

## **Bloodshed**

by mazaher as Jack (font: Courier New)  
and athens7 as Patrick (font: Verdana)  
July-August, 2011

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The events take place in late February-early March 1897, after "Close encounter" and "Sleeping" and a few days before "Catharsis".

Warning: unwarranted self-inflicted harm, questionable sexual practices, and don't forget that this is *\*fiction\**, folks. By all means do suspend disbelief while reading, but then switch it on again, and stay safe.

The story issues from a discussion we had about the lengths Jack is ready to go at a moment's notice on Patrick's behalf. We are aware that Jack's solution is unadvisable under any circumstances (in other words: do *\*not\** try this at home, *\*ever\**), but we feel that his case stands, as an instance of calculated risk taken in order to prevent otherwise inevitable, very likely worse damage.

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### **1. Jack**

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If it don't end in bloodshed, dear,  
it's probably not love.

-- Tom McRea, *My Vampire Heart*

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Patrick is stretched on the sofa, his burgundy silken dressing gown tightly wrapped around his lithe naked body.

He has just taken a hot bath --a touch of his favourite vetiver in the water-- but it has done nothing to dispel his irritable mood.

We have been travelling across the Continent these last two weeks, rushing between destinations: Lille, Amiens, Reims, then south as far as Dijon of the golden cathedral, the façade haunted by a forest of thin columns, an eerie host of carved figurines crowding under the arches of the portals as though in a painting by Monsù Desiderio.

From Dijon we have reached Strasbourg and made our way along the Rhine, drinking Blauburgunder in Worms, hock and seltzer in Mainz and Riesling in Bingen. Then east to Würzburg and south again, Heilbronn, Stuttgart, Schaffhausen, Zürich... Meiringen and the Reichenbach falls looming on the horizon like an evil mirage. Four days ago, the lake of Luzern sparkled turquoise at midday below the window of our room at the inn in Küssnacht. But the nearer we have been getting to our unspoken, ultimate destination, the more restless Patrick has become, until he couldn't stand it anymore. I saw something breaking in him, and he couldn't help himself: he just had to flee. On a sudden whim, he hired a carriage which brought us and our hurriedly packed luggage to Luzern; from there we sped to Bern, then Fribourg and finally Montreux.

Here we are now, comfortably settled in the most luxurious suite in the Hôtel Helvétie, as the sun is setting beyond the old tiled roofs of the houses along the quay and shadows grow dimmer in the corners of the room.

But his mind is far from settled, to say nothing of comfortable.

He's been re-reading Byron's *The Prisoner of Chillon*: never a good sign.

He's been sleeping little, eating less, and not speaking at all.

I have tried to distract him, talking about history and art and music, the pen with the bears in Bern and Rossini's *Wilhelm Tell* and Sarasate's last composition for violin and piano, *Viva Sevilla*: he turned a deaf ear. I went on at length about the effort it must have been for the ancient Romans, trying to have properly messy orgies in such a punctiliously tidy corner of the world: in vain. I suggested a visit to Bayreuth for the Festspiele in August (they're giving *Das Rheingold* and *Tristan und Isolde*).

"The detective has a fondness for Wagner," I said.

He answered curtly that he has no patience for such shapeless music.

This happened two days ago, and that's the last I managed to draw from him.

I sit in silence on the armchair next to the sofa, and I don't know what to do.

It breaks my heart, seeing him like this.

His eyelids have slipped almost close: is he asleep? I watch his chest, count the breaths. No, the rhythm is irregular, the inspirations superficial. Now he stirs, sits up, curls forward, dipping his face in his upturned hands resting on his raised knees. His dressing gown slips open, flowing down like the folded wings of an angel. But he's no angel, and surely he's not in the peace of heaven.

I can't stand this anymore.

I rise quietly from the armchair and make my way to the sofa. Slowly, silently, I settle on my knees at his back, my hands on my own thighs. I wait. I keep my breathing deep slow and even, hoping for his body, if not his mind, to respond and release him from the torture of his heart.

He doesn't move, but I begin to hear deeper inspirations and expirations: still constricted, but regular.

Then I dare.

When words fail, a different language must be attempted.

I pass my hands on my trousers, so as to make a small noise in warning, then I raise them until my fingers graze the collar of his robe. As gently as I can, I slide it down, revealing his pale shoulders. I breathe on them, so that he won't feel the chill of the late winter evening on his naked skin. Then I begin to rub the points of his shoulderblades, protruding sharply from his slim back above the texture of his ribs.

He's far too thin.

I keep at it, deepening the pressure, widening the circles, adding the tiniest touch from my blunt nails (a pattern I learned in Russia) until he draws a sigh, and his muscles begin to unclench under my hands.

I press my palms lightly to the sides of his neck, then slide them down in long repeated strokes reaching his narrow hips. He breathes in rhythm now; I guide him with my hands, feeling his ribcage expand and contract under my touch.

He doesn't raise his face from his joined knees, but he lets his arms fall limply down along his sides, the left one settling between seat and backrest, the right dangling free.

This speechless conversation is going much better than whatever words I spoke during the last week. I feel that his pain has not left him, the searing pain which I am forced to witness but which I could never understand; yet he seems now calmer, more focused. Restored.

Perhaps I should stop here, and not try my luck-- but there is so little I can really do for him, and this moment is so magically dense with possibilities, that I yield to temptation. I nestle my left hand in his hair, just above the nape of his neck, and begin to massage his scalp with my fingertips.

His breathing stops, and so my heart: but I go on, trusting instinct more than reason, and look, he makes a small sound --half sigh, half grunt-- while I lean closer and keep massaging.

He's smacking his lips now; my touch excites him. I can't see his face, but I know his eyes are half-closed and his face is smooth and relaxed like it never is outside these stolen moments.

Languidly, his right hand snakes up and back, taking hold of mine, dragging me forward until I lean onto his back. He brings my right hand to his lips and begins nibbling on each finger, licking the palm, nuzzling.

This is wonderful, this is more than I could hope for, and I am greedy, a glutton for his pleasure.

I continue scratching.

Suddenly, he turns around with a growl. His dressing gown slips off him and half to the floor. Naked and hard, he faces me kneeling on the opposite side of the sofa.

"Off with your clothes," he orders, in a low hiss which chills my bones.

Silent and still like an idol carved in ivory, he watches as I comply.

I shiver.

An idol expects a sacrifice.

But there is nothing, nothing I wouldn't do for him.

I don't care that I'm now naked in front of his desire, naked and soft, left behind by my own concentration on providing him with some relief.

What I care about, is that he's alive again, for a while.

He raises one hand as if to touch my shoulder, but he doesn't. He stops and stares at me through narrowed eyelids. His sex twitches, the tip bobbing. I feel my own stirring, responding. He doesn't move, he just stares, as though he could see my blood flowing in waves through my veins and pooling, pooling hot between my legs.

He doesn't touch me.

He's making me hard, just by watching me.

He waits until my breath gets short and I'm as hard as he is-- as hard as I ever got. Then,

"Your turn," he says under his breath. He grabs my neck, half-rises on his knees, shifts himself forward, and God in heaven, he's trying to impale himself dry on my prick. Again.

His senses are so keen, his perceptions so finely tuned. He was made for pleasure, and I can't stand the thought that something happened and hammered into him the conviction that his pleasure must be bought with pain. Who could have been so cruel as to draw him into such a hard bargain...?

I'm desperate enough for his safety that I manage to stop him this time, although I have to physically lift him up and slam him back, not even so gently, against the opposite armrest.

"Wait, you idiot," I huff.

I hold him down with the full force of my left arm, and fumble with my right hand among my clothes strewn on the ground. Where is the damned...

Here.

My small steel scalpel, a Wilkinson piece which I always carry in my back pocket.

Using only my thumb, I pop the cap off.

I have no time to disinfect it now; I trust myself to have cleaned it properly last time I used it.

Most of all, I don't care a damn.

Better my blood than his.

It's the work of a moment to slip the edge along my left forearm.

It doesn't even hurt, the blade is so sharp.

Dark red blood gushes forth from the vein in small pulses, not nearly enough to need stitches and much less drain me to death, but definitely enough for my immediate purpose.

I focus back on Patrick; I start, feeling him tense like a wire under my hand.

I look at him.

He's staring at me, pupils dilated to black orbs, and on his face a look of such sheer, humbling adoration that I shudder. No human being is worth such a look.

I hear a small wet sound: my arm is dripping blood, on my thighs, on his legs.

I stroke my right hand on the bleeding cut, gathering up fluid, then I smear it on myself, coating my prick.

"There," I say, "if you want," and I release him.

He surges up and forward, kneeling in front of me as if in prayer. He quickly looks up at me, then his eyes turn again to the cut, the bleeding slowly stopping already. He takes my arm in his hands like a blessed relic, bends down, and kisses it, until his lips are crimson and I lean my head back in torture and bliss.

"Please," I sigh, and I close my eyes.

I am his to do what he wants.

He grabs me by the shoulders and he lowers himself on me and it is my sex that penetrates him but it feels like if it is him fucking me, because I am whole in his hands from the inside out, my bones and guts and muscles and tendons and this slick blood that allows the rhythm of our thrusts to slide effortlessly, deliciously, like the bow on the strings of Sarasate's violin as he plays *Malagueña*.

When we come, his small gasp and my muffled shout together make a perfect chord.

He's the first to revive after tonight's bloody little death.

"Quite unsanitary, I must say."

Good. He's speaking again.

"Let me worry about that," I answer. "Surgeons have secret agreements with their scalpels, didn't you know?"

"Hmmm... I'll have to do some espionage, then. I don't like being kept in the dark-- about things which touch you."

"In the physical sense, or the metaphorical?"

"Both."

"Oh, and why the sudden interest...?"

He turns his eyes away.

"Well?"

He mumbles something.

"What?"

"Because you're mine."

And he takes my face between his hands and he kisses me.

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Oh, you're in my blood like  
holy wine, and you  
taste so bitter and so sweet...

-- Joni Mitchell, *A Case of You*

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## 2. Patrick

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The water envelopes my body with scalding intensity, and I welcome the momentary distraction with a gasp.

With every inch of skin progressively covered, a correspondent, infinitesimal fragment of my brain seems to finally shut down.

It's only a momentary illusion of course, and as soon as I reach sensory adaptation ("But then by dull degrees came back / My senses to their wonted track...") the chant begins again, as if it never stopped.

"My limbs are bow'd, though not with toil / But rusted with a vile repose..." I murmur to the unknown ceiling.

The verses have just escaped my lips, and already with my mind's eye I can see the subtle, hard frown of condemnation wrinkling my beloved's brow whenever he catches me skimming through the worn-out pages of *The Prisoner*.

'Wallowing in self-pity', is what he calls it. (Or maybe that was my voice?)

Will Germany ever end? I am fairly certain I will throw up if I have to visit one more charming locality.

Hateful, so hateful. There's no place for me among the living.  
My breathing begins to quicken in familiar hyperventilation, my heart a hammer smashing my ribs. I feel like my skin is being scrubbed with sandpaper.  
I try to relax teeth I didn't realise were grinding, and force my numb fingers to release the edges of the tub.  
I am so lost in my mind's mayhem that I dared call Wagner's opera 'shapeless'.  
If anything else wasn't, this certainly is a caveat for my elusive sanity. May the Valkyries have pity of my crushed soul.  
I wonder... can a single man survive with so much negativity held within himself? How long 'til he disappears, becomes a non-real entity? It's just mathematics, after all.

Maybe if I drill two holes in my temples, at least a portion of my brain will be discharged, and I will no longer be able to think. Such an endearing possibility, but somehow, I am not certain I can persuade Jack to lend me his scalpel to perform the experiment. More's the pity.

The shadows are growing longer and firmer along the walls. The end is approaching, I can feel it. Every step takes me nearer to the water, and with every step I go slightly madder. And again, a hoarse whisper asks the eternal question: What am I doing here?  
This is not my (our!) place, is it not? This is not our journey. It's a creeping pantomime of someone else's fate, an allegoric tapestry woven by my restless memories.

"But this was for my father's faith  
I suffer'd chains and courted death;  
That father perish'd at the stake  
For tenets he would not forsake."

Wrong wrong wrong! It must not necessarily be so! You are free! Why can't you see it?  
I'm sorry. I simply can't. The snow makes even the smallest movement so tiresome and difficult.

When I scream at last, no sound comes out. Sparkles of oxygen running madly towards the surface instead, and vetiver-flavoured water flooding my mouth, my throat.  
I was drowning, and did not notice a thing.

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He's still sitting in the armchair of course, composed and obedient like a cat politely waiting on the doorstep.  
The burgundy dressing gown is a coat of chainmail hollowing my shoulders out and suddenly I can't feel the floor under my feet anymore.  
The sofa catches me at the very last moment, a sprawl resembling the elegance of a floating dead jellyfish.

What am I doing here, what am I doing here? What will I do when the last of the lights goes out? Out in the darkest night, how will I be able to recognize his hair -- his eyes?

"A lovely bird, with azure wings,  
And song that said a thousand things,  
And seem'd to say them all for me!  
I never saw its like before,  
I ne'er shall see its likeness more."

Enough! This is too much! I sit up, curl into myself, hide my eyes behind my palms. To be born blind and never have known the kindness of his face!  
It would be so much more tolerable.  
Go away, leave me alone. A hermitage, and all my own!

But there, rustle of skin against refined fabric, a fair warning, and then a touch, the only thing that could ever anchor me to this grey, inconsistent reality. Alright then. As long as he is part of it, I will try to bear it.

He strips me down to the bone, pierces the veil, reveals me in all my misery.

And the best part is, he doesn't care when he sees it.

On the contrary, he wants it, takes it, manipulates it until it turns into the opposite thing.

When his hand finally settles in my hair, something stirs in the pit of my stomach, ancient and terrible like the waterfall looming at the borders of my inner perception.

Yes, yes! Take me, take me! It's all I have to offer after all, and if you are so hopelessly, stupidly in love to be satisfied with it, then who am I to blame you? I wait for the day you'll turn the other way. But until then, I'm yours and you can do anything you want with me.

I turn, face him, ask my price.

And he pays it willingly, as always.

I observe transfixed as his quiet sex lifts and begins to fill with his scorching life force: a sight more mesmerizing and heartbreaking than the sea waves incessantly going back and forth along the shoreline.

I wait until he catches up with me on the edge of this insane lust, then I grab him, brace myself for the offering. Because, even during these bestial moments the awareness that to every action there's an opposed and equal reaction never leaves me. I am not allowed to feel pleasure without pain: the two must always remain together within me.

Wrong again! He screams, without even moving his lips. He pushes me away, with such desperate force that my head hits the armrest and I can smell the heavy pressure of blood in my nose septum.

I struggle, trying to straighten, but he keeps me pinned to the cushions using just his left hand (for the first time in forever, I regret my self-inflicted diet) while the right rummages frantically on the floor.

A pop, a white blade dancing in front of my eyes.

The intent look of concentration upon his face, the collected focus binding all the strong lines of his being, his vein so entrancing in its fullness -- and then that first red drop, and my mouth simply waters at the sight.

My eyes waver, filled with images and suggestions buried deep in my mind: pale faces and sharp fangs and lascivious sighs and torn flesh -- Could the answer be this simple?

Would you finally heal me, if I ate you? His fingers tasted so delicious just moments ago.

I take his arm, praying to a God that died a long time ago that he will let me; I bring my lips to the cut -- so excruciatingly beautiful in its precise purity -- and suck, his moan a low note sweeping away all thought.

The flow seems to be endless, unstoppable, and I drink, I drink, like the Apostles drank the wine offered by the Lord. The blood slides down my throat, floods my stomach, where it will be processed, reduced to its essential atoms, and become part of me.

His cells feeding mine, in total assimilation: what other form of symbiosis could ever be more perfect than this? The thought makes me delirious.

I'm trembling with arousal by now, my prick hard to the point of hurting. Taking my lips away from his slashed skin is quite probably the most difficult thing I have to do in my entire life. But I can't make us wait anymore.

I straddle him, and a small measure of panic comes back to me. My skin burns, my heart shrieks, the past and its ghosts rising like bile in my throat.

No no no no! Not to be seen like this! He can see too much! You'd better run, run, run!

But then I feel the caress of his flesh, his hot blood wetting my quivering entrance, and I am lost.

I sink into him as he sinks into me, and almost immediately he moves, a sword ravaging my core.

When we come, two distinct thoughts cross my mind before it blanks out completely: that his semen is now joining his blood inside me, and that I hope I will never wake up again.

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Of course I wake up, and before him, as always. And of course, the first words I manage to speak in weeks are of sarcasm, aimed at playing down the intensity of what we just lived: an established mechanism of self-preservation that prevents my joy from making me forget who I am.

I just don't know another way.

But even in this he follows me, intelligent and unafraid, using the patience of his bottomless heart, blunting my sharp retorts, turning them into fond banter, into another form of love.

Then he lets a trickle of his self-doubt seep through his walls, out in the open, and I can't but respond. Because he's everything good the world has ever had to offer, and he must know it. It's the highest form of justice I can imagine.

"Because you're mine" I say, and the beast inside my head howls at the heresy. It's like saying that I own Bach's Goldberg Variations while all I do is defiling them with my clumsy touch. I can study the architecture and learn to perform the variations as fluidly as possible, yet I'll never penetrate the spirit lying beneath. But we are in the middle of night, and this darkness has a different quality than that of my nightmares. It hides my demons instead of revealing them, and for one moment I can cherish the illusion that, yes, he belongs to me.

I kiss him, brief and soft like a sip of water, then move and whisper into his cheek, "And cheering from my dungeon's brink/ Had brought me back to feel and think."

"Maybe Byron is not as bad an influence as I thought, after all" he smiles, a hushed current of contentment buzzing under his (our!) skin, and he brings me to bed.

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Notes:

1. For Monsù Desiderio (François de Nomé, 1593- after 1620) see

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fran%C3%A7ois\\_de\\_Nom%C3%A9](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fran%C3%A7ois_de_Nom%C3%A9); more pictures at

<http://allyoutouch.wordpress.com/2010/07/16/through-portals-of-the-sense-sublime-and-whole/>

2. Pablo de Sarasate composed *Viva Sevilla!* op. 38 in 1896; *Malagueña and Habanera* op. 21 go back as far as 1878.

2. On June 22, 1816, while sailing with Shelley on Lake Geneva near Montreux, Byron conceived the idea for *The Prisoner of Chillon* from the life of Swiss patriot François Bonivard, who in 1532-36 was imprisoned in the nearby Castle of Chillon.

3. There is a nod in here to *Astérix chez les Helvètes* by René Goscinny and Albert Uderzo (1970).

4. Sherlock Holmes' interest in Wagner is mentioned in the last paragraph of Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Adventure of the Red Circle* (1911), later reprinted in the collection *His Last Bow* (1917). William S. Baring Gould sets the episode in 1902, but his appreciation had likely taken root earlier than that.

5. "...a pattern I learned in Russia": I wonder if anyone will ever recognize the pattern in question... (maybe bronctastic at Brokebackslash...?) Massage -- long strokes -- carding through hair... Obvious enough. Or not? ...I leave the hint hanging as a memo to myself of when and how the idea for Jack's physical therapy on Patrick came into my mind.

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