




I'D RECONCILED MYSELF TO SELLING OUT MY PARENTS TO THE SURGEON IN THEORY. BUT THE REALITY WAS SOMETHING ELSE ENTIRELY.




"NOTHING COULD HAVE PREPARED ME FOR WHAT I SAW AND HEARD THAT NIGHT."



"THE SURGEON HAD SLICED THEIR VOCAL CHORDS SO THEY COULDN'T CRY FOR HELP."


"BUT THAT DIDN'T STOP THEM FROM TRYING."

"WHAT DID IT SOUND LIKE?"



"YOU KNOW THAT SOUND YOU MAKE WHEN YOU BREATHE ON A PIECE OF GLASS TO POLISH IT?"

"NOW IMAGINE THAT SOUND WET WITH BLOOD AND SNOT AND FEAR...YOUR BREATH FAST, FAST, FAST, PUTTING EVERY BIT OF YOUR AIR INTO IT, TRYING TO SCREAM--"



"--TRYING TO LET THE HORROR OUT AS YOU LOOK DOWN TO SEE YOUR BODY BEING DISSECTED RIGHT IN FRONT OF YOU, AS A DISEASED EXCUSE FOR A HUMAN BEING PERFORMS AN AUTOPSY ON YOUR LIVING FLESH --"



"--AND ALL YOU WANT IS TO SCREAM, BUT YOU CAN'T...YOU CAN'T...YOU CAN'T..."

"IT FELT LIKE IT WENT ON FOREVER, AND ALL I CAN THINK, OVER AND OVER, IS --

"-- WHERE IS HE?"

"THEN I HEARD IT: FOOT- STEPS. SLOW. MEASURED. CAREFUL. COMING CLOSER.



"AND I KNEW I WAS UP."

"AND NOW THAT SAME SOUND WAS COMING OUT OF ME. WANTING TO SCREAM, BUT TOO HORRIFIED TO DO MORE THAN --

--HUUUCCCCCHHHH--

VERY GOOD, YOUNG SIR...



"WHERE IS THE RED COWL?"

...FEAR IS PRECISELY THE RIGHT RESPONSE WHEN CONFRONTED BY THE ARTISTRY OF --

--THE SURGEON!

MOMMMMMM!
DAAAADDDDD!



"AND THEN... THERE IT WAS..."

MONSTER!





...MONSTER...
...DEAR GOD...

YOU'RE
TOO LATE, RED
COWL!



THE
NIGHTMARE
CANTATA HAS
BEGUN AND
YOU CAN'T
STOP IT!



THIRTEEN
MORE DEATHS
AND THEN ACT
TWO!



"THE RED COWL
COULDN'T AFFORD
TO LET HIM ESCAPE.

AND NEITHER
COULD I.



"THERE WAS ALWAYS THE
CHANCE HE'D BE CAPTURED
LATER AND TELL EVERYONE
HOW MY PARENTS CAME TO
BE IN THAT ALLEY."



NO!

HA-
HAAA-HA-HA
HAAAA!

Fwoosh

"I COULDN'T
TAKE THAT
CHANCE."