

My Friend, the Executioner

written by

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INT. EXECUTION CELL - DAY

A narrow, sterile room. One wall is solid concrete. The other: bars. Fluorescent lights buzz overhead.

THE EXECUTIONER, late 40s, sits just outside the cell in a plain police uniform—walkie-talkie and sidearm at his belt. Clean. Still. A man of routine, not menace. He faces forward, away from the prisoner.

WALKIE (O.S.)

Chair will be live in about five minutes.

EXECUTIONER

Copy.

Inside the cell, on a hard cot, sits MARTY—50s. Soft in the face, paunch at the belly. His shirt is tucked in with effort, his hair combed wrong.

He leans forward, elbows on his knees, speaking. Not loudly. But like he's been talking a while.

MARTY

People are so judgmental now. You work for one guy with a... "flexible" relationship with the law, and suddenly you're the head of some kind of criminal ring.

A pause. He gestures vaguely.

MARTY (CONT'D)

A ring. What is this, a Tolkien novel?

He lets out a small chuckle. It bounces off the concrete like a bad joke at a funeral.

MARTY (CONT'D)

My lawyer told me not to talk.

MARTY (CONT'D)

(mockingly)

"Anything you say can and will..."

MARTY (CONT'D)

—yeah, yeah. If I could keep my mouth shut, I wouldn't be here in the first place.

He shrugs, adjusting his shirt like it'll sit better if he tugs it enough.

MARTY (CONT'D)
Poor guy. Looked like someone put a
tie on a turtle.

A longer pause now. He shifts on the cot. Breathes through
his nose.

MARTY (CONT'D)
So what's your actual title?
"Executioner" sounds medieval. I'm
picturing you with a big hood and
axe.

beat

MARTY (CONT'D)
What are you, like... "Corrections
Specialist Level Four"?
They give you a badge for that?
Do you guys do holiday parties?
What's that like?

(beat)

MARTY (CONT'D)
Do you get dental?

(he chuckles at his own joke)

MARTY (CONT'D)
I'm just saying—if they're gonna
have you kill a guy, the least they
could do is throw in Invisalign.

(he glances over, no response)
Tough crowd.

MARTY (CONT'D)
You know they use Courier New on
the paperwork?

He glances up, half-expecting agreement.

MARTY (CONT'D)
Like the actual death sentence.
Courier New.
It's... ugly. Makes it feel cheap.

Beat.

MARTY (CONT'D)
You ever think about fonts?

A pause. Longer this time.

MARTY (CONT'D)
No, of course you don't. You kill
people.

Silence. A low buzz from the light. Marty rubs his palms
together and keeps going.

MARTY (CONT'D)
So... do you have kids?

Nothing. Not even a blink.

MARTY (CONT'D)
No? Yeah. Not everyone does.

He shifts again. Leans his weight on one side.

MARTY (CONT'D)
A dog, maybe? Or a cat. Or—I don't
know. A cactus.
Something to come home to?

Still nothing. Then—

MARTY (CONT'D)
A husband?

The EXECUTIONER glances up. Brief. Automatic.

MARTY notices. Smiles—not smug. Gentle.

MARTY (CONT'D)
Oh. Sorry. I wasn't—didn't mean
anything by it.

He rubs the back of his neck. The EXECUTIONER turns back
away.

MARTY (CONT'D)
You seemed quiet. That's all.

MARTY swallows his spit.

MARTY (CONT'D)
People assume a lot. You get that
too, right?
You do one thing, and they think
they know everything.
But maybe you're just... doing your
job.

Marty looks through the bars. His voice lowers.

MARTY (CONT'D)
You seem like someone people get
along with.
When you're quiet, people assume
you're thinking.

A pause.

MARTY (CONT'D)
I think too. I just... let it out.
Like a leak in a radiator.
Same pressure, different sound!

He almost laughs. Then—

MARTY (CONT'D)
My cousin used to say some kids
learn to juggle
when the house is on fire.

Beat.

MARTY (CONT'D)
You drop one pin, everyone looks.
So you learn to keep them in the
air.

He lets that sit. Then, softer—

MARTY (CONT'D)
I don't know. I just get the
feeling people...

He breathes in. Looks at the executioner. Says it plainly:

MARTY (CONT'D)
Like you.

Silence. Absolute.

Marty looks down. Doesn't try to explain it.

A long pause.

MARTY (CONT'D)
Don't most guys usually get a
crowd?

No answer.

MARTY (CONT'D)
Not like I'd have a lot of people
coming.

Beat.

MARTY (CONT'D)
My sister came to an open mic once.
But that was different.

MARTY (CONT'D)
She left early. Said the drive back
was long.

MARTY (CONT'D)
She's a good sister though. Always
laughed at my jokes.

(He shifts a little. Something sinks in.)

MARTY (CONT'D)
I got sick on stage once. Could've
been a school play. I was a tree, I
think.
One of those background roles they
give kids who talk too much.

(A pause. He's quieter now.)

MARTY (CONT'D)
Nerves, maybe. Or lunch. I puked.
All over the floor. Everyone
laughed.

(He rubs his hand against his pant leg.)

MARTY (CONT'D)
My sister was there. She didn't
laugh.
She just looked at me.

(Beat.)

MARTY (CONT'D)
I still think about that look. I
don't know what it meant.
She didn't say anything. Just
looked like...
Like I'd ruined something.

(He sits still now. Eyes glassy.)

MARTY (CONT'D)
I think I embarrassed her.
Not just that day. Always.

(A long beat. He swallows.)

MARTY (CONT'D)
(He opens his mouth to say
something else. Stops.)

(He wipes at his eyes. Barely.)

He doesn't laugh.
He just sits in it.

FADE TO BLACK.

...
JUMP CUT - The buzz of fluorescent
lights. The hum returns. The door
opens again.

Another GUARD enters.

GUARD
Time.

Marty stands.

As he steps toward the door, the EXECUTIONER finally speaks—
quietly.

EXECUTIONER
You were right about the font.

Marty stops.

MARTY
What?

EXECUTIONER
Courier New. It's hideous.

Marty doesn't move. Doesn't speak. Just... smiles. A tiny,
broken thing.

Then he nods. And walks out.

FADE TO BLACK.