

Brogan Dray

Monsters

Purple had splattered against the stark white of her skin, the imperfection trailed kisses that burned at the touch. She could still feel the faint outline of his calloused hands squeezing at her flesh, the way his fingers dug into the base of her throat, squeezing until the ripples of her trachea slipped across his skin.

She remembers the look in his eyes. The cold blue woven with fury painted in a brilliant white and when they flickered from her throat to her fear brimmed gaze and how they had shifted into pure rapture.

She remembers his grin, the way the crooked teeth glimmered in the blinding light ahead of them, its artificial gaze highlighting the extremities of his own imperfections, the ones he had caused himself from years of misuse. It brought an odd comfort to her fleeting moments, to see his own image fade away- perhaps not as quickly as hers but it withered away nonetheless.

There was something about the way his face flushed, and how his veins popped out from under his skin, her gaze shifting around each curve that wasn't blocked by a circle of black. She found herself tracing his imperfections with her eyes and it soothed to an unsettling extent. To know her killer was far from perfect, to know he wasn't above the role of a monster.

But what made a monster, a monster?

She was afraid of death, they knew that. They used it to their advantage to pull the strings that kept her up, tugging at the thin pieces and seeing how she would move with each action they orchestrated. Her life was a mere game for them to play, building her up and seeing how far they could get before she stopped working.

A lone tear slid down her cheek, its warmth stinging against her cold skin as her hands dug hopelessly into the stone ground. She felt her nails snap under the pressure she had put them under, the blood that seeped through the cracks in her skin and trickled into a puddle. She felt it, she felt the blood pumping in her veins, and it made her realise something excruciatingly important.

She was still alive.

Within seconds, adrenaline rushed in her veins like water in a pipe, pure instinct took over as her leg kicked where the space between his thighs lay unprotected. His grip loosened as it moved to cup the wounded spot and that gave her the chance to rush away from his crouched form and gasp for air at a distance. She remembers the way her lungs burned with each breath of air she took, and she was grateful for that pain.

Her gaze had shifted frantically around the room as soon as he began to recover, her hands still left a trail of blood in its wake but the pain became numb when she rushed towards

the collapsed mirror, him hot on her heels, grabbing her foot and pulling her down with him, “You aren’t getting away that easily.” He had snarled, the fresh spit launching from his mouth to meet her cheek and nose.

She was desperately trying to crawl away from his grasp, but she only got far enough to grip onto a closely lying shard that dug deep cuts into her skin. He flipped her, his hand once again moving to her throat where the bruises were still tender and his touch ignited flames in her nerves. She thrashed once again watching his grin, meeting his eyes and tracing his imperfections but in a new light. With new eyes filled not with fear but with a resolve she never had to gain beforehand.

Had she become a conqueror?

When she slid the sharp glass into his jugular, had she become the conqueror? When his blood spurted from his neck, tainting everything it touched from the flesh of her cheeks to the tan covered top she wore, had she taken on a new role in the world she survived in? His body toppled onto hers, unmoving and growing cold just like his eyes had once been. Still were. They had adopted a new form of cold, one that no longer painted white streaks but only filled a contrast of blue and black.

She heaved his body off hers after minutes of silence. Her legs uncertain as she stood, her form wobbled and stumbled forwards, blood dripped off her and her hands shook now but had not before. Had she risen above everything she stood for and become what the strings had told her to be?

Was she nothing but string?

Her brown eyes looked at his unmoving body, a lump formed in her throat at the sight. She had been afraid of death before but in that moment? She had become it. She had become the very thing she had feared. So, she asked the question as she stared at the door that had opened with a click.

What made a monster, a monster?

And she knew.