

Uncut

By Arthur V. Klepchukov

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It's simply one of those moments when the entire world seems to stop as your mind tries to grasp exactly what just happened. Confusion cripples more men than war. They'll just never admit it. Strength? There is no strength in denying the truth about what's really going on around you.

"Don't cry Little Nathan," a mother says, "that's not what big boys do." The father sits quietly and sternly nearby, enforcing the choking stigma behind open emotional expression. From day one they have you. And they don't let go until you peel their fingers from around your neck and tell them you're never going to blindly follow them. Not without a grain of salt, enough salt to make the Dead Sea seem like a mild bag of chips. Doubt cripples men too, but it also builds. And boy am I doubting things right now. I just hope its building something besides a psychotic mid-life crisis in my future.

It's a summer day but we're inside. I would say the curtains are drawn but I can't concentrate on much besides the current situation at hand. That's how much the darkness encases the room and everything in it. I can feel the intense, white light above me. I wish it was the sun, but it's too fake. I can almost feel the fluorescent tubing in the drops of sweat it's squeezing out of my forehead along my hairline. Disgusting. It's the feeling of discomfort biting at all the annoying places of my body, yet I'm too drawn into the moment to move.

Paralyzed. If police rushed the room right now or if my first girlfriend walked into the door, it wouldn't matter. I wouldn't react in either case. I would just keep looking down as I am now. Where else to look? Left or right into the sad and silent darkness? No. Up into the blinding light? No. Just down. Down at the reality that has manifested itself before me. I can't turn around. What can I say? What would I say if my aged lips could move right now? They are two, useless slivers of a faded pink that aren't worth a damn. My whole body is so much older than it was just moments ago. There is no aching in my joints, no wrinkles on my face, nor any guilt on my conscience, only the memories. They are so much farther at this moment that I feel like a decade has passed through me on this vicious July day.

In this hot room I stand sweating, thinking. If there was a clock to meticulously chronicle these seconds of thoughts I would surely go insane from the ticking sound. I wonder if he was mad. What could have possessed him to do such things? I had to do it, of course I had to do it. It was the only way.

For a brief moment I seem to hear the blood soaking into the carpet. It crawls around my dark boots leaving a wavy red trail on the rubber. Thank God my laces are tightly tied and not touching the dark pool in which I stand. This carpet is going to have to be replaced.

I look back towards the body. He must have been insane. It was the only thing I could do. Look at me, trying to justify his actions with madness when I've never even defined the word for myself. I wish he'd left something behind, a poem, a picture, a song, anything that I could have looked into and read. Who am I to find understanding in those kinds of things, but at least it would have been a step in the right direction. There I go again. Right direction? There is no right direction. He's dead. My brother is dead. I killed

him.

The crimson stain silently mocks me. I want to reach down and rip the pathetic liquid out of the carpet and tell the bastard to stop haunting me. I can already see the nightmares that'll plague me for the rest of my life. But why shoot so far into the future? I could be dead like him. I would have been dead if I hadn't killed him. My brother, a murderer. I would have been his next victim. His trademark knife is still in my hand. It's stopped dripping the blood of all the people whose lives it stole. No, no. The knife is no thief. It was all you dear brother. But why?

I wish you had left something behind. I want to understand, I really do. And what now? You're dead and I'm just standing here looking down at you with a thousand questions. Thinking of all the opportunities I had to ask them in the years before, in the moments before. Could I have stopped you? What went wrong? Confusion. Doubt. Finally, the tears come. I still don't budge. My eyes slam shut and I tuck my head further in. My fingers begin to tremble. The knife falls out of my hands. I drop to my knees and sink into the pool of blood. I openly sob but no sound enters my ears. My head begins to shake disturbingly. A thousand emotional wrinkles form in my face as my mouth twists in pain. My fingers grace the back of his head and his short, curvy hair. My heart pushes out, trying to rip itself out of my chest. He is still. My whole body begins to convulse. I scream out and a thousand questions escape. I ask and tell him everything. Silence. Dead bodies don't talk.