2017

The Origin of Gin Reaper

Sabrina N. Jimenez

Find similar works at: https://stars.library.ucf.edu/horrorshort
University of Central Florida Libraries http://library.ucf.edu

Recommended Citation

This Short Story from 2017 is brought to you for free and open access by the KnightVerse at STARS. It has been accepted for inclusion in Knight Terror by an authorized administrator of STARS. For more information, please contact lee.dotson@ucf.edu.
Lauren had become a regular at Gin Reaper, having spent several consecutive weeks tapping her pumps to the pianist’s rendition of modern pop and downing wine glasses without regard for her swollen abdomen. With unexpected pregnancy costs and growing debt, the bar had proven itself a welcome escape from reality.

One fateful night, Lauren found herself slumped on yet another barstool. This one, however, was situated at the pianist’s apartment. She'd lost her purse and heels en route. Remarkably, she didn't seem too concerned. Her face was rarely ever free of worry lines; the pianist attributed her chronic anxiety to the baby. He stalked up behind her and laid his palm against her baby bump. With luck, Lauren would never feel it kick. The pianist knew firsthand what an unexpected child could do to a mother in Lauren’s situation; his own mother deeply regretted having birthed him, and it was a regret she carried down six stories and into her unmarked grave. The memory would surely haunt the pianist into his own.

He occupied himself with Lauren’s hair, twirling it into a bun. Pulling a few strands loose, the pianist marveled at the resemblance both women shared. He held a pocket mirror to her freckled face. “Like it?” Lauren's unmoving eyes gleamed at the sight of her reflection, leaving the pianist perplexed by her loose-lipped frown. Lauren usually smiled with her teeth. The pianist, however, had never been on the receiving end of it. Unbothered, he planted a kiss on her cheek and let his lips linger by her ear.

“I know what’ll make you smile,” the pianist whispered, heaving her into his arms and setting her down at a piano seat. He sat beside her and Lauren sagged against him, her head coming to rest upon his shoulder. The pianist shuddered at the unexpected contact, his contentment translating through the music that poured from his fingers at each stroke of a piano key. His gaze shifted to the balcony as the music took a melancholic turn. There sat a rocking chair, swaying gently in the breeze. The pianist could visualize his mother reclined in it, the sun drawing a natural glow from her freckled face. The face that peered into his only moments before leveling itself on the pavement.

A forceful knock startled the pianist from his thoughts. The police had arrived. Lauren's head lolled back unceremoniously as he ushered her through the glass balcony door. There was another loud knock followed by a muffled warning. The pianist swung his legs over the balcony railing, clutching Lauren to his chest just as she returned to consciousness.

Although Lauren’s baby was salvaged from her fractured body, the Gin Reaper has yet to hire a long-lasting pianist; the moment they touch the keys in her spirit’s presence, their death warrant is signed. Without music, the only sound resounding from the Gin Reaper’s walls is that of a mother’s pitiful cries, making it the renowned tourist attraction it is today.