

TW: Blood, intense gender dysphoria, descriptions of bodily mutilation.

Don't Look Down.

Jay Sharpe

TW: Blood and violent intrusive thoughts.

Character:

THE STRANGER

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Punctuation and spacing implies delivery.

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The voice of THE STRANGER is delivered through a pair of headphones. The vocal track is pre-recorded.

There is a chair facing a full-length mirror. The lights dim to total darkness once the audience member is sat in the chair.

The track begins. The sound of running bath water starts, then the turning off of the tap. A body gets into the bath water and relaxes.

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THE STRANGER

You are in your bathroom, in your bath. There is a sink to your right and a toilet to the left, with towels on top of both.

You are in the bath. You have not been in the bath long enough. Bubbles are floating on the surface of the water. Mist fills the room.

You are warm, but know that the water will soon start getting cold. But in this moment, you are relaxed, and you don't want to leave the bath yet, but you need to get to bed.

Why can't you stay for a little longer? Why can't you just freeze time and stay in this moment for a little while longer? You sigh.

You take in a deep breath. You slowly lift your arms out of the water. You look at your hands, your forearms, your upper arms.

You sit up, looking straight ahead.

You take in another deep breath.

You get your legs under you, crouching in the bathtub.

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You brace yourself.

Brace.

You had braces once.

You stand.

The water drips down your body.

Water.

Water.

Water.

Down water.

Water down.

Down.

Cold.

Down.

Fuck, your nipples are pointy. There are goosebumps on your chest.

No.

Don't.

Don't.

Cold.

Bed.

You step over the edge of the bath with your right leg. You do the same with your left. You hit the bath with your foot. It feels hard and cold.

You stand with both feet planted firmly on the bathroom mat. It is grey and soft beneath your bare feet.

The mirror.

You see it.

Fuck.

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Don't.

Fuck.

No.

Look.

Don't.

w...

Down.

Look do...

Fff...

Down.

U...

Up.

COLD.

It's cold.

Towels.

Right.

Left.

Sink.

Towels.

You pick up the towel to your right, on the sink.

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You must hide. You must hide it. It. H...

Hide from me.

Yourself?

You tell the reflection to go away.

You try again.

You repeat it to yourself.

It doesn't listen.

I never do.

Never.

Listens.

It.

Fine.

Everything.

Listens.

Fine.

You put the towel over the mirror.

Cold.

Hair.

With the towel on the toilet to your left, you dry your hair. It's cold.

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Cold.

Quick. You need to be quick. You try to be. It's still there. You turn your back to it. It's still there.

You grab the dressing gown.

You avert your eyes.

You look at the wet tiles on the wall.

You hold the dressing gown in front of you.

It dangles in your hands.

It reminds you of...

No, it doesn't.

What time is it?

Something hanging...

Water feels gross.

Swinging in the...

Why are sinks always white?

What?

The bin needs emptying.

You know that you need to look down to tie the belt.

You are holding the dressing gown in front of you.

You hug it tightly.

Maybe then it will go away.

Silence. It feels like it will go on forever.

The sound of dripping water slowly fades in.

You don't want to let go.

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You hold the dressing gown in front of you.

You try not to look down to tie the belt.

You put the dressing gown on.

You double tie the knot.

What if you tied it so tight that you couldn't breathe?

What if you tied it so tight that you sliced your stomach in half?

What if you...

What?

Do you want me to stop it?

What if?

What?

No water.

Blood.

Red and thick.

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Falling.

Falling.

Splat.

Falling.

Falling.

Do you feel like you're falling?

Do you feel trapped?

Am I cruel?

Why do you see me as cruel?

Am I only cruel?

No.

No.

You...

Are Scary.

To me?

To you?

Am I you?

Why do you not want me to be?

Cruel.

Blood.

Cuts.

Dripping.

Down.

Down.

Falling.

Splat.

Drowning.

Red.

Falling.

I won't stop.

You know I won't.

You decide to take the towel down from the mirror.

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You need to get dry.

THE STRANGER talks faster and faster until the words blur together.

Still.

Breath.

Breathing.

Hard.

When

In

Out

Why

In out in out

Fuck

In out in out in out in out in out in out in out in out in out in out

inoutinoutinoutoutinoutoutinoutininininoutinout

AlloutAllin.

All out.

All in.

All out.

All in.

All out.

Still there?

You see it again.

Is that you?

They look like you.

But also not like you.

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They look wrong.

But that's not you. It can't be.

Can't.

You reach up.

You slowly trace down the middle of your chest with your finger.

Up.

Down.

Up.

Down.

Down.

You reach your stomach.

You continue slowly down and to the side.

Down your hip.

Your hip curves out too much.

Down.

Up.

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Down.

Curves.

Too much.

Why?

You want to get rid of it cut it off cut all of it off

Your voice needs to be better your chest needs to be flatter your hips need to disappear your legs need to be longer

Why does your body do that out-in-out thing?

You know why.

This is wrong.

This is not you.

You find something red to draw with.

You look at THE STRANGER in front of you.

You look at me dead in the eyes.

You can't look away.

As each part is marked, the sound of cutting plays.

Your eyes drift down to the throat. You mark it.

Your eyes fall to the breasts. You mark them.

Your eyes find their way to the hips. You mark them.

You can't move.

The sound of water dripping gets louder and becomes a waterfall.

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You need to get to bed.

Now.

Silence.

The lights snap on.

The mirror is cracked and covered in smears of blood.