

The Alleyway

Part One:

The news was grim but somewhat expected. Stacy had been battling cancer for quite some time now, so it came as no surprise to her that her doctor's visit today resulted in her knowledge about how long she had left to live. Eight to twelve months was the expected range. The doctor had told her to start making preparations and letting her loved ones know. Funny, she didn't have any loved ones or anyone that she was even close to. Flashbacks of her childhood flashed through her mind as she walked down the crowded streets of the city, bringing a tear to her eye. Her parents had both been drug addicts and she recalled the day she walked into the bathroom to find them both dead from a drug overdose. She was six years old at the time, too young to grasp the concept of death, especially the deaths of her parents. Since then she grew up bouncing between foster families, never staying with any single family for more than a few years at a time until she was old enough to go out on her own. Having little experience and even fewer life skills, she found it extremely difficult to hold down a job. She never was a good person, she could barely read and write, and she hadn't had any stable education her entire life. Needless to say, she had made it to her thirties, getting by on a lot of help from the government as well as partaking in some shady activities for extra cash. She had even done some time in the county jail for a few years due to the nature of some of the organizations and activities she was involved in. She felt the cool breeze chill the tear that had begun to roll down her cheek, wiping it away with the back of her hand as she started down another busy walkway. Everything she had done was for survival she thought to herself as she continued down the busy streets, headed back to the shelter which she now called home.

As she was on the final stretch, she caught the eyes of another woman walking past her heading in the opposite direction. The woman's eyes were filled with sadness, Stacy noticed as they locked eyes for what felt like an eternity. "I wonder what her story is?" Stacy thought to herself. She had begun to think about the fact that everyone has a story, different experiences, different problems, struggles, and goals in life. The sadness in those eyes was different, however, deep and almost angry looking. It sent a quick shiver through her as she tried to brush it off and put the thought of it out of her head. That combined with the setting sun and cool breeze made Stacy pull her coat around her a little tighter, quickening her pace to reach the shelter before curfew when the doors would be shut for the night.

As she rounded the last corner Stacy could see the shelter towards the end of the street. This street wasn't as busy and crowded as the others had been, a small two-lane road that led to nothing but a dead end. Stacy had always hated walking this stretch alone, alleyways scattered the sides leading to the backs of buildings that sat on the main roads, it seemed that this was a go-to spot for users and sellers. Having dealt with plenty of both, and being a dealer in these very parts for a short time for some extra cash, Stacy knew what kind of people lurked down those

side alleys, and she wanted nothing to do with them. As she passed by one of the dim-lit alleyways she heard a voice calling her name from the shadows.

“Stacy! Hey Stacy!” She heard without seeing who it was calling to her. She yet again quickened her pace to something of a slow jog, knowing that whoever it was, she wanted to avoid them.

“Stacy!” She could hear the thudding of heavy feet begin to catch up to her. Figuring she didn't have much longer to live anyways, she decided to find out who it was and what they wanted. She stopped and spun around, right fist ready to strike at anyone there who she perceived as a threat.

“What do you want!” She shouted as she spun around to face the unknown person.

“Whoa there killer, it's me, Jack. Say, do you have any more of that crazy rainbow rock you used to sell back in the day? I'm fixing 'for some bad ya know.” Jack said with a twitchy laugh.

“No jack. Go home, that was years ago and I haven't been dealing anymore. Please don't bother me again.” Stacy replied, happy that it wasn't someone with more malicious intent. Jack stood there and stared at her for some time before dipping his head and walking back towards the alley. Stacy could hear him mumbling to himself as he disappeared back into the shadows of the alley. She let out a sigh of relief, letting herself relax as much as the cold weather would allow her to. She turned and started towards the main entrance of the shelter which was now only two blocks or so away. She maintained the quickened pace in case there was another addict that had recognized her, or heard her name being shouted by Jack. Past another alleyway, and another, nothing out of the ordinary since her encounter with Jack which she was thankful for. She reached the shelter and took a step onto the small set of stairs that lead up to the entrance when again, she heard her name coming from behind her.

“Stacy is it?” She heard a woman's voice from behind her. As she turned to see who it was she felt a sharp pain shoot through her skull, and the world went dark.

Stacy woke up to find herself tied to a drainpipe within a damp musty room, a basement of some sort if she had to guess. Her head was throbbing and she could feel that her head was bleeding from where she had been struck. She could hear someone walking on the floor above her and make their way to the door that led down to where she was tied up. The doorknob turned and the door opened slowly, the footsteps began descending the stairs and Stacy could make out the silhouette of a woman. The woman made her way across the room over to Stacy, and as she knelt Stacy could see the woman's face. Those eyes, the ones she had seen on the street, the ones that were so filled with pain were staring right at her, almost as though they were staring into her rather than at her.

“Wha-what is this?” Stacy managed to get out, still shaking from the blow to the head. “Who are you?” The woman gave her a long look over before answering.

“You ruined my life.” The woman said. “My son was a recovering addict, and you sold him the drugs that he overdosed on.” She began to check the knots that attached Stacy to the large pipe, ensuring they were tight. A tear rolled down Stacy's cheek as she formulated what to say to the woman.

“I'm sorry, that was a long time ago and I never meant to hurt anyone. I was just trying to survive and keep myself off the streets.” She explained to the woman. “If it's any consolation I just found out that I don't have long to live anyways. I have terminal cancer, and less than a year

left.” She told the woman trying to play the pity card. Judging by the look on the woman's face it didn't work, she continued to tighten the knots before looking at Stacy.

“Oh, cancer? Well, I guess that throws a wrench into my plans for you then. I might just keep you around down here and let mother nature deal with you. That'd be a hell of a lot less messy for me.” The woman gave Stacy a sideways grin as she started towards the stairs again. “Hope you're comfortable.” The woman said as she turned out the lights and slammed the door closed, leaving Stacy alone in complete darkness to live out her remaining days.

Part Two:

Mary was trying her best to move on with her life after losing her son to a drug overdose. She had spent countless hours weeping and mourning the loss of her only child. Her husband had left her after their son had passed, leaving her alone. Sure, he had left her the house, and car, and mostly everything in hopes that he could start again. Everything was just too unbearable for him so he left it all behind and moved on. But Mary couldn't, no matter how hard she had been trying to. She had been seeing a therapist at the local hospital downtown who specialized in recovery after the loss of a loved one. It helped a little she supposed, but nothing could bring him back. She was getting ready to go to another session with the therapist, making sure to grab a heavier coat due to the questionable weather. She left the house and decided to walk instead of dealing with the busy downtown traffic, the walking helped her clear her head anyways. As she walked down the crowded downtown streets towards the hospital flashbacks of walking those very streets with her son flooded her mind. They had spent a lot of time window shopping at the various shops right off the main walkway, just to kill time and get out of the house. The memories made her crack a small smile, but at the same time brought a tear to her eye knowing that she would never be able to walk these streets with her son again.

Her son had been fighting with drug addiction for a few years, and Mary thought he had finally overcome it when he lapsed back into a bad group of people, and the temptations were just too much for him to handle. Their local hangout was just off the main walkway down an alley near the hospital. She found it ironic and a bit sad that they choose to use it in a place so near a center whose entire purpose is to help heal people. She was just past the road where this local hangout was located when she began to cry again. Wiping the tears from her face she looked up and caught the eyes of a woman who looked a bit distraught. She tried to smile at the woman but couldn't muster one together, so she just looked at the lady in passing. She was only a few blocks from the hospital now but something had caused her to stop in her tracks. She heard a man's voice coming from the road where the local addict hangout was located. It was hard to make out over the sound of the city, but she was sure that the man's voice had been calling out for a lady named Stacy. The name Stacy is a name that she had heard before. Her son would often talk to a woman on the phone named Stacy, and referred to her as a friend. Curious, and hoping that Stacy wasn't about to get robbed, Mary decided to meet Stacy whom her son seemed to be so fond of. She turned around and walked back to the roadway where she had heard the man's voice calling to Stacy. As she turned the corner she heard the man asking Stacy for drugs. Stacy had known the man and had sold drugs to him before. All of a sudden it clicked, Stacy hadn't been a friend like she had thought, she had been his drug dealer.

Something inside of Mary snapped at the realization of who Stacy was. Rage overtook the sadness, and she acted impulsively. She quickly stepped out of sight into one of the alleyways to not be seen by Stacy or the man. After the man had been turned down, and Stacy continued to walk towards the shelter, Mary glanced around looking for some sort of weapon. She wasn't thinking very straight, but this new feeling of rage overtook the feeling of sadness and dread, and to her, that was much better. After looking around for a minute she found part of an old metal fence post and decided that that would do for what she was quickly planning in her head. The rage was a nice change from the sadness, and for the first time, Mary had a real grin smeared across her face. She stood in the shadows for a while watching Stacy move closer to the shelter doors. As Stacy approached the main doorway Mary made her move, she walked up behind Stacy and said,

"Stacy is it?" And as Stacy began to turn around she swung the broken fence post against Stacy's head as hard as she could, causing Stacy to lose consciousness and fall to the ground.

She drug Stacy's unconscious body behind some trash cans in the nearest side alley and propped her upright against the brick wall. She looked like the twenty other junkies passed out in the same alleyway. Mary then headed back home and got in her car. She drove back to that alleyway to find Stacy sitting there just as she'd left her. She began to lift Stacy's body into the passenger seat when she heard someone from within the alley.

"You alright man? Do you need some help?" One of the shopkeepers asked her as he was taking the garbage out.

"Uhm.. my daughter, she has a serious drug problem and I'm trying to get her to the hospital," Mary replied.

"Let me help get her in the car for you, my brother is a junkie as well so I know how hard it can be to see them like this. I hope it all works out for you." The man said.

After getting help from the man loading Stacy's still unconscious body into the car, she set for home, thinking about what she was going to do with Stacy when they arrived. Somehow managing to get Stacy into the house and down the stairs, although not very gently, she had gotten Stacy all tied up to one of the drain pipes in the basement. Stacy was starting to show signs of coming again so Mary went back upstairs before being seen, and to think over her next plan of action. She had already beaten her over the head with a metal post, kidnapped her, and was now holding her prisoner. Still, the feeling of sadness was all but a flicker inside of her now, and her rage and excitement grew. She couldn't stop now she thought to herself. "If this is what it takes for me to move on and find peace then so be it." She mumbled to herself taking a deep breath. She was all in now, she was going to end Stacy's life just as the drugs had ended her sons. Not sure how she was going to do it still, she decided to go give Stacy a proper greeting and explain the situation that she had found herself in. She headed to the basement door where she could hear Stacy somewhat whimpering and breathing heavily, probably trying to figure out what was going on and where she was. She opened the door and headed down the stairs, she saw Stacy sitting on the floor tied to the drainpipe right where she had left her. She could see the blood begin to dry on Stacy's hair and the confusion in her eyes. She walked over to where Stacy was on the floor and knelt, staring her in the eye for a minute before Stacy spoke.

"Wha-What is this?" Stacy scrambled with the words. Mary began to check the knots holding Stacy in place before replying.

"You ruined my life." That is all she could say before telling Stacy the circumstances of her son's death. Stacy began to apologize and tell Mary that she was a good person, and didn't

mean anyone any harm. But that didn't change the fact that her son had died using this woman's drugs. Stacy then went on to tell Mary about not living long anyways due to cancer, and this caught Mary's attention.

“Oh, cancer?” Mary said with a bit of a smirk. Mary knew what to do now. She didn't have to get blood on her hands, not anyways. She would just hold Stacy here until cancer took her. Slow, agonizing, and alone. The perfect execution for the person responsible for her son's death. And the best thing about it is that she got to be there for every moment of it. Mary began to head back to the stairs, and as she was just getting to the door she turned and looked back at Stacy, smiling at her.

“Hope you're comfortable.” She said with a hint of satisfaction in her voice. She then turned out the lights and slammed the door closed, leaving Stacy in the darkness to live out the rest of her days.