

His body stuttered as it slipped down the wall eventually slumping in a heap to the floor, his hands grasping at the hilt of the knife disappearing into his stomach. Sarah stared at him, puncturing his body had deflated him, he lacked substance now. Sarah took time to reflect on her feelings. Dr Daniels had explained how it was important that she take some time every day to stop and listen to her body, to listen to how she felt. That had made her confused. She couldn't hear her body, it was silent. Should she be able to hear something? And if so, what should she hear?

His blood began to soak into his polo shirt; the stain now expanding across his chest. She watched his glazed eyes glare back at her, accepting of the inevitable. He didn't seem surprised by her defence. Sarah stepped back once more as the blood began to pool on the floor. This blood wasn't from the entrance hole of the knife, the blood there was minimal. That blood had produced a rather attractive ink blot pattern on his shirt.

Sarah allowed a smile to skate across her lips. That felt strange, it had been such a long time since she had smiled. The blood stain reminded her of the images from the Rorschach test, they were the favourite of all the tests Dr Daniels had given her. The patterns made by the ink or in this case blood, were supposed to access her subconscious, were supposed to reach deep into her feelings getting her to express her thoughts beyond the superficial. She had found it difficult to locate her emotions; to express her thoughts. They were in storage, packed in white polystyrene curls like quavers, surrounded by brown card and sealed with a thick transparent tape. They were secure, hidden from the world. Her survival depended on keeping them hidden, on being quiet.

Sarah tilted her head, peering at the ever increasing pattern on his shirt. Perhaps to access her subconscious the test had to be made of blood, more specifically her 'uncle's' blood. Perhaps that was the point of all this, that only when he was bleeding to death on the floor did she feel safe enough to open the box. Perhaps that was why she used a knife that was the ideal tool to slide effortlessly under the thick tape binding the edges of the box together.

Fifteen minutes had passed and he was still alive. This was disappointing; on the television most deaths were instantaneous. She had never watched a programme where the murderer had to wait around for the victim to die. She touched the chair behind her with her finger tips, and sat down never moving her eyes from his face.

It definitely looked like a bird, not a phoenix like in the Harry Potter books, just an average everyday bird. She could see its wings stretched high as it prepared to push down and take off into the sky. The noise could have been its feathers moving but it was the soft rustle of her toes wriggling, they were cold and she was moving them to warm them. Where had her tights gone? She glanced furtively around, the candy striped tights hung from the arm of the sofa. He had always been so generous, he had always bought her pretty things, usually pink, usually expensive, 'nothing but the best for his special girl' was his mantra.

He coughed and blood leaked from his lips. She watched a slow trickle run down the corner of his mouth.

20:30

The clock chimed again. Why wouldn't he just die? The waiting was allowing her body to thaw, she could feel now; she could feel the gentle ache in her back where she had fallen against the table, the sharpness on her thighs where his nails had caught her tender flesh, the gentle throb of her ribs as he pressed onto her.

She rehearsed the next stage, when they asked her how she got the knife she needed to

shake her head and start crying. It was just there on the table; she reached out and felt the wooden handle and she used it to protect herself. She knew she had to acknowledge that she had done wrong but she had just wanted it to stop and the knife was just there, it was God.

There was no sound from him now. The blood continued to gather, they would know how long she had waited by the amount of blood on the floor. Sarah didn't care, she stood cautiously and side stepped to the phone. She couldn't cry on the phone, she knew it would seem better if she had cried, they taped all emergency calls, and on replaying the tape she would sound wooden, distanced from the crime. That was accurate, her body was playing its part but she had been unable to access her feelings. It was more difficult than expected to retrieve them from storage. She could hear an ambulance, were they coming here, that was quick. The door burst open and she could hear men shouting and stamping up the stairs. She couldn't shout to direct them, she wasn't allowed to make a noise, she had to be quiet.

The police had arrived first, they wore big shiny shoes. They didn't know how to act, no one ever did. They gathered around her uncle and she kept back out of the way trying not to be a nuisance. When the ambulance arrived so did the blanket. Someone held her then, fearing to touch her skin. He was guiding her gently away from the body. He knelt down in front of her and she turned from the body for the first time.

"Are you Sarah?"

She nodded.

"Are you hurt?"

How could she answer the question, she still couldn't get into storage to retrieve her feelings.

"Sarah, are you hurt? The ambulance is here they can help you."

She stared at the paramedics and watched them try to smile. No one knew what to say, how to act, and neither did she.

"Her hand, there's blood on her hand."

The policeman lifted it gently turning it over slowly.

"Is this your blood? Is your hand hurt?"

Sarah stared at her hand, that wasn't her blood. Her blood was red and this was black. How had she got blood on her hand, then she remembered the knife, pushing the knife deep into his body, trying to ensure that it wouldn't escape. It was his blood and she had killed him.

The clock started to chime and she felt herself move slowly to the door and down the stairs. She glanced back as the final strike rang out. Her candy stripe tights were still there on the chair and as the tears rolled down her cheeks, she wept for their loss.