

THEE GUILTY!

Written by

Jacob Massaro

5001 Bridge St, Apt 4415
Tampa, FL 33611
(813)-767-5538
massarojpr@gmail.com

EXT. - DIRT ROAD - DAY

A group of peasants surround an obscured object; whispering, murmuring, panicking. Suddenly, a man more sharply dressed than the crowd around him exclaims.

DETECTIVE

I do not believe this to be an accident. I believe this man was murdered!

The crowd of peasants gasp. A dead body is revealed in the center, a knife plunged into the man's chest. The conversing amongst the crowd grows louder.

CHRISTOPHER

Well yeah. That would have been some accident.

DETECTIVE

And the culprit is someone in this very crowd.

More gasping. Distrust grows.

Accompanying the detective is a knight, gowned in a chainmail coif, ready with shackles. The detective peers into the crowd with a grin, knowing he has their full attention.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

But before we get there, we have to start at the beginning. You see on the previous day our poor John Doe here was making a trek home from the town over...

TINA

Excuse me sir. If it isn't too much trouble, may I take a leak before this really gets going.

DETECTIVE

(perturbed)

Uh no, you may not. Please don't interrupt me. As I was saying.

TINA

Why not?

DETECTIVE

What? Well what if you are the killer?

The rest of the crowd nods in agreement with the detective, giving off small grunts of affirmation. The detective turns to continue his monologue.

TINA
Well, Am I?

DETECTIVE
(frustrated)
Are you what?

TINA
The killer.

The detective is at a loss for words. The crowd slowly starts to support Tina in her efforts to use the restroom.

DETECTIVE
Well I can't say as that would
spoil the ending.

TINA
How about I use the buddy system
and take George with me so he
brings me right back.

DETECTIVE
Well then what if your friend is
the killer.

GEORGE
Well, am I?

This back and forth continues for some time. The crowd looks like windshield wipers; turning their heads back and forth trying to keep up with the conversation.

DETECTIVE
Fine! Just go quickly and come
right back.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
Ugh, okay where was I? Oh yes, our
poor soul here was coming back from
business he had the next village
over. He had hoped to leave before
nightfall as his wife planned a
romantic dinner. Fate had other
plans it seemed.

The detective points to LUKE, one of the peasants in the crowd.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

You sir.

Luke takes off in the opposite direction. What starts off as break neck speed quickly deteriorates into him hunched over, gasping for air.

The knight does a quick job catching up to him. The crowd starts murmuring again; convinced Luke had something to do with the murder. The knight escorts him back. Luke hunches over again and when the knight checks on him, he tries to take off, but to no avail.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

Sir, why did you take off?

LUKE

Well, you pointed at me and I got nervous.

DETECTIVE

I was just going to ask a question, I wasn't incriminating you.

LUKE

Oh I am sorry sir. I am not too good under pressure.

DETECTIVE

Well yes, we can all see that. My good sir.

LUKE

Luke.

DETECTIVE

Luke. What happened last night that may have kept our victim here stuck in town.

Luke feels the eyes of his peers staring down at him. Once again he panics.

LUKE

(Looking for affirmation)

Well... It was... Um, it was cold out.

DETECTIVE

We are in the middle of summer.

LUKE

Oh shoot, was that not right?

DETECTIVE

How do you not remember? It was last night! What happened last night?

Luke is now shaking to his core. He feels the crowd's presence suffocating him.

LUKE

Well how... how am I supposed to know what made him stuck. I didn't do it. I didn't kill him!

The detective is visibly frustrated now. Every interruption and dumb comment only adds to his annoyance.

DETECTIVE

Rained, Mr. Luke, it rained.

LUKE

Oh yeah, there was a big storm last night, couldn't miss it.

Luke rambles on about the storm of the century that occurred the night before. Somehow he winds up on the topic of chickens working for the government. He gets cut off.

DETECTIVE

(exacerbated)

Good lord! It was Christopher Herald. He is the killer. He and Victor, our poor victim, were rival wheat dealers. Victor was close to securing trade with one of the neighboring kingdoms when...

CHRISTOPHER

Uh no.

DETECTIVE

What?

CHRISTOPHER

It wasn't me.

DETECTIVE

Yes, yes it was. You were blinded by greed and jealousy. You needed Victor here out of the picture. My dear knight, if you may.

The detective gestures to his guard to contain Christopher.

CHRISTOPHER

No, I was shagging with Tommy's wife last night.

The man standing next to Christopher flashes him a dirty look.

TOMMY

You were what?

Tina returns from her bathroom break. She joins in on the commotion in the crowd.

TINA

What did I miss?

TOMMY

Chris here is shagging my wife.

CHRISTOPHER

It was our anniversary.

LUKE

Oh wow good for you man, congrats.

DETECTIVE

Everyone enough! I had this whole dramatic story planned out. You ruined it, every one of you. The culprit was obviously Mr. Herald here. My good knight, you may arrest him.

TOMMY

Whoa, you heard the man. He was with my wife. She'll back up his alibi.

CHRIS

Yeah no way she is forgetting that.

The crowd starts to now turn on the detective. Cheering and roaring at every retort Tommy and Christopher have against his accusations. Luke finally builds up some confidence.

LUKE

How do we know it wasn't you?

The crowd falls silent. They all whip their heads to focus on Luke like a deer in headlights.

DETECTIVE

Me? How do we know it wasn't me?
The detective.

LUKE
(nervously)
Uh, yeah.

DETECTIVE
Well, because I am the detective.

CHRISTOPHER
Wait, how did you know Victor's
name?

LUKE
You said his name was John.

TOMMY
And how did you know his wife was
waiting at home for a romantic
dinner?

TINA
And why does this knife say,
"Property of Detective Grant"?

The detective flickers from annoyed to worried as the crowd gives him a silent, oppressive glare. Even the knight by his side gives him a suspicious look.

DETECTIVE
Well you see there is a simple
explanation for this.

The detective unathletically pushes the knight down and takes off running. The crowd helps the knight up and they all share a brief moment of hesitation. In an unspoken collective agreement, they give chase to the detective.

Before getting too far, Luke doubles back to the body. He pulls the knife out of the dead man's chest.

LUKE
Oh shoot looks like he forgot this.
I better return it to him.

He runs back in the direction of the crowd that is still chasing the detective. A few seconds in he loses his breath and hunches over. He continues to try and catch up.