

Of Sin and Memories

by Najee Brooks

He's out there again. The man, or being, that always gain ground every time I see him. He gets closer each night. Tonight he's at my porch steps. Tomorrow, he'll be at my door. The next day we'll meet for the first time, face to face like good neighbors. The man is always nude, but seeing him like this brings to my attention that he doesn't have any distinct sex organs. He's thin with lanky limbs, he's like a dead tree, his body waved in the wind: left to right, steadily.

"Will you be in bed soon, Derrick?" my lover asked. She's still in her clothes, so I guess she's going up to get ready. She's new around town and is waiting for a great night.

"Yes, Kim," I said.

He's on my porch now. It's odd for him to move twice in one night. "Hey, pal?"

He shifted to me. His wiry hair draping over his hollow eyes. He looks like he bathes in cigarette ash, but his skin is blemish free.

"Who are you?" I asked.

He didn't respond.

"Uh, Derrick?" Kim ask, coming down the stairs in her underwear.

"Yes?"

"Who are you speaking to?"

"No one."

"Well then, I'm ready,"

"No."

She paused. "No?"

"Yeah, go back upstairs," I said. There is no need for her to get involved.

"Um..." Kim's attention was on the door.

"What?" I asked. The doorknob jiggled.

"Who's at the door?"

I unlocked it. "There you go."

"Wait a sec, I didn't agree to more than one guy," Kim said.

"I have a visitor."

He cracked the door opened just bit and wriggled through.

"Oh my god." Kim leapt over the stair rail and bolted to my backdoor. The visitor didn't even inch towards her. He stood before me, still swaying.

"Is this the finale?" I asked.

He nodded yes. He pressed his hand against my chest. His eyes stayed glued to mine.

“I know who you are now.”

He tilted his head.

“You’re not a child of God, nor the Gods, nor the Universe. You’re the embodiment of our mistakes,” I said.

He nodded again.

“I Zwielicht,” he said. His voice was like my father’s and oddly like my mother’s. His voice had two tones, one was soft and light and the other was deep and flat.

For the first time in a decade, a tear ran along my cheek, “You’re here to cleanse us, you’re here to reap the world of its imperfections. We’re your children.”

His hand slid to my throat and squeezed. I felt his nails pierce my skin. I could have fought, but I didn’t have the strength. I was exhausted, my psychological strength, I want to see my loved ones again.

Everything was black for a moment, then an image began to manifest. A light shined and I could see.

“Derrick?” it was my father.

“Sweet heart,” my mom said, tackling me and kissed me everywhere: from my forehead, my cheeks, and lips. It was an assault.

“Yo, D,” said my cousin, Charles. Next to his wife.

“Butterball slimmed down since college,” my friend, Mike said, punching my shoulder.

They were all here, the whole team. Everyone who I lost was with me. “Is this heaven?”

“Everyone keeps asking that. All I know is that we’re all here and we’re all happy,” my mom said.

I just hugged her tighter, I heard her gasp like I squeezed the air out of her. I can’t let go though, I won’t let go. We can create new memories here in heaven or whatever this paradise was. I was glad to be here.