

## Gas



He needed to leave. He just needed to leave somewhere he would finally feel fine. He needed some place quiet, deserted, and away from there. He just needed to leave.

Edward Donovan was a 39 year-old engineer. He was married, had 2 kids and a big house. He earned enough money to provide for his whole family by himself and afford an SUV. He was his children's role model, people could rely on him; he was friendly, helpful, faithful and hard-working: He was the perfect example for the American dream. So how could someone like him go from role model to rock bottom?

It all began when his wife left him and took the kids away from him. She needed something new and exciting, and left without a word. After all, isn't perfection boring? That's right, she was bored. And miserable. She wasn't made to be a housewife life: taking care of their children all day and making sure dinner was ready by seven. That's all. She had given up her career for him. To let him shine. To fit into the perfect housewife mould. But it was finally over.

The morning went well. At 12 o'clock, Edward was called in the boss' office... Finally! He had been waiting for this for a whole month: a raise! Edward immediately thought he would celebrate it by getting his wife a very nice present. Maybe it would help working things out between the two of them. He knocked and came into the office. He and his boss talked a little. At the beginning, they kept things friendly, but everything changed in only a few minutes. Edward left and slammed the door. He was fired. They were looking for new people, with new ideas, and were getting rid of the old ones.

Edward went back home, pretty depressed. There he found his house empty. He knew this would happen eventually, but he didn't expect it to be that soon. He truly thought things would get better. But it didn't. It was over. It was all over.

He was broken. Shattered.

He wanted to cry but didn't shed a single tear. He felt despair, anger and humiliation at the same time... He thought he was the weakest man ever.

In spite of all the qualities Edward Donovan might have had, his biggest flaw and also weakness was that he was a quitter. He had never been able to face his problems and had chosen the easy way out his entire life. For instance, he chose to ignore the fact that his wife was unhappy. He thought it was no big deal and that there was nothing to solve, to fix. But when people like him suddenly have to deal with big issues, they might act desperately.

He stood there for a few minutes, motionless. Thoughts were going through his mind. He was having one of these moments where you can't think straight, where you feel like you're about to faint and the last thing you need is someone to tell you what to do.

He walked slowly outside, and went to his car. He needed to leave. He just needed to leave somewhere he could finally feel fine. He needed some place quiet, deserted, and away from there. He just needed to leave.

Where? The forest. The answer came by itself. It was obvious. This place was special to him, and to his family. That's where they used to go on the week-end, to play, have fun... yes, the place was perfect.

He reached the gas station situated near the forest, without any building or house at sight.

He got out of the car and stared at the sky: it was sunny, with no clouds around. He almost wanted to smile. Then he had a look at the forest: it was so dark that the road seemed to disappear in it...as if it had no end. But Edward had already finished the road.

He took a deep breath, stared right at the station; and then walked slowly to the gas containers. There was a sign hanging on the door where it was written: "closed". At least he knew he wouldn't hurt anyone else but himself.

He opened one of the containers, poured gas all over his body and down the floor of the station. He took his lighter, lit it on and threw it down the floor. Everything happened very quickly. The flames reached out the containers, which exploded.

The building burned down. The billows of smoke got higher and higher in the sky. The flames reached out a leaf, and another, and a whole branch, and then a tree burned down too. The fire spread into the entire forest. But there still might be a few trees left.

The body of Edward Donovan has never been found, mostly because there was no body to be found. Only ashes remained. Nowadays, people say that his ashes are spread around the station and the forest, which is now named after him.

**The End**

Inspired by Edward Hopper's painting: *Gas*

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