THE DOOR WHILE J. AND I WATCH THE FLAMES DEVOUR THE SCENERY. THEY LICK, LICK, LICK, THE COTTONS, THE DIRTY HOTEL COTTONS.

I ASK J. IF HE WANTS TO DO SOMETHING ELSE. HE RECOMMENDS WE JUMP IN FRONT OF A TRAIN. I SHRUG AND SAY OKAY, THAT SOUNDS LIKE A PLAN.

"YOU REALLY DIDN'T NEED TO DO THAT," J. FINALLY TELLS ME AFTER WE WALK PAST THE CROWD OF CONFUSED COSPLAYERS AND RANDOS IN THE HOTEL LOBBY. "IT WAS KINDA MEAN."

WE WALK ALL THE WAY DOWN SUMMER STREET TO SOUTH STATION. THERE ISN'T ANYTHING SEXY OR COOL ABOUT WASTING THE BEST YEARS OF YOUR LIFE ON ROLEPLAY AND DRESSING UP. I STARED AT COMPUTER SCREENS HALF MY LIFE AND ALL IT GAVE ME WAS CHRONIC DEPRESSION AND A SELF-ENDORSED ENDOCRINE PROBLEM. I ASK J. IF HE REALLY WANTS TO GO BACK TO THE CON FLOOR. HIS OBVIOUS ANSWER IS OF COURSE NOT.

"IT WASN'T MEAN. THEY WERE FREAKS," I TELL J. HE NARROWS HIS BROWS, BITES HIS LIPS.

"OKAY," HE ANSWERS. "YEAH, YOU'RE RIGHT."

EVERYONE IS STARING AT ME, THE WEIRD FAGGOT DRESSED UP AS AN EMO ANGEL WITH A SWORD WHILE WE BUY TICKETS AT THE BOOTH. THE SPEAKER WARNS US TO STAND BACK AWAY FROM THE YELLOW LINE. MY BOY SQUIRMS BESIDE ME, TRIES TO TANGLE UP HIS HAND IN MINE, BUT I PUSH HIM AWAY. HE SIGHS. PENELOPE IS TEXTING ME, ASKING WHERE THE HELL DID WE GO. SHE SAYS WE HAVE TO COME BACK AND FINISH UP OUR ORIENTATION. WHAT ORIENTATION, I ASK J. AND J. SHAKES HIS HEAD AND SAYS HE HAS NO CLUE EITHER. I SHOW THE MESSAGE TO HIM AND HE SNATCHES THE PHONE.

A HUSBAND AND WIFE STARE AT US, AWKWARDLY SQUEEZING PAST MY HIDEOUSLY OVERSIZED WINGS.

> WELL IF UR SO WORRIED ABT US THEN WHY DID U LET ALL THOSE OTHER CREEPS IN?? THAT IS UNREALISTIC AND U SHOULD BE ASHAMED. OFC WE NEEDED A FIRE. IM GONNA BLOCK YOUR DISCORD CHANNEL BITCH! FUCK U —J <

OUR TRAIN ARRIVES WITHOUT FANFARE. I DON'T KNOW HOW TO BREAK IT TO J. THAT NO ONE WANTS BOYTRANNY ASS IN ANY DAY AND AGE, EVEN IF WE ARE DRESSED LIKE THE HOTTEST ANIMES KNOWN TO MAN. HE STARTS PLAYING WITH MY LIGHTER AFTER WE BUCKLE OURSELVES AND GIVE THE NICE MAN OUR TICKETS.

"WHERE ARE WE GOING?" J ASKS ME.

"I DON'T KNOW."

"WHAT ABOUT MY PLACE?"

"THEN WE BOUGHT THE WRONG TICKETS, DUMBASS."

"OH," HE REALIZES. HE HOLDS HIS THOUGHT AND CROSSES HIS ARMS. "OH."

"DID YOU REALLY WANT TO GO HOME, ANYWAYS?" I ASK HIM.

"NOT REALLY."

"I CAN JUST HIT YOU SOME MORE OUTSIDE SOME DELI."

"I'M NOT MEAT."

"WE NEED TO GET THIS CRAP OFF US SOMEHOW."

"LET'S JUST THROW IT IN SOME TRASH," J. SUGGESTS.

WE GET OFF AT THE NEXT STOP. SOME SMALL TOWN WE HAVE NO IDEA ABOUT. ON THE WAY OUT, WE CRUMPLE OUR WIGS AND STRIP

OFF THE NONESSENTIAL ITEMS OF CLOTHING AND SHOVE THEM INTO AN ALUMINUM CAN. WE HOLD ON TO THE PROPS BECAUSE SWORDS ARE FUCKING COOL.

THERE'S A PUBLIC BATHROOM NEARBY, SO WE BOTH HUDDLE INSIDE BY THE SINKS. WITHOUT THINKING, MY BOY SPLASHES SOME WATER ON HIS FACE, RUBS HIS EYES, AND SMUDGES EYELINER ALL OVER HIMSELF. I USE A NAPKIN AND WIPE HIS CHEEK AND TELL HIM WE GOTTA FIND A PLACE TO CRASH TONIGHT.

BUT IT'S ALREADY GETTING SO DARK AND I HAVE TO HONESTLY TELL J. THAT I THINK I FORGOT MY PILLS AND I FEEL FUNNY AND REALLY NEED TO JUST FIND A ROOM. BUT WE KEEP STANDING IN FRONT OF THE MIRRORS, THE DIRTY SMUDGED MIRRORS FULL OF SPIT AND SEMEN AND SHIT, AT OUR MESSY HAIR AND THE BAGS UNDER OUR EYES. WE LOOK NOTHING LIKE PEOPLE.

I PAT DOWN MY POCKET. I FIND A CIGARETTE, PRY IT OUT AND PRESS IT TO MY LIPS. I ASK J. IF HE WANTS TO SMOKE WITH ME. WE FIND A BUS STOP, SIT DOWN TOGETHER AT 10PM, AND WATCH THE CARS AND THEIR TAILLIGHTS INCH ACROSS CONCRETE. THE EMPTIER IT GETS, THE LESS ALONE I FEEL.

I PULL OUT OF MY LIGHTER, FLICK MY THUMB ACROSS THE WHEEL A FEW TIMES, AND STRETCH IT OUT TO THE SKYLINE, SLOWLY PANNING IT ACROSS EVERY UPPER-FLOOR OFFICE AND CONFERENCE ROOM I CAN FIND. SET THE WHOLE KINGDOM AFLAME. EAT SHIT FOREVER AND EVER MIDGAR, MASSACHUSETTS. <<<

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