

Kalopsia

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I used to love dissecting moths. I'd wait for the sun to go down and for the darkness to consume the land beneath it, and with a lamp in hand I would sit down and wait for the moths to move towards the light and capture them in my hands. Occasionally, I would crush them to make the process easier. After I finished playing around with the dead moth, I'd dispose of the leftover pieces by feeding them to my now dead pet tarantula. They made a nice delicacy for the little guy, or I'd at least assume because I never had the desire to try a dead moth.

Was I heartless as a kid? Certainly, however, I didn't even know the bugs had brains. Size-wise moths aren't super big, and I thought all brains had to be large, larger than a bug at the very least. At the end of the day, I was just a kid who was wondering why they stupidly chose to chase after this one light. Empathy for the moths never really came until my mother saw what I was doing.

She hurled the instant she saw what I was doing. My mother called me every name under the sun: psychopath, sociopath, future serial killer, and so forth. She treated me as if I were a devil. I was no longer her sweet little boy, and she no longer wanted to play the role of mother.

Why? What did I do wrong?

She divorced my father, and he didn't take the divorce well either. His parents were strict. Ground you for the entirety of your teenage years level of strictness. Perfection wasn't a goal, it was the expectation. When he had to explain the divorce to his parents, they said, "You are a traitor to what our family stands for. Never refer to yourself under our last name ever again."

He had nothing. No purpose. Just a kid, himself, and the same old apartment that reminded him of a gleeful past. He felt that he needed more. He felt that he needed more to be whole again.

If there is demand for something, there will be someone supplying it. Online, there were millions of ideologues looking to sell their ideologies to get a quick buck. My father bought all of them. All the popular ones, and all the fringe ones. At the time, I would've told you the most outrageous one he believed was that the wealthy global elite were working on a cure for mortality, and that we needed to become rich in order to protect ourselves from the ruthless elite. Due to recent events, it seems more plausible.

How would we get rich? Me, of course! Despite his grudges he had over his parents' treatment of him, he repeated the cycle for me. Being a savior of me and him would be worth it in the end. Just focus on work and school, and don't fall in love! I'd get to sleep with any girl I wanted once I was rich anyway, so who needs love?

Thus, I began to work. Elementary school blew by and my teachers thought I was a genius. Middle school blew by and my teachers thought I was a genius. Freshman year blew by and all of my grades were stuck at 99%. It wasn't good enough. I wasn't good enough. How would I be rich if I couldn't even get a 100%?

What purpose would I serve to anyone if my grades weren't perfect? School was my everything, and I had no time to waste on meaningless hobbies and entertainment. Once studying was out of the way, I'd go around the city looking for work so I could get paid. I spent all of that time and despite everything I was still unable to climb higher than some of my other classmates. I was useless, and I would never be able to do anything properly.

Death was what I deserved.

If I hadn't met her, that was where my story would've ended. I needed my own savior, and I met mine at the beginning of sophomore year: Elaina.

She was the one who started talking to me first. People scared me too much due to how unpredictable they were, so I typically avoided people. During lunch, I'd escape to a nearby park to eat. I'd always be sitting right next to the tire swing. One day she approached me and asked if she could sit next to me. Before I was able to force out a response, she was already sitting

down and asking why I was always sitting alone by myself out here. That was just how she was. You could be a criminal with multiple felonies, and she would always optimistically approach you and try to have a nice conversation with you. I guess that's what made her so endearing to me.

I told Elaina that I was feeling tired and down. I don't remember why I was depressed. she offered to go and spin on the tire swing with me in order to "brighten my spirits." I obliged and we both stuffed our legs into the tiny tire that was clearly meant for young kids. One of Elaina's friends spun the two of us around on the swing. While the world was blurred from the two of us spinning around on the swing, all I could focus on was Elaina's smile that was brighter than the sun. Before that day I never tried to look another person in the eye, but I finally looked at her face while spinning around.

I fell in love instantly.

Eventually, I found myself orbiting around her and becoming closer with her. All my problems disappeared once I was with her. Nothing else, not my mother, my father, or any dumbass conspiracy theory, mattered except for my lovely Elaina. She was everything I wasn't: sociable, optimistic, and charming.

A year later we went out to the theaters to see a movie about a zombie apocalypse. I didn't remember the details of the movie or the plot because I was more focused on what I wanted to ask her afterwards. We left the theater and I managed to muster a few words that would forever change my life, "Elaina, would you be fine with dating me?"

She said yes.

For the next six months, I was on cloud nine. Love made me feel higher than any drug could. While doing things over and over like kissing led to diminishing returns on that high feeling, everything new I did in the relationship felt great. I wanted to gush about her to anyone and everyone as another way to push the envelope further, and I planned on telling my father about our relationship the day before Valentine's Day. When that day came, however, I never got the chance.

I sat on the couch waiting for him to arrive home that fateful day. The clock turned its hand from one to two to three to four and so forth. Light that pierced through the window slowly dissipated as darkness consumed the land. Once the clock struck one again my father entered the household.

An alcoholic stench flowed through the room. My father was barely standing because of how drunk he was and had very red, puffy eyes. While fighting his tears, he punched a hole into the wall of the apartment near an old family photo with my mother and screamed, "I hate this goddamn prison cell!"

I tried to pull him away and stop him before he could do anymore damage, but he continued his confused, drunken ramblings while fighting me, "Everyday. Every damn day, I'm forced to think of you! My family used to love me, I used to be fine, but now I'm forced to deal with this."

He sagged down to the floor and let the tears pour out, "I just wish I wasn't so fucking miserable."

I guided him to the bathroom and he began chuckling to himself and muttered something about the end of the world. I dismissed it as nonsense and went to sleep immediately. After I woke up, however, I knew something was off immediately.

I turned on the TV, and my father was right for once.

There was a zombie apocalypse.

Whether or not it was due to the rich elite as he had previously claimed didn't matter to me though. My life was flipped upside down for seemingly no reason and my father had vanished from the apartment, but Elaina's safety was my bigger concern at the end of the day.

Ding-dong. It was the doorbell. It was Elaina.

Thank God, she was still with me.

We hugged, and I wanted to lean in for a kiss, but she pushed my mouth away and said she had bad news for me. A zombie had bitten her. Elaina and I only had a little amount of time

left together. She only had one request, "Can we watch some zombie movies together before I'm gone?"

And so, we watched a few movies. Even though I was uncertain as to whether I would be alive tomorrow, I wanted to give this one last Valentine's gift to her, but it still felt wrong. I never wanted this feeling to go.

It was nighttime by this point, and the screaming and chaos outside had subsided. My girlfriend was starting to clearly lose herself, as she began to speak worse and she couldn't stop drooling.

"I thank it'sh time for me ta leave," Elaina said as she got up and went towards the door.

"Don't," I said as I grabbed her hand. "I'll be here with you until I die. I want to be with you until I die."

"Wha if I turn you inta zombie?" she said.

"I would rather die a painful death than lose you." I responded.

With that she agreed that she would stay the night out in the living room while I slept in my bedroom. As she predicted, the next morning the Elaina I knew was gone. Now it was just an empty husk of what she was. Whenever she heard me speak to her, she would bang as hard as she could on my bedroom door. Not strong enough to break into the room, but enough to make her presence clear. Maybe, just maybe, she would transform back to her normal self I hoped, or maybe my dad would come home.

Nothing of the sort happened. Food, at least what little of it I had ran dry quickly. I knew that I had a choice to make. The part of me that hoped that this would all end as quickly as it started was gone, and I knew that if I wanted to live on I would need to leave the apartment. Still now, I think that would be the wrong choice. I spent sixteen years on this planet only to enjoy six months of it. Maybe the hunger drove me insane, but I knew that I would have nothing without her, and I could tell she was getting hungry like me.

I was sick of being hung up on the past.

I was sick of being like my father.

I wanted to go back.

And so, I left my bedroom. I left it and like the moths I went to my love, my guiding light and leaned in for a final kiss.

She ripped off my lips and is continuing to satiate her boundless hunger with the rest of my body. Even as my body gets devoured, I don't feel a singular regret.

I would have been satisfied with a life outside this apartment. Outside of Elaina. What could've been doesn't matter to me anymore though. All that matters to me is that I was loved. Even if I'm just a final meal for her, Elaina and I had one more unforgettable moment where we loved each other.

Short story inspired from the songs "Zombies" by DECO*27 and "Kalopsia" by Queens of the Stone Age