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# Blurry

December 24th, 1971

I watch raindrops roll down the windows and drop to the ground, leaving small puddles on the window sill. Looking through them, the passersby resemble colorful stains. I put down my glass of whisky and press my nose against the glass, staring out into the rainy Paris evening. The glass fogs up as I exhale gently. I watch the dark shape on the other side of the street, the bundled up child that has been sitting among the puddles for nearly half a day. Finally I light up a cigarette, put on a coat, and cross the street, pausing a few meters away from the child. She's wrapped up in a slightly too large coat, only her huge dark eyes peeking out from under it. The girl backs away in fear as I extend my hand. Then she gets up. Slowly stepping towards me, her small palm finds its way into mine. She holds my hand gently, a shy smile creeping onto her face. As we walk back across the street, I can see a snowflake land on her pitch black hair. She looks up and smiles. I open the door and we walk into the empty bar. The clock strikes midnight as we sit together in silence. It's Christmas Day

December 24th, 1981

I add some lime juice and mix the cocktail before handing it to the guy at the bar. He pulls out his wallet and looks for money. My gaze travels to the back of the bar. Nina. There she sits, all dressed up, smiling her mysterious smile. Everyone at the table is gazing at her, hanging on her every word. I feel myself grinning with pride. This sudden fatherly feeling scares me slightly. After all, I love her. I love her like a father loves his child. But I also love her the way you love the most beautiful and mysterious and tragic girl you have ever met.

Out of the corner of my eye I notice a familiar face enter the bar, a gust of wind blowing through the open door. He looks around, his face disgustingly arrogant, his eyes cold and cruel. Tipping his hat, he walks right to the back, joining the group. Nina gets up and kisses his cheek, smiling. I can't help but wonder whether she would be this excited about my presence. He pulls her aside and they sit at a separate table. I assume he's just trying to taunt me. After all isn't that all he's been trying to do by

coming here every night? He does this to upset me; he has for the past year. I suspect he knows I love her. He also knows if I ever told her she'd run away.

I pour myself a drink and watch them. She sips her fifth cocktail, her eyes distant, but happy. He glances over at me occasionally. As I watch them talk, I begin to notice the details I've seen a thousand times. She laughs and he touches her cheek lightly. His fingers linger a second too long while lighting her cigarette. He playfully kisses her hand. I can practically hear him laughing at my jealousy. The candle on their table flickers and goes off. I see him lean over slightly, enveloping her in his disgusting arms. I look away.

When I look back, she's gone.

I feel a wave of emptiness flush over me. Maybe this is what I've feared for the last years. I'd never had a family until the day I met her. Maybe I'd been so suspicious, because I knew he would try to take her away. Perhaps I couldn't stand the thought of losing her, because with her I would lose both my true love and the only family I had ever had.

I get up and run to the stairs, sprinting to my room. It's too late. Her coat is missing.

I walk out onto my balcony, my head spinning from too many drinks. As I lean back on the railing, I catch a glimpse of two shadows up on the roof. His evil laugh fills the cool air. He leans over and kisses her cheek. I stand there, watching them entangle their arms, watching him kiss her hair. I realize he must see me. Of course he does; he knows I'm watching, he knew I'd follow them. My heart explodes with hatred. How dare he take away the only thing I'd ever loved? He taunts me more with every moment, waiting to see how far I'll let him go.

Suddenly I feel myself overcome with jealousy and hatred and too many whiskies. I softly jump onto the ladder and begin to crawl up onto the roof, moving faster than I ever thought possible. When I reach the top, I pause. They both look up.

"I thought you would come." He laughs and I hear the contempt in his voice.

We stand there silently, as if everyone knows what will happen next, and yet nobody wants to be the first to move. Finally, I reach into my pocket and aim. The bullet hits his heart.

It happens so fast that I barely realize what I just did. I'd always thought killing a person would be difficult, and yet this drunken haze and jealousy made it the most effortless thing I'd ever done.

I hear a siren in the distance. Of course - the shot was loud. This is the end, I realize. I can't escape. Nina stands up. I expect her to run away. Instead she smiles. She shakes her head and holds my hand.

"Run, Nina. You can go far away, start a new life".

She laughs a soft drunk laugh.

"I have no place to run to. You're my only family. The only person I've ever loved."

The siren grows louder. I pull her closer.

"Are you ready?"

She smiles her mysterious smile and grasps my hand even tighter in response.

We step over his dead body, pausing on the edge.

I look up and take in the view; Paris, the night sky, her smile.

Then we jump.

A nearby clock strikes midnight. It's Christmas Day.