

A Cannibal's Love Story

Von abgemeldet

Prolog: ACT I – THE LIVER

Seven of them, all of the same brownish grey like the earth they were so violently wrested from; five of them were quite big and strong, looking rather healthy; then there was their younger brother, rather small compared to them but still fresh and youthful. And then there was the misfit, yes, he even was a little paler and more grey than brown, and his face that must once have been full and pretty was now all wrinkled up, deep furrows running through the dry skin.

Mrs. Crotchet screwed up her face at the sight of the bad potato which looked a bit lost between his younger brothers. She had no pity left for him, none at all, in fact she was quite irritated by that ugly potato being in her sack, even though she had wanted to buy the most prettiest potatoes of them all, and finally she had chosen this very family just to realize she had chosen one with a cripple. Her fingers, callous with gout, clutched the little bag in anger when she looked up and stared at the person facing her. "I bought the family with the cripple!" she gabbled in excitement, furious about her own stupidity.

There were only two people in the compartment, and still, the person she wanted to inform about this brash potato wasn't reacting. It was a young man, not older than twenty, eyes closed, the slightly ruffled hair hanging in wet wisps down to his shoulders, brown like a chestnut. Or a very dark potato.

"The cripple!" she repeated, now a little excited. "Can you see?"

Due to the loudness of Mrs. Crotchet's indignation the young man woke up, blinked once or twice and noticed a pair of watery eyes staring at him from a skeletal face, looking as if it was not skin but old leather covering the bones underneath. The old woman sat there like a toad focusing him like he was an insect, unlucky enough to be her next meal. He remembered having heard about that in his Biology classes ...

And Mrs. Crotchet's enthusiasm grew even stronger when she realized that he really intended to have a serious conversation with her. Quickly she raised the potato sack in front of his face and pointed at the malefactor. "See here, there's the Cripple! I didn't want any cripples, these potatoes are for my daughter, she is going to visit me this weekend, and, yes, she loves potatoes so much, and I thought of cooking her potato dish, I thought. She will like it, she likes potatoes. So do I, I and my daughter have so many things in common, we really have! I haven't seen her for so long, she hardly comes to visit me but now she really is going to. And I want to do something good for her, since I am her mother and she is my child. And I thought of potatoes." Then she smiled and nodded to confirm their obsession with potatoes.

Silence. Just the steady rumbling of the train. The young man tilted his head, taking a closer look at the little sack, his eyes as maroon as his hair. "If I may ..." he mumbled

quietly after some moments of examination and took the sack from her, holding it like a newborn child in front of him. "I see your point", he continued with a mundane voice. "There really is a cripple in there."

Mrs. Crotchet embosomed the boy immediately; after all he had an eye for potatoes. He lowered the bag and looked at the old woman with a weak smile. "Though, it is very rude to call it a cripple when it can hear what you say, Madame. And maybe it is not a cripple at all, simply a potato that grew too old ..." Carefully he put a finger through the net and touched the little vegetable gently. "You know, I like potatoes, too," he said, giving another smile. But not for Mrs. Crotchet – it seemed to be for the potato.

"Oh really? What a very nice young man you are, indeed! I am sure, you and my daughter ... you would go very well together."

A friendly chuckle, then he looked out of the window into the dawn. "I have already found the girl I love, sorry."

The goggle-eyes were still resting on him, twitching from his face to the potatoes on his lap and back. The fingers of his right hand played absently with the net of the sack and Mrs. Crotchet thought of her daughter again. She'd really be visiting ...

Suddenly, the young man moved again, giving back the precious potatoes and said quietly: "I am sure your daughter will enjoy them. Unfortunately my girlfriend doesn't fancy potatoes a lot, that's why I'm doing without them now."

But the old lady was occupied with the Cripple again, a peacefully senile expression on her face. Yes, there was no cripple; there was just a very old potato. He kept watching her for quite some time just until he felt a well known drowsiness coming over him. But as soon as he had closed his eyes once again, Mrs. Crotchet started to talk.

"When she was just a tiny tot" she continued, eyeing the raindrops on the pane "she used to jump into every puddle along the way."

The young man straightened up and said good bye to an hour of dozing; as a grandson he knew very well of the loneliness of seniority. He nodded sympathetically and met her eyes as she searched for his attention. And with every story told Mrs. Crotchet's face appeared a little livelier, she seemed to be truly content to share her words with someone other than herself. It must have been a long time that someone really had listened to her; and it really was interesting from time to time. Her young listener learned that she was a child of the Second World War, that she became a mother very late and that her husband died of cancer when her daughter was just twelve. And even though he really cared about the life and the fate of Mrs. Crotchet, his thoughts kept drifting away from her monologue.

Every now and then the old lady's face changed into another one, a well known one that kept smiling at him. The time for losing his nerves was when it was night, not on a simple train ride.

"Have you heard of that girl gone missing?" the old lady asked suddenly, drawing all of his attention. "What was her name? Lily Evans?"

"Stevens. It is Lily Stevens. Lily Evans is from Harry Potter ..." He had never expected that senile old grandma to come up with something like that. Furthermore, he had no intention to speak about that topic; too often he face smiled from a newspaper, too often a reporter talked about the 'Mysterious Vanishing of Lily Stevens'. For days the statewide media had kept stripping the case of Lily Stevens down; and even in the international news it had already been mentioned. "How couldn't I have heard of it? Why are you asking?"

"I hope my daughter travels safely; God knows what can happen to little girls nowadays." Without a warning she took his hand and started patting it. "If every man was as friendly and nice as you, mothers like me wouldn't have to fear for their precious daughters."

Her skin was as scratchy as her voice, still he smiled at her. "Thank you very much. Unfortunately I have to get out at the next station, Madam."

"Is that so" she muttered silently, a shade of sadness in her voice, as much as in the last senile smile she gave him. "Very nice talking to you, nice young man. Godspeed!"

And for the last time he smiled back, like he had done a hundred times during their conversation. "Greet your daughter. And have a safe trip ..."

Mrs. Crotchet looked out of the window again and saw the platform, lightened weakly by two lanterns; the third one was broken. And then there was that young man stepping into the cone of light, into the rain. "What a very nice young man indeed" she told the pane and patted her potatoes absentmindedly.