



## When it ends

Her clogs began to bang against the corridor tiles. I knew what it meant so I took a deep breath and entered the race. I had to keep distance, a question of timing, and the rest would keep up. Beneath my feet, she was going straight into my trap.

I had been tracking her since the early hours of the day, food and supplies were so rare that I couldn't let her escape. I had followed her thin footprints for about one mile in the mud of the devastated streets of the city when I had just turned at a corner. She was standing in front of me, innocently. At this time, I thought she was the most gorgeous creature I had ever seen, graceful and fat as I hadn't seen for weeks. She could see me of course but it seemed she didn't mind I was there. She seemed to be waiting for something. I was surprised when she settled her eyes on me. I could taste their beauty. I had been told eyes were the soul's reflection. I understood this idea at this exact moment. Just before she started running away. Luckily, she took the way I had prepared for her.

She was running pretty fast, fearing this feeling I had experienced, that death is just behind you. Fortunately, the end of the passage was coming closer and closer and I would reach the stairs soon enough. Then, I would leap on her from above. Arriving where it was supposed to happen, I felt something was going wrong. Indeed, I figured out the barrier I had made had been broken. She didn't even think about it, she seized the opportunity of an escape and got her freedom back.

I didn't feel powerful as I should have been at this time, at the top of those stairs from which I should have earned my so deserved meal. I was watching through the gaping hole of the high school while she was moving over the ruins of what had been a great civilization, so they say. She was going straight to the edge of the woods where she would be safe. When she entered the forest, it closed up on her, depriving her of the sunset that gave her a rich-bronze-glint coat, I understood Nature would always prevail because it was able to make creatures like this one and I wondered if they all seemed so perfect, if they all were kinds of golden hinds.

The sky was getting darker and darker. The night was dangerous and I couldn't stay there, above all because my barricade had been broken. It was time to get back to the camp, as quickly as possible.

We were plunged into silence, as usual, eating the few berries he had found. We hadn't taken the risk of making a fire since my trap had been discovered and we were both freezing, even in the post office, rolled up in a blanket.

"Have you ever seen a golden hind? I asked.

- I suppose you mean a deer? Of course I did see a deer, little boy!" he answered, aggressive.

Robert had never been kind to me but, well, he found me, he saved me, and he didn't ask for more.

"Tell me about it!

- Won't you shut the fuck up, little boy? Just trying to get some sleep right now!"

He had never been kind to me but we had learnt to live together. We needed each other. So I shut "the fuck up", as I always did. Curious thing, I was not tired, I was thinking about that golden hind I had encountered, I couldn't help it. The woods were a shelter for her, somewhere nothing could ever happen to her unless she wanted it, because the forest wouldn't let anyone hit its golden hind. I wouldn't let anyone hit my golden hind if I had one. But if the woods were such a safe place, why didn't Robert want me to go there? What did he fear in the woods?

"You could find plenty of deers, you know? Robert began. I mean, before. I often hunted in my youth, but I always did it with respect, for Nature that fed me. And that's a thing they didn't have, this respect to Nature. So they spoilt it. From everywhere it was falling to pieces. But at one point it became much more than what Nature could handle, and it made this appalling destruction stop. I tell you, it always wins."

Then, he got back to his quiet sleep and, for sure, I "shut the fuck up".

I felt like somebody was gingering me up. I opened one eye, Robert was bent upon me. I wriggled out, off my blanket, staring at him. Why did he wake me up while there was no daylight yet?

"Come with me" he ordered.

I followed him out of the post office, we crossed the street and entered a different building. We took the stairs we found to go up and up, silently, until we were on the roof, overhanging the city and its surroundings. Some light was showing up from the skyline and the sun would soon rise. Robert sat down and I preferred standing at his side. A few minutes later, the sun started rising and I contemplated that amazing red semicircle.

"You like?" Robert kindly asked.

I nodded. Then I glanced at him and it seemed he was smiling. It was the first time I saw him being happy or, at least, satisfied.

“It always prevails, you know? Nature always prevails.”

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