

Prey/Pray: Hunting Party

The Nurse



This is a work of fiction, and a rather deranged one at that. Names, characters, places, and incidents either are the product of the author's twisted imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, events, or locales is entirely coincidental. If you do find yourself believing that any part of this work is about you, please seek psychological help immediately or turn yourself in to the police (whichever you can do fastest).

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First edition 2020

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Dedication

To everyone who supported me by reading and reviewing my debut novel; Prey/Pray: Origin of The Average Man. You all helped motivate me to expand the world of Prey/Pray by introducing the Hunting Party series. I hope you enjoy meeting the characters in the shadows as much as you enjoyed meeting The Average Man. Thank you for all of your support.

Spoiler Alert

For those who have not read Prey/Pray: Origin of The Average Man, you should stop here and not read further. The story of The Nurse contains scenes pulled straight from The Average Man's book and, while not overtly giving away the ending, has the potential of spoiling aspects of the first book. If you need to find a copy of the first book, you can find it here:

[Amazon.com: Prey/Pray: Origin of The Average Man: second edition with bonus material eBook : Kitchen Jr, Dicky: Kindle Store](#)

For people who don't mind spoilers, feel free to continue with the story of The Nurse. If you enjoy it, I hope you will go back and read The Average Man's story.

For everyone else, enjoy.

Chapter 1

A woman stands in front of a mirror, her eyes devoid of all emotion. She stares at herself, yet her detached affect would have you believe it was a meaningless stranger in the mirror staring back. She thinks how this isn't the first time she's seen herself in such a wretched condition. No, she's seen herself like this many times before. This is however, she tells herself, the last time her reflection will report such a monstrosity ever again.

Calmly, she dips the rag into the warm running water, and wipes the splattered tacky blood from her face. She's stood in front of a mirror so many times, wiping blood, smeared makeup, and worse from her face. At first, she would cry and her hands would shake, but now the action is as mechanical and mundane to her as washing dishes.

Her blood-stained skin no longer shocks her. Tears don't fall, her hands don't tremble. The screaming pain, now a dull presence, is easily ignored.

She thinks how much older she looks now. Not older in the sense of years passed, but rather in the way an object ages when it's used and worn down. There was a time when she considered herself pretty, but now the light in her eyes has dulled. And the features of her face, once soft, are now hardened.

Still staring into the mirror, she loses herself in her thoughts, her mind drifting back to earlier days. Days when she was still pretty. Days when she was still soft.

She remembers coming home from the clinic where she works, excited by her first raise since being hired. It wasn't a huge raise. Just seventy-five cents extra per hour. But it would be helpful in paying down her school loans a little faster, and the doctor who owns the clinic had told her he would give her another raise when the clinic was making enough for him to afford it.

The clinic was a little family run office; two nurses, two doctors, and one person working the front desk. But since they were literally the only place in the small town to go for medical treatment, they covered a wide range of needs. From flu shots and yearly checkups, to sick visits, to workers compensation cases, to removing toys from little kid's noses and ears, to women's

health, even the occasional minor gash needing stitches or a broken nose needing resetting. The clinic dealt with a bit of everything.

She enjoyed the work and hoped the wide exposure would improve her chances of finding a better job once her husband was finally ready to move out of town.

They both grew up in this town. After high school, he got a job at the same factory his dad and uncles worked at, and worked there for seven years. About half of the town worked at that factory, with the rest being either unemployed or working at the few local businesses that existed in the small Podunk town. She on the other hand left town to go to college for nursing, but came back to be with her high school sweetheart who was now her husband.

She didn't dislike living here. She enjoyed being close to her sister and her niece, and she got along with most everyone. It's just that she wanted to see more of the world. Small-town living was all she had ever known before college, but once she got a taste of life outside, only love could have brought her back. So, there she was, still in the small town, excited by her new raise and hopeful of what the future might hold.

She remembers walking into her small home that day and seeing her husband sitting at the kitchen table with his back to her.

"Hey sweetheart, guess what happened today?" She walked up and hugged him from behind.

That's when she noticed it. The smell of whiskey poured off him, and his normally muscular body felt unbalanced.

A bottle sat on the table, half empty, with a shot glass in front of him.

"Sweetheart, are you okay?" she asked, stepping back in concern.

Her husband stared down at the empty shot glass in front of him. "They let me go," he muttered.

"Who let you go?" she replied, not grasping the meaning.

“The factory let me go. Me and a handful of other guys. Said they just weren’t making what they used to in orders. Said they just didn’t need us no more. What am I going to do, babe? I don’t know nothing else,” he said mournfully, as he reached for the bottle of whiskey.

She reached out and gently took his hand, keeping him from pulling the bottle to himself.

“Well I tell you what you ain’t going to do. No man of mine is going to sit by himself and get drunk and wallow in despair. If you’re going to drink, let’s head down to the bar and have a few together. We have a little something to celebrate anyhow. I got a raise today,” she said, trying to pull her husband out of his gloom.

“I’m glad you got a raise babe, but unless it’s a forty-five thousand dollar raise, we’re still screwed. How are we going to get the bills paid? How are we going to cover your student loans?” he responded pessimistically.

“We’ve got a little money tucked away that can get us through for a while. Plus, you’re strong and hard working. I’m sure you’ll get a new job in no time,” she said, refusing to lose her optimism.

Her husband looked up at her, trying to believe what she was saying.

“So we should just go to the bar and celebrate, huh?” he said half sarcastically.

“Yep. That’s exactly what we should do. Go to the bar and celebrate my raise. The rest will work itself out, sweetheart,” she replied as she leaned over to kiss him.

“Ok. Let’s get dressed and go to the bar,” he said, kissing her back.

The woman standing in front of the mirror snaps back to the present and finds herself staring blankly at her own distant eyes. She dips the rag back into the warm water to rinse the blood and begins to pull it through her hair to continue cleaning herself.

The bar. She continues to clean the blood from her hair, I wonder, if I hadn’t ever suggested going to that god-forsaken bar if things would have gone differently.