

PAM SCOTT

The Orphan's Valentines

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Contents

1	Autumn	1
2	Winter	15
3	Spring	30
4	Summer	41
5	The fall	72
6	Thank you	82

1

Autumn

THE ORPHAN'S VALENTINES

A THRILLER DRAMA
BY
PAM SCOTT

A dimly lit room, possibly a dining area, with a table and chairs. The room is cluttered with various items, including a large white vase, a blue bag, and a small figurine. The lighting is soft and moody, with light coming from windows on the left and right. The overall atmosphere is mysterious and unsettling.

THE ORPHAN'S
VALENTINE

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At sunset, in an alley next to a restaurant, a little girl named Devin plays with a kitten, completely ignoring her father's calls.

"Devin! Devin!" he shouts several times, but she doesn't respond.

Frustrated, he walks over to her and grabs her hand. As they walk, Devin starts crying.

"I want her, Daddy! I want her!" she pleads, but he keeps walking, ignoring her cries.

The cat lets out a soft sound, almost as if calling her.

Behind a dumpster, a Young Guy known as Y.G. in his twenties watches the scene. He steps out, smoking a cigarette. Dressed in a hooded jacket, his face is cold and distant. He stands next to the cat, which tries to climb his boot. He looks down at it with an emotionless gaze.

He turns and walks away, leaving the cat behind.

He walks through the wet city streets, lost in thought.

The narrator's voice says:

"We all know that feeling, finding a small friend we can't take home. I know how that little girl felt. I know how the cat felt. I've felt that way my whole life."

Y.G. arrives at a middle-class neighborhood.

He opens the gate to a backyard. Through a kitchen window, a woman named Brana smiles and waves at him. He looks past her, noticing the overgrown, dark abandoned house next door. His expression softens slightly, as if consumed by memories.

Brana opens her door to greet him, but he's already gone.

In the backyard of the abandoned house, Y.G. wanders around, as if he knows the place.

He turns and sees Valentine, another young man his age, watching him with an indifferent expression.

“Sorry, I just wandered here. Something about this place felt familiar,” Y.G. says.

“I’m sure it did,” Valentine replies.

“Do you... live here?” Y.G. asks.

“Not anymore. The state seized it,” Valentine answers.

“What happened?” Y.G. asks.

“Don’t you know?”

“No, I was just bringing something to the house next door,” he replies.

Valentine looks up at the sky. “I used to lie here and watch the sky while my breath turned to mist in the cold air. The stars... Mars, Jupiter, Venus—beautiful, cold nights.”

Y.G. folds his arms against the cold, shivering.

Valentine says, “Let’s go inside before the cold gets to you.”

As Valentine heads indoors, Y.G. hesitates, overwhelmed by a sense of unease.

He touches the collapsible baton hidden in his pants, then follows Valentine into the house.

The house is old, empty, dark, and cold.

Y.G. moves cautiously, feeling the walls like a blind person searching for direction.

In contrast, Valentine navigates confidently, as if he can see invisible furniture. He effortlessly avoids obstacles.

The living room is large and empty, with a tall window letting

in faint sunset rays.

Y.G. reaches the living room and finds Valentine standing by the window, staring outside, focused on something unseen.

“This is where I saw him fall for the first time... and the last,” Valentine says quietly. “I was only ten years old.” He pauses before adding, “It was Valentine’s Day. Just like today. Ten years ago. Since then, every year, I remind myself of everything.”

Valentine moves through the room as if he’s walking through a museum.

Y.G. watches silently, confused and unsure, his expression full of hesitation.

“This house...” Valentine begins, “still feels the same. Every step I take shows me pictures. Every door I open whispers echoes of the past. Every wall I touch tells me my story.” He pauses, his voice dropping, “I tried to write it down once, but I stopped. I was scared it would bring everything back—the torment, the pain... But it’s all here. Carved into my mind. Every detail, every look, every laugh. I can still feel it, as if it’s happening right now.”

Y.G. still holding himself for warmth, watches Valentine walk toward the staircase. His youthful face contrasts sharply with the heavy atmosphere surrounding them. Valentine stops at the base of the stairs.

“I used to sit here,” he says, his voice softer. “Alone. In the dark. Watching them all. The holidays, the vacations, the summers... They played, talked, ate together—without us.”

Valentine turns to the young man and says, “Come. Let me show you something.”

Valentine pushes the door open, stepping into a large, rectangular room. The space is dark, cold, and empty, with long windows lining the walls.

Y.G. follows cautiously, his eyes scanning the room with suspicion.

“It’s still cold, just like it always was,” Valentine says, his voice distant. “The only place where I truly felt I belonged.”

Holding a small paper doll in his hands, he adds with a faint, sorrowful smile, “I had strange questions, a strange imagination. I made my toys out of paper. Watching all those shows on TV... well, at least he tried his best.”

The scene shifts to a flashback of the early 2000’s.

The room is warm and bright, filled with furniture—a comfortable couch, a table, and a television. The light floods the space, casting a cozy glow.

Around the dining table, a family gathers: Joseph, the father in his forties; Mary, a 15-year-old girl; Martha, a 13-year-old girl; and little Valentine, barely five years old, full of life and playful energy. They share dinner together.

Valentine’s voice narrates, “But he seemed so distant, like he didn’t care. He spoke softly, looking at me with eyes full of sorrow...”

The memory fades, bringing us back to the cold, dark room.

Valentine continues to gaze at the paper doll in his hands.

Y.G. stands near the window, looking outside. His eyes catch the remains of an empty picture frame hanging on the wall.

Valentine says, still staring at the doll, “It felt like he was stuck

here with us.”

He walks toward the window. “ it’s no longer there. It always stood by this window.”

Valentine moves closer to the window as well, his voice lowering. “My father used to talk to me about God. He said God would punish me if I lied, stole, or behaved badly.”

The scene shifts again to another memory.

The family is gathered around the dinner table. Valentine’s father points toward the window, speaking calmly to the little Valentine, though the narration continues in Valentine’s voice.

“He pointed to the sky through this window, talking about God.”

the little Valentine’s gaze follows his father’s gesture but stops at a picture of the moon hanging beside the window.

“But I misunderstood. I thought God was in that painting.”

The young Valentine’s eyes remain fixated on the painting.

“Whenever I did something wrong, I would come here, to that painting. Like a pagan, with a sad face, apologizing, asking for forgiveness.”

The scene shifts again.

the little Valentine peers through a hole in the bathroom door. Inside, a woman in her thirties, Sarah, is taking a shower.

“One day, my grandmother was sick, so my aunt Sarah and her daughter Irene came to visit. Sarah was taking a shower. I found a hole in the door and watched her. She was naked, and... I liked it.”

Valentine’s narration pauses briefly.

“But then, I felt something else. Fear. Like something immense surrounded me.”

The little Valentine pulls back from the hole, trembling.

“Somehow, I thought of God. I felt His presence there...”

We return to Valentine and Y.G., both standing by the window.

Y.G.'s face shows a mix of curiosity and amazement.

Valentine, composed but cold, gently touches the faint outline of the old painting on the wall.

“That’s when I realized... God was bigger than the painting by our window. I can still feel it—that weight on my chest,” he says, his voice quiet and weary. “Like I killed a child. Maybe I was that child.”

Another memory flashes.

the little Valentine kneels under the window, tears streaming down his face, silently pleading with clasped hands.

“I begged beneath this window. I prayed for it to stop, for peace to come.”

We return to the dark room, where Y.G. is sitting under the window, lost in deep thought. His face reflects the despair we saw on the little Valentine.

We hear Valentine’s voice saying, “And that’s all I ask for now.”

Y.G. snaps out of his daze. His expression softens, returning to his innocent features. He notices Valentine holding a chair—it’s the same chair from his childhood. His face changes to one of shock as he scans the empty room, wondering where the chair

came from.

Valentine says, “I still hear Mary’s words in my ears. I see her clearly—the way she stumbled that day.”

We move into a memory of Valentine. Little Valentine is running around the room, joy lighting up his face, and his voice narrates, “We had a tradition. Every time we heard our father was home, we would rejoice.”

Back to the present, Valentine and Y.G. remain in place. Valentine continues, “I mean, he was all we had. And he always brought something for us...”

We go back to Valentine’s memory. Little Valentine is lying on the floor, his screams filling the room, blood flowing from his mouth. Mary and Martha rush in, their faces pale with fear.

“Don’t cry. You’ll be okay,” Mary whispers as she hugs him. Her voice is shaky but soft, the only comfort he had in that moment.

Back to the present, Valentine’s gaze is fixed on the faded spot where he fell.

“That’s all I want to hear,” he whispers, his voice heavy with longing.

We shift to an image in his mind, pulling us back to that day. Little Valentine, trembling, is being carried into a hospital room. Nurses hold him as he screams and struggles against the burning pain of the needle piercing his jaw. But we only hear his voice narrating, “They couldn’t numb a small child. I had to feel every moment of it.”

After the stitching is done, his father, who had been waiting outside the room, takes him in his arms and carries him home as if nothing had happened.

That night, with bandages on his small face, they all sit down to dinner. Mary and Martha take care of him, asking if he's okay. His father, usually distant, is different that night. He's present, even smiling. He puts a radio on the table and says to Martha, "Tell your teacher I just changed the batteries."

Little Valentine looks at him, his voice still trembling. "You can say you actually fixed it. It's easy money." His father smiles and gently places his hand on little Valentine's head. "And what do I tell God when I meet him?"

Back to the present, Valentine smiles as he remembers. Now, the room is dark, cold, quiet, and empty. His finger traces the scar on his jaw, still there—a reminder of pain, love, and salvation.

"and I was only five... I had everything that day. Now, all I have is this scar,"

he whispers to himself. His eyes drift to where the table once stood, and with slow, tired breath, he adds, "Every time I remember this, I realize how deep I am in."

We transition to another memory, showing a small child in diapers, standing at the threshold of the dark room, listening as Valentine continues the story,

"These memories, my favorite side, they're all inside this threshold..."

The scene shifts to outside the room, where the child now faces us, still standing at the doorway. We begin to retreat, "I didn't know what awaited me behind this door, the wide world,

my family.”

We move to another memory, in a sunlit living room with simple furniture. Little Valentine stands on the stairs, watching his grandmother Rachel, who is in her seventies, Sarah, Irene (seven years old), and Jake (twelve years old) as they gather to prepare for summer and swimming.

Little Valentine watches their preparations with curious eyes. Lilith, in her fifties, arrives to take them. Everyone gets into the car. As the car drives away, little Valentine steps out onto the street, his eyes filled with tears as the car disappears.

We return to Valentine, lost in his memories with a cold expression. In contrast, the Y.G. looks at him with deep sympathy.

The scene shifts back to little Valentine, sitting on the sidewalk, tears streaming down his face.

The narrator continues, “I cried that day. I felt a deep loneliness.”

We return to Valentine and Y.G.

“The girls weren’t around. As they grew older, they spent more time with their mother. I don’t blame them. Who could stand living in that house?”

A child of Valentine’s age opens the door for him, and the narration continues,

“Then I wiped my face and went to play with a neighbor’s child...”

In the living room, the furniture is beautiful and luxurious,

suggesting wealth and comfort.

“His father was a doctor, and he had all the toys I’d dreamed of my entire life.”

The two children play joyfully with a set of toys while the other child’s parents talk in the kitchen and cook. It seems Valentine hears their voices.

“That day, his parents were in the kitchen, making fun of how we kept the fridge in the same room we slept in, how we all shared one room without a kitchen...”

Tears fall quietly down his cheeks, but his small face shows no signs of sadness. Without saying a word, he quietly stands and leaves the house.

“While I played, the rest of my tears fell onto my hands, but I didn’t cry. I stayed there for a while, then... I left.”

Little Valentine sits alone on the sidewalk, watching other children play with their bikes, balls, and new toys.

His eyes follow their movements, but he stays still in his place.

Valentine narrates, “No one in this neighborhood wanted to be my friend. Even my family seemed to ignore me. The kids outside...”

We return to the dark room, where the young man listens attentively.

Valentine continues, “For no reason, I stood alone and watched them play with their toys... I had nothing of my own. I didn’t have anything I could call mine.

I watched and told myself, ‘If I were one of them, I would have given me those toys.’

But that didn’t make sense. If I were them, I would have kept the toys for myself. This thought made me realize the difference

between me and them. If I were them, then selfishness is altruism .”

Y.G. looks at Valentine in surprise. Valentine smiles sarcastically, reaches for a pack of cigarettes, pulls one out, and lights it. “Don’t look at me like that. I told you, I had a strange imagination.”

We go back in time. Little Valentine meets Irene. Several shots show them spending all their time together, playing and laughing.

Valentine narrates, “One day, Sarah was arrested for writing bad checks. She spent two years in prison. During that time, Irene came to live with us. She was my first childhood friend.”

In a quick shot, Valentine sees Irene leaving Uncle Chuck’s room.

“She told me her mother used to send her to steal money from Uncle Chuck whenever they came here.”

Back to the dark room.

Valentine takes a drag from his cigarette. “I was stupid... and she wasn’t, but I was a good boy, and she wasn’t.”

Little Valentine waits for Irene outside Chuck’s room. He feels nervous as she takes longer than usual.

He hears a strange sound from inside, slowly pushing the door open.

He opens the door and sees Chuck holding Irene, touching her and pressing her against him, his lips moving closer to her face. Chuck notices the boy standing there, shocked, and Irene seizes the opportunity to break free and run away.

Valentine narrates, “I was waiting for her outside, but she

took longer than usual. I pushed the door... I saw him holding her, touching her, and kissing her. As soon as he saw me, she ran.”

the little Valentine and Irene run to the dark room. They shut the door tightly.

Chuck’s footsteps come closer quickly. He tries to force the door open. His shadow appears under the door, and the children’s breathing grows faster. They stand still, hearing his footsteps fade away slowly.

“We ran to the room. I closed the door... his heavy footsteps and his shadow under the door... and we were terrified.”

Back in the present, Valentine stands by the door as if reliving the scene, his eyes full of anger. He says, “Every time these images repeat in my head, I ask myself the same question... What did I not see?”

Y.G. “Oh my God... the girls!”

“What did they go through that they couldn’t talk about? How many other little girls lived through this nightmare in this house?”

Y.G. asks, “And you let him live among you?”

“My grandmother allowed it.”

“Why?”

Valentine answers, “For his pension. Chuck was an engineer. He lived a great life somewhere else, but ended up here, losing his mind. I don’t even know where he is now... My grandmother took his money, just like everyone else... That’s normal in this house.”

He pauses for a moment, looks at Y.G. with a bitter smile and says, “Don’t worry, nothing happened yet.”

2

Winter

THE ORPHAN'S VALENTINES

A THRILLER DRAMA
BY
PAM SCOTT



THE ORPHAN'S
VALENTINE

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Mary is lying on the couch, crying bitterly, while Martha stands, terrified. The father is reading some mail, his face showing anger and shock. Little Valentine, with his innocent eyes, watches from his seat at the table. The food is ready, but no one eats.

“Alright, it’s over. Start packing your things, you’re leaving tomorrow,” Martha says, crying. “Please, Dad, don’t leave us. We don’t want to live with her. She always hits me.”

“It’s a court order, I can’t do anything. Pack your things now,” the father replies.

Martha tries to hug her father, but he stops her harshly. “Stay away from me, you’re not even my daughter. Go to your mother, the whore, and let me live my life.” All of this happens in front of terrified Valentine.

Little Valentine watches from the window as Mary and Martha cry while getting into the taxi, while the father puts the bags in the trunk. We see how lonely Valentine feels.

He watches for a few moments. In the background, we hear the father entering the room.

“Enough. Come finish your meal, do your homework, and go to sleep,” he says.

little Valentine moves without blinking.

Back to the present, Valentine says, “After years of court battles, the girls’ mother won custody. At first, she didn’t want them, but once she settled and built her life, she filed for custody of them. Even though Mary and Martha hated her and hated spending time with her, my dad wasn’t someone they preferred

either. And so, the only good thing for me in this house, left.”

“Your mother took your sisters and left you,” Y.G. says.

With a sarcastic tone, Valentine responds, “You’re right. My mom really left me behind, but it wasn’t this time.”

Little Valentine opens the fridge to find it empty. We see him pale and weak. Frustrated, he goes to his bed.

Later, in the dark, the father arrives, drunk, swaying and making noise while Valentine stays in place, lying down, hugging his pillow, hiding under his blanket. We see a cold look on his face for the first time.

Back to the present, Valentine says, “After that, my dad went back to drinking, and this time he overdid it. You might think he was celebrating Mary and Martha leaving, but if you looked at him, it was the opposite. He aged quickly, right before my eyes, day by day.”

Back to the past, it’s midnight. We see little Valentine eating bread and milk hungrily while the father watches. His face is covered with his beard, struggling to sit normally, clearly drunk, but there’s a look of satisfaction and joy in his eyes as he looks at Valentine. They look at each other.

Valentine narrates, “That night, I knew my dad had lost his job completely because of his drinking.”

In the hospital, we see from outside the room, the doctor talking to the father in the bed. Suddenly, the father starts screaming and crying, forcing the doctor to leave. We follow the doctor outside to find little Valentine, terrified, standing alone while the nurses try to calm the father.

The narrator says, “A few months later, my dad had a car accident under the influence of alcohol, and he became paralyzed.”

In the neighborhood, little Valentine is on the ground while other kids laugh.

The narrator says, “The kids in the neighborhood found it funny. They told me that my disabled dad wouldn’t be able to protect me, and that they would take my things from now on.”

Early in the morning, little Valentine stands on his way to school, looking at his father in a wheelchair, wearing a diaper. Valentine mimics a gun with his hand and slowly moves his hand toward his father’s head. Suddenly, the father’s eyes open wide in a terrifying way.

Back to the present, as if Valentine woke up from a nightmare, his breathing is fast and we see the fear in his eyes.

“Are you okay? Calm down, calm down. Do you need water?” Y.G. tries to comfort Valentine.

Valentine, breathing heavily, says, “Sorry, Dad, sorry, Dad,” focusing on the spot where his father used to sit in the wheelchair.

Images of the next scene begin to appear, as if Valentine is seeing this memory in front of his eyes. Little Valentine, bruises on his face, seems to have just arrived from school. He stands in shock at the doorway, gradually pulling away from him as he stands there, wetting his pants. We turn to see that his father has committed suicide with a gun, and the room is filled with blood.

Back to the present, the same shock is on Y.G's face, but Valentine only looks coldly. "I killed my dad, I did it."

We return to the memory again, exactly when little Valentine approached his father, making a gun shape with his hand. The moment his father's eyes opened, suddenly, his father lunged at him and began beating him viciously, shouting, "You too, you son of a bitch, you want to get rid of me too."

"Please, leave me, please stop!" Valentine begs, but his father falls from his chair. Valentine manages to escape, leaving his father screaming with all his strength, "I'll kill you, I swear I will kill you!"

Days later, outside the house, Valentine's father in his chair, and little Valentine, his face covered in bruises, hides behind the priest.

"Son, please come, don't be afraid," says the father in a soft, tender voice.

"Come on, Valentine, go to your father, it's been a week now, you need to go back," the priest says.

The priest leaves, leaving little Valentine standing there in fear, and his father slowly approaches him. His father hugs him and says,

"My little son, what have i done? I'm sorry, I'm sorry. I promise I won't hurt you again, I promise." He holds Valentine's face and adds, "You won't have to be afraid of me anymore, I promise."

Back to the present, Valentine says coldly, looking at Y.G's shocked face,

"The next day, he blew his brains out."

We go to the funeral. The same expression we saw on Y.G. On little Valentine, the bruises starting to fade, standing by his father's grave. Grandma Rachel is crying bitterly while everyone leaves. Moments later, the priest comes with a woman in her forties, looking deeply affected. She calls out to Valentine, who is standing next to his grandmother.

"Valentine," she calls, her voice full of concern. With a fearful look and eyes full of tears, he looks at her.

"Come here, boy, that's enough for today." says the priest, But Valentine ignores him and goes back to staring at his father's grave.

"It's okay, you can come back anytime, always, just not now."the priest adds

The woman approaches him calmly, bending down to examine his face and features.

"My God, you're so beautiful, Valentine, just like I was when I was young. Do you remember me?" she asks.

Little Valentine, in shock and fear, says nothing.

The priest says, "Don't be afraid, little one, this is your mother."

The mother embraces him, but Valentine keeps the same expression.

Back to the present, Y.G. seems like he just asked a question.

We see a look of relief on Valentine's face, as if he feels something good.

"I never knew I had a mother. That thought never crossed my mind. After Dad found out his wife was cheating on him, they divorced," Valentine explains.

We return to the past, the mother sitting in a café, watching a

couple with their child, seeming happy. The voice of Valentine continues.

“And my mother was desperate, waiting for anyone, even if it was my father.”

We move to another memory. Little Mary, three years old, sitting and staring, while one-year-old Martha cries in the middle of the night. The father looks confused, insomnia written all over his face.

The narrator continues, “On the other hand, all my father wanted was a woman to take care of his daughters, the house, the laundry, cooking, and the bed.”

The mother holds Martha and plays with her, the house looking clean and lively. She hands a cup of tea to Grandma.

They all sit at the table for dinner, looking better.

Valentine narrates these events, “And my mother accepted it.”

We return to the present, and Y.G.'s expression shows that he is deeply connected to the events. Valentine remains with his cold expression.

“In the early years, it was bearable, but my father couldn't move on, he couldn't. What his first wife did, bit by bit, he started neglecting everything.”

We go back in memory, five-year-old Mary stands in the bathroom doorway, looking at the mother. The mirror's reflection shows the mother with bruises, trying to hide them with makeup.

The narrator continues, “...violent.”

Back in the present, Valentine says, “He started spending all his money on alcohol.”

We flashback to a scene from the past, the father is unconscious outside a bar.

The narrator continues, “Until he went bankrupt.”

Back to the present, Valentine adds, “Of course, this wasn’t what my mother expected, it’s not how she imagined it.”

We go back to the past again, five-year-old Mary at the same bathroom doorway sees the mother applying heavy makeup, not to cover the bruises, but for decoration, wearing immodest clothes.

Back in the present, Valentine continues, “That was the final blow to my father.”

We flashback to the room, Mary hugs her sister Martha. The two little girls hide in a corner of the room, while we hear the mother’s screams.

The narrator says, “When my father found out, he went mad. Every day he came home drunk—beating, raping, until my mother got pregnant with me.”

Back in the present, Valentine adds, “About a year later, on a regular day, my father came home from work, but it was too late.”

We go to this memory, the father is shocked, the grandmother is sitting on the couch, looking angry and disappointed. Little

Mary is holding the newborn. "My mother had already left, and she left me behind."

Back to the present, Y.G. looks at Valentine with sympathy and regret, still sitting under the long window, with Valentine's usual cold gaze.

"Again, the same thing happened to my father. That's how his collapse happened."

We return to the scene of the mother hugging little Valentine at the cemetery.

The narrator continues, "And so, my mother came to me, or maybe she just had nowhere else to go."

In the present, Valentine adds, "My grandmother liked the idea. She needed someone to take care of her too."

We go back in memory, Valentine's mother gently washing little Valentine in the bathroom, while he is calm and mesmerized by her.

In bed, the mother hugs little Valentine, and they both fall asleep. We see peace on Valentine's face as he sleeps.

The narrator says about this scene, "It was nice, warm, something I hadn't felt since Mary and Martha. Something I missed and would miss for the rest of my life."

Little Valentine sits on the stairs, watching his grandmother, Lilith, Sarah, Erin, Jake, and another uncle named Butch, a man in his fifties. Hatred and jealousy are visible in Butch's eyes as he looks at Valentine. Valentine gets scared and runs up the stairs.

Back to the present, Valentine continues, “My mother took care of the house, my grandmother provided the money. At least everything was stable—food, warm water, that heater.”

We return to the past, two years after the father’s death. The grandmother is lying dead in her room, on her bed.

Lilith and Sarah are crying beside her, the mother is hugging Valentine. In the background, we hear Butch speaking on the phone, “Yes, she died this morning...”

We focus on the mother’s face; she looks frightened and terrified.

At the funeral, the mother and little Valentine are standing alone, while the priest Joseph, Sarah, Lilith, and Butch are speaking at a distance.

Their expressions show a heated discussion, and the priest is trying to calm things down.

The narrator says, “My grandmother’s will was that the house should not be sold until I was older, or at least that’s what the priest told them.”

We return to the present, and Valentine continues, “Of course, especially since I’m not one of them, and I never will be. They went crazy, but they had another plan.”

We go back to the past, where Butch is showing different people the rooms of the house for rent in various scenes.

The narrator says, “The priest was really able to convince them that it was my grandmother’s will, and that in just a few years I would be old enough, but it wasn’t enough for them.”

We see little Valentine standing at the bathroom door. The bathroom is locked, and we hear the sound of water running in the toilet. Then the mother opens the door and comes out.

The narrator says about this scene, "Because of the constant change of tenants, I used to follow my mother to the bathroom to watch over her."

We return to the present, and Y.G. and Valentine are in the same position, sitting under the window and on the chair.

Valentine continues his story, "We also had to pay rent; that was the deal my family made with the priest."

We go back to the past, and little Valentine, curious, is standing at the bathroom door, just like Mary once did, watching his mother apply heavy makeup.

"My mom worked at anything..."

With a look of frustration, little Valentine walks away.

In the dark room, during the day, the room is dark, cold, and lifeless. Little Valentine is eating at the table, and his mother sits in the same chair, smoking and looking out the window.

The narrator continues, "... and everything, even things I don't want to think about."

We return to the present, with Valentine smoking and looking out the window, while Y.G. looks innocently, like little Valentine did.

"Wasn't it hard for you to be angry at your mom? I'd be angry because she left me, maybe."

"I can't be angry at my mom... At school, everyone talked about their moms and Christmas presents."

We move to a memory of Valentine walking out of school. It's pouring rain, and all the other kids are getting into their mothers' cars, while he walks home in the rain and cold.

The narrator continues, "Everyone else found their moms waiting for them in the car."

We return to the present, and Valentine continues, "I thought I'd experience the same thing, but life had other plans."

Now a teenager, Valentine's mother looks older, tired, and restless. She talks as though she's complaining, holding bills in her hand. Exhaustion is visible on Valentine's face. We hear nothing but the narrator's voice:

"Over time, with all the pressure, my mom became very tense and irritable. She would complain about everything I did, as if I was the cause, as if I was the one who brought her here, as if I was the one who kept her here."

Teenage Valentine looks out the window. Outside the house, a fancy car pulls up. A well-dressed woman hands a large suitcase to the mother. The mother tries to kiss the woman's hand. The same cold look is on teenage Valentine's face.

We return to the present, where Valentine is sitting in his chair, smoking.

"I was fifteen when I got tired of people giving my mom charity, their old kids' clothes for me to wear."

At school, teenage Valentine, with the same cold look, is sitting alone while all the other students are with their friends.

He continues his narration: "And because of what they said

about her, I didn't make friends."

At night, in the dark room, the mother is cooking and putting food on the table. Valentine eats a little and then gets up, shivering from the cold. He lies down in his sleeping place.

The narrator continues, "And I also got tired of her complaining. I used to take cold showers in the middle of the night."

We return to the present, and Valentine continues, "I didn't want her to know that I was the one showering, until my arm started to hurt."

Y.G. listens carefully and says, "You meant your arm all this time?"

Valentine ignores him and continues, "She didn't want to use the heater. I don't blame her, I don't blame her for anything. I'd go to school without breakfast, or nights without dinner, or days without food."

We move to a memory of Valentine. Valentine is now eighteen, looking the same as the current Valentine but with a shaved beard to look younger. He's in a dark alley with a shady-looking person, buying a folding stick like the one the young guy had at the beginning of the story.

The narrator says, "I was thin, pale, so I started carrying that stick."

We return to the present, where Y.G. looks shocked, while Valentine calmly continues his story.

"I knew I couldn't defend myself."

He pauses for a moment and then adds, "I never told anyone about any of it."

We move to scenes from the past, showing Valentine working different jobs: a bar boy, carrying luggage at a hotel, washing cars.

“I did everything...”

At dawn, we see a beautiful river next to a farm. Valentine steals poultry from the farm, leaves, and sells it at the animal market. A boy his age, who we later know as Husky, watches him from a distance.

The narrator says, “...and anything...”

At night, Valentine dyes some dogs to look like German shepherds.

The next morning, he sells them at the animal market. Again, Husky appears in the background, watching him.

The narrator continues, “...and I didn’t wait for anyone.”

We return to the present. Valentine says, “But my mom didn’t mind telling anyone about everything, hoping they’d give her something. Years of this right in front of me.”

We go back to a scene where baby Valentine is standing in his diaper at the door of the dark room, facing out toward the world.

The narrator says, “I didn’t know all this was waiting for me when I stood at this door, looking out at the world.”

We see Valentine stealing from a weekly farmers’ market again and again, until a hand catches him. Surprised, he turns around to find the priest. He breaks free from the grip and runs away.

3

Spring

SPRING

A THRILLER DRAMA
BY
PAM SCOTT

A person in a dark jacket and pants is walking away from the viewer on a grassy hillside. The scene is shrouded in a thick, pale fog, creating a sense of isolation and mystery. The person is centered in the middle ground, walking along a path that leads up the slope. The foreground is filled with green grass and some small, dark shrubs. The background is completely obscured by the fog, with only faint outlines of hills visible.

THE ORPHAN'S
VALENTINE

FIRST PUBLISHED IN NOVEMBER
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The classroom, senior year of high school.

Valentine sits at the back, lost in thought, his expression cold and distant.

In the background, the principal is talking to the students about graduation and universities. Then he interrupts, calling out, "Hey, you! Boy!"

Valentine looks up to see the principal pointing at him.

"Come with me to my office," he says.

In the school hallway, Valentine walks behind the principal.

"There seems to be an issue with your application file. I'll give you a form—take it to the municipality and bring it back to me," the principal says.

They enter the principal's office, which is messy and full of papers. The principal looks for the form while Valentine stands silently, observing the room with sharp eyes.

A teacher enters the office.

"Oh, is this the boy? Good choice of university! We're really proud of you."

Valentine doesn't respond, just looks at him.

The teacher adds, "Your mother must be proud of you too. You know, you're her last hope."

Valentine's expression suddenly changes. He looks shocked.

"What the hell are you talking about? Do I even know you?" he says.

The teacher responds angrily, "What did you just say?"

Valentine shouts, "What are you talking about? My mother died giving birth to me!"

"What?" The principal interrupts, trying to calm things down.

“It’s okay, I’ll handle this,” he says to the teacher, who leaves the office angrily.

“Sit down. I said, sit down,” the principal says sharply.

Valentine sits, his eyes burning with hidden anger.

Back in the present, we see the same cold look on Valentine’s face.

“The only thing I ever asked her...”

Quick flashes of Valentine’s memory show him as a child, standing next to his mother at school. His mother wears shabby clothes, and a teacher looks at her with disdain.

The memories stop, and we return to Valentine.

“... was to never say anything again, to anyone. I’ll do whatever it takes.”

Back in the principal’s office, Valentine sits with the same cold expression, while the principal looks stressed and tense.

“Listen, I know you’ve had a tough life, and... everyone here just wants to help you,” the principal says.

Back in the present, Valentine, now older, continues speaking.

“I chose that school because it was far away. I didn’t want her to come there.”

Back in the office, Valentine glares at the principal.

“Who told you all this?” he asks, his anger barely contained.

“I know your mother personally. Most of the teachers here don’t know her, or even know much about you. You’re like a ghost here,” the principal replies.

“So you’re saying she begged you to help me graduate? Do you think I can’t do it myself? And what else does she tell you? That I’m an orphan? That I sleep in the same room as her? How did I get this jacket? Tell me, Principal, are you sleeping with her to help me too?”

The principal stands up, shouting in anger. His words are loud, but we only hear silence.

The camera focuses on Valentine, still seated, his expression cold and unreadable. Tears slowly stream down his face.

after the office scene, Valentine stares at himself in the bathroom mirror, his expression filled with hate.

“I was burning inside. I couldn’t hold back my tears anymore,” the narrator says.

Back in the office, Valentine stands face to face with the principal.

“If this happens again, if I hear you or your teachers talking about her to anyone, in front of anyone, you’ll see what this orphan kid can do, Principal.”

Back in the bathroom, Valentine is still staring into the mirror, his face full of rage and bitterness. It’s as if he’s drowning in memories.

The narrator says, “And finally, I understood...”

Back in the present, Valentine continues, “I understood why I asked that teacher...”

Down town, Valentine is walking home from school, the quiet streets of the small town stretching out before him. lost in his

thoughts.

“Why did she ask me that?” Says The narrator.

A woman in a suit appears ahead of him, holding a large notebook. She stops him.

“Excuse me,” she says, her voice polite yet firm.

Valentine pauses, giving her his attention. “Yes?”

“You’re from the school, right? How was your day?”

“It was fine,” he replies.

“I’m with the town newspaper. Mind if I ask you a few questions?”

He hesitates, but then gave a small nod.

She opens her notebook and begin writing. “Which school do you go to?”

“Brighton High,” he answers.

“Where do you live?”

“The north side.”

“Isn’t that far from here?”

“I like walking. It clears my head.”

“Interesting,” she says, scribbling more notes. “What does your father do?”

Valentine’s expression changes slightly, a flicker of discomfort crossing his face. “He’s a merchant,” he says after a pause.

“Oh, really? Does he deal in anything specific?”

Valentine stiffens. “I’m sorry. I have to go.” He turns and walks away quickly, leaving the woman standing there, puzzled.

She watches him for a moment, then signals with her hand. A car pulls up, and she gets inside. The car speeds away, leaving the street quiet again.

But Valentine didn’t go far. He had only pretended to leave. From a hidden spot, he watches the car disappearing down the road, his expression serious. It is as though he pieces something

together in his mind.

Back in the present, Valentine says,

“A week before, one of my teachers asked me about my father’s job, I always say he’s a merchant, even though he only repaired electronics. That teacher drove the same car that woman got into”

“Just a coincidence, right?” Y.G. says, trying to sound casual. Valentine didn’t respond.

“Why do you lie about your father?”

Valentine’s voice cracks as he replies, “I didn’t want anyone to know. I didn’t want people looking at me the way they did when I was a kid.”

Memories floods Valentine’s mind—his childhood, painful and lonely. He sees himself as a small boy, being pulled out of an event by a teacher because of his tattered clothes. He remembers watching other children play from a window, excluded and invisible.

The memories fade, leaving Valentine’s expression cold once again. Y.G. looks at him, unsure of what to say.

night, in the backyard of his home, Valentine stands alone, staring at the sky. His gaze is icy, and he held a bottle of alcohol in one hand.

The narrator’s voice echoed faintly, “That night...”

Just moments earlier, Valentine is on his knees in the same backyard, tears streaming down his face as he prays desperately.

“I begged for a sign,” the narrator continues. “Just one sign

that He was with me. It was more than a child like me could bear.”

A sound interrupts Valentine’s prayer. He freezes, his heart racing. Moments later, he hears a scream. Fear gripped him, but curiosity drives him to the fence at the edge of his yard.

Peering through the slats, he sees the backyard of a neighboring house lit up by the headlights of a luxury car. A man is tied up and blindfolded, blood dripping from his face as he sobs and begs.

Ron, a middle-aged man with the demeanor of a mob boss, standing nearby, holding a club. Two other men stand with him, along with Max, who is also dressed sharply and exuded danger.

Without hesitation, Ron begin beating the tied-up man with the club.

Valentine gasps, the sound of his movement rustling the bushes. All eyes turned toward him.

Ron’s men grab him and drag him into the yard. Despite his terror, Valentine stayed quiet, his face calm though his eyes betray his fear.

Ron approaches him, towering over him. “Aren’t you scared, kid?”

Valentine doesn’t respond, his silence unnerving.

He turns around to Max who steps forward. “Is this the kid? The scrawny one?”

“Yeah,” max replied, Ron starts looking him up and down. “He doesn’t even flinch.”

Ron leans down, his voice low and menacing. “If we catch someone like you stealing from us, we cut off their wings.”

Max intervenes, “No need for that. Valentine’s a good boy. He’ll go back to school and stay out of trouble. And he won’t say

a word. Right?”

Valentine glanced at the bloodied body, then back at Ron and Max. His expression doesn't change.

“Watch your gaze, boy,” Ron growls

Max hands Valentine the bottle of alcohol. “Here. Go home.”

Valentine climbs back over the fence, disappearing into the night.

As Ron and his men clean up the scene, they prepare to leave.

“Are you sure about him?” Ron asks Max.

Max nods confidently. “He won't say a thing.”

We return to the present.

“Did they kill that man in front of you?” Y.G. asks, shocked.

Valentine looks at him with a hint of surprise. “Of course, they did. Whatever the reason, he's dead now.”

“Do you know Max?”

Valentine pauses before replying. “When I was a kid, I discovered something about the house behind ours...”

The scene shifts to a memory. Teenage Valentine sneaks into the backyard of the neighboring house. The house, sitting at the edge of the neighborhood, seems abandoned. He breaks into the garage, which is massive.

Curious, Valentine rummages through the numerous boxes inside, unaware that they contain drugs. The house isn't as abandoned as he thought.

Max pulls up in his car, parking it out of sight, and enters the garage through a basement door.

Meanwhile, Valentine begins taking some of the contents of the boxes. But as he turns to leave, he freezes. Max is standing

there, watching him.

Terrified, Valentine stays rooted in place as Max approaches. To his surprise, Max smiles.

“I’ve heard you’re quite the troublemaker,” Max says calmly. “Sorry, but I can’t let you take those.”

He takes everything Valentine had stolen. “Go home, Valentine. Trust me, this world isn’t for you. You still have a lot to lose.”

Back in the present, Valentine continues his story. “That’s how I found out that the mysterious man I used to see when I was a kid was a drug dealer.”

The scene shifts again to Ron and Max’s car pulling away. Valentine stands in his backyard, watching the car disappear. He looks up at the sky, his expression filled with anger and resentment.

The narrator’s voice echoes, *“Maybe that was His sign. A sign that I’m alone. That He doesn’t care.”*

Later that night, Valentine walks through a graveyard, drinking from the bottle of liquor. He stops at his father’s grave, staring coldly at the headstone as he takes another swig.

The camera pulls back slowly as Valentine unzips his pants and urinates on the grave. His voice, cold and devoid of emotion, says, “Now we’re even.”

In the early morning, Valentine stumbles into the dark room, the effects of alcohol still visible on him.

His mother is there, worried. “Where were you all night? Tell me...” She approaches him and catches the smell of alcohol.

“Were you drinking? Tell me!”

Her voice rises, and in frustration, she tries to slap him.

But Valentine grabs her hand mid-swing. He steps closer, his grip tightening, and her hand begins to hurt.

“I told you not to tell anyone about us, about our life, about this place,” he says in a cold, menacing tone. “But you didn’t listen. Now you’ll see who I really am.”

His icy gaze terrifies her. He releases her, leaving her cowering in a corner. Without a word, he picks up his bag and walks out, as if he’ll never return,

As if The Valentine who leaves isn’t the same one we once knew.

4

Summer

THE ORPHAN'S VALENTINES

A THRILLER DRAMA
BY
PAM SCOTT



THE ORPHAN'S
VALENTINE

FIRST PUBLISHED IN NOVEMBER
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Morning. A party. Music. Everyone is dancing. It's a graduation ceremony.

We shift to Valentine, his long black hair visible this time. He's sitting alone in the school stadium, smoking, lost in thought.

The narrator says, "After fixing the issue with my name, my application was accepted, and I joined an engineering university."

Back to the present. Y.G. excitedly says, "That's great! Finally, some good news from you."

Valentine stays quiet, his cold gaze steady.

"What was the issue with your name?"

"My father... he never gave me his name."

Back to Valentine in the stadium bleachers.

The narrator continues, "He never considered me his son. He died feeling the same way."

Back to the present. Valentine adds, "Maybe that's why he always felt so distant. Why I barely noticed his presence most of the time."

Back to Valentine in the stadium. A boy, Husky, appears and says,

"I was looking for you. Aren't you going to celebrate with us?"

Valentine looks at him calmly, as if telling him to get straight to the point.

Husky hesitates. "I heard you got accepted into a good school. Engineering, right?"

Valentine's expression doesn't change. Husky grows nervous.

"Well... do you think you can get me a husky puppy?"

Valentine stays silent.

“Come on, Valentine! We’ve known each other since second grade!”

“One hundred dollars. I’ll leave it by your house tonight.”

“What?! A hundred—” Husky starts, but Valentine’s cold stare stops him mid-sentence.

“Fine, fine, a hundred dollars.” Husky pulls a wad of cash from his pocket, like something a drug dealer would carry. Valentine looks at him suspiciously, wondering where he got it.

Husky notices and says, “I have to do whatever it takes too, you know.”

Valentine replies, “I’ll take the money when I deliver it.”

Back to the present. Y.G. listens as Valentine explains, “I got a scholarship for university. Suddenly, everyone noticed me. I didn’t care, but I realized something: in this world, if you have nothing, you are nothing.”

We return to the past. Prana, the woman from earlier, hugs Valentine. She’s proud and happy for him. For the first time, Valentine looks genuinely content, at ease.

“Well done, my boy. I knew you’d make the right choice. Here,” she says, giving him a beautiful silver necklace with a cross.

Valentine hesitates, tense and unsure.

Outside a pawn shop, Valentine holds the necklace, staring at the cross. He takes a moment to think before walking inside.

Moments later, he comes out, stuffing money into his pocket.

Later that night, Valentine is walking home when he sees an

elderly woman struggling to take out the trash.

Back to the present. Valentine says, “I know that woman. She lives alone.”

In her house, Valentine is in the kitchen, stealing whatever food he can find—tomatoes, eggs, potatoes.

He opens the fridge, grabs a bottle of milk, but notices it’s warm. Realizing the fridge isn’t working, he checks the back and finds the motor disconnected. He takes it and leaves.

The narrator explains, “So, I broke in and took everything I saw. When I realized the fridge wasn’t working, I took the motor too.”

At the cemetery, Valentine lies on his father’s grave, using a blanket like a quilt and resting his head on his arms as he stares at the sky.

The narrator says, “For the first time, it didn’t bother me. I didn’t feel guilty. I didn’t hear my father’s words about God in my head.”

Back to the present. Y.G. looks at Valentine, shocked.

“You... slept on your father’s grave?”

“I had nowhere else to go. A kid wanting to express anger toward his mother, but everything I earned was hers.”

Early morning, in a dimly lit room, Valentine eats breakfast. His mother kisses him on the forehead and says, “Happy birthday. Everything will be okay from now on.” For a moment, his face shows a trace of relief.

Valentine steps outside as the narrator says, "First day of university. First day at eighteen..." He opens the mail and finds a letter from the court. As he reads, tension and shock grow with every line.

The narrator continues, "...My first day as an adult was the last day I could live in that house."

Valentine explains, "The court ruled that the house must be vacated entirely. I had no right to the inheritance because I'd already used my share by living there all these years. This was my family's plan all along."

Y.G. asks, "But didn't you pay rent? And what about your grandmother's will and the priest's testimony?"

"There was no proof we paid rent to Butch, and the priest's testimony was worthless since my father never acknowledged me."

Valentine holds the mail, fear deeply etched in his eyes, his breathing heavier with every moment. The

university bus, meant for students, drives out of town. Valentine is on board, still in shock, unable to think clearly.

In class, everyone is focused on the professor's lecture except for Valentine. He sits alone, fearfully observing everyone. The lecture ends, and the students leave, but Valentine remains in the same state, frozen.

At a gas station outside town, Valentine waits for the bus. From a distance, he notices two familiar figures: Max and Ron. They're talking together. As the bus arrives, Valentine glances at Max and Ron while boarding. Max notices Valentine and is just as

surprised. The bus pulls away, and Valentine sits, lost in thought, as if piecing together something significant.

That night, Valentine and his mother pack their belongings.

“How will we afford the rent for a new place? The bills, the food...” his mother begins. Valentine interrupts her, “Mom, everything will be okay.”

He takes the trash out to the backyard, only to find Max standing there, calm and smoking. “That’s a good school you got into. I’m guessing it’s a scholarship. That place isn’t cheap,” Max says.

Valentine stays silent, holding two large garbage bags.

Max adds, “Engineering, huh? You must be smart.”

Valentine cuts him off, “I know what you want.” Max, slightly surprised, replies, “Oh? And what’s that?” “I agree,” Valentine says firmly.

Y.G. asks, “Agree to what?”

“You want me to smuggle drugs to that gas station, using the university bus since the police don’t search student buses,” Valentine states coldly. “And since my school is located at a crossroads between five towns, it makes things easier for everyone involved.” Calmly says to max,

He adds “I’ll be just a student at the university who happens to smuggle drugs,” Valentine says calmly. Max smirks, clearly impressed.

Valentine adds, “No one will know about this except me, you, and that mafia guy.” “Of course,” Max replies.

“But first, I need your help with something,” Valentine says.

A few days later, Valentine and his mother are unpacking in their new apartment. Valentine's phone rings. "It's done," Max says on the other end. Without a word, Valentine hangs up.

Outside the old house, from a distance, Valentine watches, satisfaction on his face. Police and drug enforcement officers swarm the property, pulling out bags of drugs and sealing the house with yellow tape.

Back to the present.

"Was that you, Max? Why?" Y.G. asks,

Valentine replies, "I thought I should leave a gift for my family."

"But what about your sisters' share? Didn't you consider that?"

"Do you really think they cared? Honestly, they were happier about it than anyone else."

We continue after the police seize the old house. At Pranna's house, Valentine enters through the back door and finds Mary and Martha, now grown women.

Overjoyed to see Valentine, Mary exclaims, "Oh my God, you've grown so tall and handsome!"

"Valentine, it's been so long! You're a grown man now," Martha adds.

Valentine hesitates, his shock evident, as they hug him warmly.

"We're so sorry. It's been so long. You know how we left, and with Mom... it was hard to reach out back then. But now, with the internet and phones, things are easier. Honestly, we came to give you our share, but I guess it's all settled now," Mary

explains.

“You didn’t come to the funeral. I waited for you,” Valentine says, his voice calm but cold.

“You know, we were just kids, and Dad didn’t... you know everything,” Mary says apologetically.

“We heard about it—that you were the one who found him first. We’re truly sorry,” Martha adds.

Valentine stares at them as if he can’t believe what he’s seeing or hearing, visibly conflicted.

“So, how was it here after we left? How have you been, Valentine?” Mary asks.

In his usual cold tone, Valentine replies, “It was fine.”

“This whole drug thing—it’s not connected to you, is it? The state has seized the house for good. None of us will get anything,” Martha says.

“You know, this might be the best thing that’s ever happened to the family. I’m sure they’re fuming about it,” Mary adds with a smirk.

Valentine stays silent, watching Pranna, Mary, and Martha chat. Their words fade, and the focus shifts to Valentine’s expression—his cold gaze and subtle reactions, as if memories flood his mind.

As everyone leaves,

Martha stops and says, “No matter what people say, Valentine, you’ll always be my little brother. Here’s my number and our address. Please come visit. We’re so proud of you. You’re going to be an amazing engineer—I just know it.”

They hug him and leave, while Valentine stands frozen in disbelief, processing everything.

Later that night, Valentine walks back to his apartment, holding

the paper with the phone number and address written on it. He takes out a lighter, pauses for a moment, lights his cigarette instead, and continues walking.

Back in the present, Y.G. asks Valentine, “Do you miss them?”

“It felt like they were strangers to me. Honestly, I didn’t think much about it. All I could focus on was how I’d pay off my debt to Max,” Valentine replies.

“What debt?”

“Where do you think we got enough to fill the house with what the state would confiscate? smuggling drugs for Ron throughout my university years at half price. After that, I be free to leave.”

Quick scenes show Valentine handing Ron a large package at the gas station, during summer and winter, day and night.

The narrator says, “For a long time, things ran smoothly...”

In the garage, Max hands Valentine a package as the narrator continues,

“...Max...”

On the bus, the voiceover adds, “...I...”

At the gas station, Valentine gives Ron the package as the narrator finishes,

“...and Ron.”

Back to the present, Valentine concludes, “It was steady. The money was enough for me and my mom. We didn’t need anything else. Honestly, it was better than that.”

At university, Valentine walks through the park, listening to music. He notices a girl, later introduced as Delilah, sitting alone, wearing a hat as if hiding from the world. He watches her with a mix of curiosity and wonder.

In the library, Delilah sits studying amidst the quiet and crowded space. When she finishes and leaves, we see Valentine in the background, watching her, clearly smitten.

Later in the evening, as everyone leaves, Delilah gets into her car and drives away. Valentine appears, a faint smile on his face, reflecting a strange sense of comfort.

Morning at the bus stop, Valentine stands alone, smoking, music playing softly in the background. A few moments pass before another student arrives to wait for the bus. There's a brief silence.

“you mind if I tell you about Delilah?” Valentine says.

“Who?”

“You don't know her!”

With a faint smile, the student replies, “Well, of course not. Go ahead, tell me about her.”

Valentine smiles too. “You know, every time I see her, it's like looking at the night sky. Even when it's freezing, her beauty makes it worth it. She feels... brighter than Venus. Always alone, not caring about anyone around her. The way she walks, the way she drives—I've never met anyone like her, and I don't think I ever will.”

“and ... why haven't you talked to her? If she's that amazing, it's worth a try.”

Valentine glances at the sky, smiling softly. “Come on, what

would a girl like her want with a guy like me?”

The student looks surprised, almost confused, as if wondering why Valentine would think that.

The moment is interrupted by the arrival of the bus.

Back in the present, Valentine continues, “With that dumb smile on his face.” Y.G. listening to him asks, “Why did you tell him all that? I don’t get it.”

“For the same reason I’m telling you my life story. I had no one else, only strangers.”

At the university, the student approaches Valentine.

“Sorry, but... why did you tell me all that?”

We return to the present. It seems Y.G. asked the same question. Valentine responds, “Have you ever heard of the perfect stranger?”

Back at the university, after being asked, Valentine explains, “the perfect stranger is someone you can tell things you’d never share with people you know. No fear of judgment, no worrying about impressions. Because, in the end, we’re just strangers. Next time we meet, it’s like it never happened. That’s why I told you.”

In the present, Y.G. asks, “Is that even true?”

“No, I just wanted him to leave me alone. ‘Perfect Stranger’ is the title of Deep Purple song I was listening to that morning.”

“You made all that up on the spot?”

“I always do.”

Morning. In class, Delilah listens intently to the lecture.

The narrator says, *“But he was right. I have to go to her.”*

There’s a knock at the door. Delilah remains at her place, writing in her notebook.

In the background, the teacher opens the door. “Yes?”

Valentine’s voice echoes, “Hi, sorry to interrupt, but the administration needs a girl from this class. Her name is Delilah.”

“Delilah? I don’t think we have a Delilah here!”

he interrupts “That girl right there!”

Someone sitting near Delilah nudges her, telling her to look at the door.

She turns to see Valentine pointing at her.

“That’s not... well, fine, go with him and find out what’s going on,” the teacher says.

“bring your things with you,” Valentine adds.

In the college hallway, Valentine and Delilah walk in silence. Suddenly, Valentine steps ahead, turns to face her, and says,

“Honestly, Delilah, this isn’t about the administration. I just wanted to meet you. And I couldn’t think of a crazier way to tell our future kids how I met their mom than this. Besides, I figured today’s lecture was boring anyway.”

Delilah stops, a mix of surprise and amusement lighting up her face as she tries to process what’s happening.

“And of course, if you’re uncomfortable, I’ll go back with you to your teacher and explain everything,” Valentine adds, his tone lively and sincere. Delilah’s admiration for him begins to grow as he continues,

“I promise you one thing: I’ll never cause you any trouble.”

“Delilah?” She says,

“Yeah, I named you Delilah because the first time I saw you, I

was listening to that song 'Hey There Delilah.'”

We return to the present, Y.G. says enthusiastically, “Isn’t her name Delilah?”

“No, but I had to come up with something.”

“Like the perfect stranger?”

We return to Delilah and Valentine.

“Well, I’m Delilah. Nice to meet you.”

“Valentine.”

The sunset. The parking lot. Everyone is leaving the university. Valentine and Delilah reach her car.

“Look, Delilah, I think you’re wondering why I spoke to you in such a strange way. I know you’re special. Trust me, I can feel special people. It’s my gift,”

Delilah hugs him with admiration and innocence, “Thank you.”

“This has been the best month of my life.”

“Why?” Delilah responds.

“I’ve seen you every day,”

Her eyes light up when she hears Valentine, “Really? I’ve never seen you here.”

“Maybe I’m just a ghost,” he looks at her with admiration for a moment, “You don’t even wear any makeup, you’re naturally stunning.”

“Thank you, you’re also...” She’s cut off by Valentine,

“No, you’re really beautiful in a way I’ve never seen before.”

Delilah blushes in embarrassment.

“Well, go home and get some rest. Dress warmly, it’s going to be freezing tomorrow.”

Valentine leaves, and we focus on Delilah's expression full of admiration for him.

At night, in a poor neighborhood, inside Max's car, Valentine and Max are watching a suspicious group of men.

"You know, they'll all be gone forever," Max says.

"One of them's the informant?"

"Maybe more, but this is their last day."

"Don't you think it's more dangerous?"

"Boy, it's not about knowing who I am, or you, it's bigger than that. We can't know anything except that they're looking for you. The police will go crazy."

"Don't you think killing them all will attract even more attention? No one would believe it's a coincidence."

"Boy, it's too late to kill them one by one. You need to understand, the police can't plant one of their own between us. Since we don't handle things the traditional way, there are distributors, and those distributors sell to scum like them. We make sure to protect their territories so their business runs smoothly. They work for us without even knowing it, alongside our men in the police. It's like a grocer going to the wholesale market, buying produce, and then selling it in the fruit market."

"Max calms down, I know all about it." Valentine says,

Max responds calmly, "I just wanted to make sure, but what you don't know, kid, is that these scum have been dealing with us for a long time. They know more about the distributors. If the distributors fall, we fall too."

"And whoever takes over their territories, in the end, it's your goods, the same deal."

"Smart as always, kid."

Husky appears and stands with the group. Valentine is surprised by his appearance.

Max picks up the phone, "They're all there. Thirty minutes, finish the job."

Max starts the car's engine.

"Max, wait. I know that guy."

"Who? The one who just joined?"

"Yes, it can't be him, the informant."

"Unfortunately, he'll be gone too," says Max as the car starts moving.

"No, wait, he might be one of us."

"What do you mean?"

"If the informant is someone else, we won't need the distributors, and you won't have to meet him. I personally, and only me, will handle him. He knows this area, and Ron will handle the protection. You'll save a lot of money. You don't know who might come to this area, maybe people with different goods, and the last thing you want is a gang war," Valentine insists.

Silence. Max looks at him coldly, suspicion in his eyes.

He pulls out his phone, "Cancel the operation."

In a remote place outside the town, Valentine and Max step out of Max's car, the cold air biting. Ron's car lights appear, and the car stops. Ron and one of his men get out.

"You better have something good to say, kid," Ron says.

"Hey, Ron. I just don't think it's a good idea to kill someone we're sure isn't the informant, especially when he could make you a lot of money—lots of money, without going through the middlemen," Valentine replies.

"Kid, you're the only one who's sure about this. We don't know him,"

“That’s why I’ll deal with him. As long as you protect him, without him knowing, he won’t need other men or middlemen, and you’ll save money,” Valentine explains.

“You know why I brought this guy with me? So he could see you. If he’s the informant, you’re done too, kid,” Ron warns, turning back toward the car.

Valentine, maintaining his calm, watches as Ron’s car drives away.

“Calm down. You did well,” Max says. Valentine remains silent.

“I know you want to save that kid’s life. Who is he?”

“Just an old friend.”

“I told you from the beginning, in a world like this, there’s no place for feelings, kid!”

Back to the present, Valentine sits in his chair, Y.G. sitting by the window.

“And so, in the following days, they started dying one by one.”

At night, in the same neighborhood, Husky stands alone, looking confused and scared. The area becomes empty. Husky turns to leave but finds Valentine standing there.

“Don’t worry, they won’t be coming back,” Valentine says.

Husky’s face shows shock, as if he realized something.

Valentine continues, “Don’t worry, you’re safe.” He pulls a parcel out of his bag.

“Here, a hundred ounces. I’ll be back in a week. One thing—don’t be stupid this time!”

Valentine turns and disappears into the darkness.

Back to the present, Valentine says, “And so, Husky became one

of us.”

Valentine delivers the parcel to the gas station outside the city near the university early in the morning. Late at night, he takes money from Husky and gives him a new parcel.

The narrator continues, “And so, I became one of Ron’s favorite men.”

At night, in Max’s garage, it feels like a small party. Ron, Max, and Valentine are there. There’s champagne on the table and a lot of money. Ron is very happy, clearly having drunk too much.

He hands Valentine a bottle and pats his face, saying, “Come on, kid, you need to smile sometimes.”

Valentine calmly holds the bottle without saying a word. Max smokes and watches.

Ron gathers the money into his bag, lights a cigar, and leaves. “Gentlemen, good night.”

Max sits at the table, collects the remaining money, and drinks from his glass.

“You know, you saved that kid’s life, for real, tell me why!” Max says.

Back to the present, Y.G. asks, “Why did you really care about Husky?”

We flashback to when Husky asked Valentine to bring him a Husky dog.

At night, in the same poor neighborhood, outside Husky’s apartment, Valentine arrives carrying a Husky puppy. Suddenly, the puppy barks. Moments later, Husky’s little sister, Martha,

opens the door.

“Is this my dog?” She smiles, takes the puppy from Valentine, and runs inside, leaving Valentine stunned. He looks through the open door.

It seems like a birthday celebration, a modest one. Husky’s other sister, Mary, joins them, and they excitedly play with the puppy.

Husky arrives, carrying groceries. He’s surprised to see Valentine.

“Hey.”

“I brought you the dog.”

“Really?!”

Husky’s mother appears in the doorway. “You’re the friend of James who brought the dog.”

Valentine looks startled and confused.

“Come in quickly,” Husky’s mother says.

Inside the apartment, it’s small. In the living room, Husky, his mother, and his sister Mary sing a birthday song for Martha. Valentine, looking almost scared, has the same innocent expression on his face as when he was a child with his sisters.

Martha, holding the puppy, Husky says, “Did you like it? I kept my promise. Now it’s your turn, Martha. Work hard at school.”

Valentine watches the scene, deeply moved.

The door closes, and Valentine walks down stairs, with Husky following him.

“Wait, take the money,” Husky says.

“What’s your other sister’s name?” Valentine asks as he walks down the stairs.

“Mary! Why?” Husky replies, surprised. Valentine responds, “Take care of them,” and leaves without taking the money.

Back to the present, Valentine becomes more emotional in this scene.

“He did what I couldn’t and never would be able to do. He protected them, without a father.”

We return to the garage, right after Max asks why Valentine wanted to help Husky.

“You know, I don’t have much left with you guys here, and someone needs to take my place.”

“Still thinking about retirement, huh?” Max jokes.

Valentine looks at him coldly.

“Don’t worry, I gave you my word.”

Valentine returns to his apartment. His mother has prepared dinner. It seems like their situation has improved a lot—better clothes, food, furniture, and her physical condition. They sit down to eat, and without warning, his mother kisses him on the cheek.

Valentine lies down on his bed later, looking at the ceiling, a sense of relief on his face.

At the university, after the morning class, Delilah arrives to find Valentine waiting by her car.

“Hi,” she says.

Valentine, full of energy, replies, “Finally, you’re here! Come, I’ve prepared something for you.”

Under the shade of a tree, they sit on chairs. Valentine takes a

lunch box from his bag.

“I know today is long and tough for you, so I’ll make sure you get the energy you need.”

“Really, thank you,” Delilah says while Valentine prepares the meal.

She watches him with admiration as they begin eating together.

Back to the present, Valentine says, “For a while, things were good. Everything was fine.”

In the morning, in the garden, Valentine and Delilah are working out, laughing, and playing.

The narrator says, “For a while, I didn’t think about any of this, like I hadn’t lived through it.”

At the university, Valentine and Delilah arrive, park the car, and get out. They say goodbye and each head in different directions.

The narrator says, “For a while, I was just an ordinary person.”

Back to the present, the scene focuses on Valentine’s expressions, as if it’s going to break all the good impressions from the earlier moments.

We see Y.G., empathetic and focused, with his narration.

At night, in the garage, Valentine enters, surprised to find Husky, Max, and Ron there. Max is counting the money.

“Here’s the hero. Hey, kid,” Ron says.

“Valentine,” Husky says.

Valentine, still a bit surprised, steps forward slowly.

“Hurry up, kid,” Ron adds.

“It’s been a few months. I think your friend is ready to meet us,” Max says. Ron adds, “You guys really make me rich. Good job.”

Valentine stays calm, examining everything. Surprise is visible in his eyes. There’s nothing but silence while Ron laughs and jokes around, but we only hear Valentine’s quiet observation, feeling suspicious.

Ron’s car leaves, and Husky is already gone. Only Max and Valentine remain. Max turns off the lights and prepares to leave.

“Come on, kid... What’s up?” Valentine stays calm. “You know, you’ll be leaving soon, and it turns out you were right. The kid’s clean, and he’s really working hard.”

“It just felt weird, I thought you guys rushed things.”

“Valentine, you chose this. You know these are your last days. I thought you’d be a little happier,” Max says.

Valentine walks home alone, a look of satisfaction and happiness on his face.

Daytime, in the park, everyone is enjoying the beautiful weather. Valentine is lying on the grass, and Delilah is sitting and enjoying her meal. Valentine looks at her with deep admiration. Delilah notices and feels shy.

“Tell me, what’s your wish?”

“My wish? It’s both fun and hard at the same time.”

“You don’t know your dream?”

“No, I do, but it’s silly.”

“I promise, I’ll try not to laugh.”

“Disneyland,” she says, then starts laughing.

Valentine smiles at her, looks at the sky for a moment, closes his eyes, and says,

“My dream...”

We begin to see what Valentine imagines.

The place is like a forest, a house in the middle of the scene, dense plants, quiet, and full of color. The sky is red from the sunset light on the clouds. Smoke comes from the fireplace. The house from afar looks full of life and warmth.

A dog starts barking at something it sees. it's Valentine walks toward the door.

A moment later, the door opens , it's Delilah, wearing a kitchen apron and holding a baby, smiles at him, happy to see him. The dog is also excited, jumping and running to see Valentine, playing with him for a moment.

Valentine reaches the doorstep, and Delilah and Valentine embrace, kissing each other.

Back to Delilah and Valentine, Valentine continues,

“But I can't believe the girl of my dreams wants to go to Disneyland.”

Delilah is so surprised, she chokes on her juice when she hears Valentine.

She looks at him in shock while he smiles, and she feels shy.

He stands up with confidence. They look at each other for a few moments, getting closer, and slowly kiss.

Back to the present, Y.G. is happy. “It's a really good story, what happened next?”

Night, in the cemetery, Valentine is at his father's grave, drink-

ing .

“You know, this is my last time here. Another year in college, I’ll take my mom and move in with Mary and Martha,” he pauses, then continues, “Do you think Delilah will want to come with me?”

Honestly, sometimes I feel like I’m not good for her. You know, I have all these problems, but I couldn’t resist it. I’m a different person now. Now, I would kill to keep this going,
Anything that stands in my way, even you, Dad!”

Sunset, Valentine waits at the gas station, looking like he’s been waiting a long time.

At night, the same thing, Valentine is still waiting.

A worker calls him, and Valentine goes inside.

“Someone on the phone wants to talk to you,” says the worker.

Valentine takes the phone and puts it to his ear without saying a word.

“Kid, run now,” Max’s voice says.

Shock and fear flash in Valentine’s eyes for a moment, then he starts running, heading away from the station.

Night, Valentine arrives at the garage, enters through the back window. Before jumping in, he sees the police inside, searching the place. Max is handcuffed.

Max notices Valentine above, nodding his head as if to say, “It’s over.”

Back to the present,

“wait, what happened? Ron got arrested that day! Why didn’t Max run?”

“For the same reason I went to the garage, money,” Valentine

answers calmly.

Valentine runs quickly to his apartment.

He arrives and feels uneasy because the place is quiet. He hesitates to enter. He pulls out a cigarette but can't find his lighter. He checks all his pockets and finds the piece of paper with Mary and Martha's address and phone number.

He looks at it thoughtfully, then suddenly moves as if he has made a decision.

He enters his home through the ventilation. His mother is surprised.

"Pack anything you need, now!"

He goes to the window to watch outside.

"Why? What happened?"

Valentine answers harshly, "Now!"

At the train station, Valentine and his mother arrive, both feeling uneasy and hesitant.

He buys two tickets, and they board the train.

Late at night, all the passengers are asleep except Valentine.

He looks out the window, then at the door, watching it as if waiting for something to happen.

Morning, the train arrives.

Valentine makes a call from a public phone, saying, "Hello, it's me."

Moments later, Valentine, trying to avoid being noticed, is observed by his mother, who senses something strange about him. A car with Martha and Mary arrives.

"My God, Valentine, it's been a long time, we've been waiting

for you to call," says Mary.

"He's shaving his face now, he's grown up," adds Martha.

Valentine looks toward where his mother is sitting.

They greet his mother. "I forgot a few things, I'll go back to get them, take care of her," Valentine says,

leaving without saying goodbye or showing any emotions, which strikes his mother, Mary, and Martha as odd.

On the train, the same thing happens. Valentine sits in the same seat, his hair blowing out of the open window, unaffected by the strong wind, his focus solely on the door.

Back to the present, Y.G. asks Valentine, "Why didn't you stay? Why did you come back?"

"You're right. I shouldn't have left anything behind to return for," Valentine responds.

Evening, the university. Valentine still feels uneasy, watching everything around him.

He sees Delilah's car from a distance and feels joy. He heads toward the door to enter but notices police officers at the entrance. His breath quickens with anxiety and fear.

A hand grips his shoulder. He turns, startled, and finds it's Delilah.

"Are you okay? I called your name several times, but you didn't respond."

Valentine looks at her as though seeing her for the first time.

"Valentine, are you..." Before Delilah can finish, he hugs her tightly.

She also feels it and hugs him back.

"Listen, I know you're in big trouble. This morning the police

stopped all the buses here and came to the university. They questioned me..." The hug continues, and we see deep sadness in Valentine's eyes, as if he understands the situation.

Delilah continues, "I can help you, Valentine."

Valentine gently holds her beautiful, innocent face, with a cold, sad look on his face.

"Take care of yourself, Olivia."

Back to the present, the same cold, sad expression remains on Valentine's face.

Y.G. listens with empathy, visibly affected.

Valentine leaves, leaving Delilah unable to grasp the situation.

Back to the present again, the same expressions, the same atmosphere.

Valentine continues, "I went to check on Husky. I didn't know what had happened to him."

After he left Delilah, In Husky's neighborhood, Valentine walks in the shadows, hiding and observing everything around him.

He reaches an intersection and sees Husky in his usual spot, still selling drugs.

Valentine shows a hint of happiness on his face.

Back to the present, Valentine says, "The first thing I thought was maybe I'd get the money, all of it or some of it, it didn't matter, but..."

Back to Valentine, looking at Husky, the joy on Valentine's face starts to fade.

The narrator continues, "There was something off."

Back to the present, Y.G. says, "Of course, how could the police arrest everyone, and he's still there?"

Back to Valentine across the street, his eyes wide with shock, as if his mind is connecting the dots before fully understanding the outcome.

Valentine whispers, "Son of a..."

Back to the present, Y.G. is stunned. "Husky was the informant all this time?"

"Right after meeting Ron and Max, here we are."

"My God, my God, Ron killed everyone and left the rat."

"No, I was the one who left the rat."

Back to Valentine, looking at Husky, as images of Husky's little sister's birthday party flash in his mind. He remembers moments of joy from the party.

The memory is interrupted by Valentine vomiting from exhaustion and tension, collapsing to the ground. Husky notices from across the street, quickly pulls out his phone, and makes a call. Valentine looks at him for a moment, stands up, and starts running away.

We return to the present and see a look of regret on Valentine's face, as if he's blaming himself. The same sympathetic look is on Y.G.'s face.

"This is it, I have nowhere else to go, this is how it ended."

Night. The cemetery. The police are questioning the grave digger, an old man with a white beard.

“I told you, it’s been a long time since he came here. He used to sleep by this grave, probably his father’s. But I haven’t seen him since then,” says the grave digger to the police inspector.

The police car leaves, and so does the grave digger. The scene shifts to reveal Valentine hiding behind a large tree, his eyes filled with despair and coldness, calm as always, lost in his thoughts.

Suddenly, images of everything he’s been through flash in his mind—memories of his childhood, his sisters, his mother, Max, Husky in his house, Delilah, and finally the image of his father.

His breathing becomes rapid, and we see him struggling to breathe, anxiety and fear overwhelming him. He stands up and starts running, glancing behind him as if fleeing from something.

He enters the nearby forest, gets lost, struggling to escape.

He falls to the ground, starts crying, gasping for breath, tears falling from his eyes. He begins shouting, looking at the sky.

“Please, help me, help me, just this once, just this time,” he cries uncontrollably.

With every breath, his voice lowers until we can no longer understand what he’s saying.

He crawls on the ground, lifts his gaze to see a faint light through the trees.

He pauses, staring at it for a moment.

Back in the present, Y.G. is in shock. Valentine appears exhausted.

“In that moment, I was ready to follow anything.”

We return to Valentine in the forest. He stands up and starts running towards the light.

Valentine reaches the source of the light and finds an old church by the riverbank.

He inspects the place and realizes it's a church. Exhausted, he collapses to the ground.

He finds it strange and looks up at the sky as if he can't believe what he's seeing. A light shines from under the door. He knocks, but after a few moments, nothing happens. Feeling cold, he sits by the door, hugging his knees to his chest. His eyes close from exhaustion and lack of sleep.

Suddenly, his face is illuminated by a light. He is disturbed by it and opens his eyes to see a nun holding a lantern.

"Are you okay, young man?" says Sister Mary.

Valentine looks at her in surprise.

They enter the church, where they find the priest, the same priest from before.

"Hello, Valentine. Are you okay?" asks the priest.

Valentine, still in shock, remains silent, hugging himself from the cold.

"Sister Mary, give him new clothes and take him to bathe. We are waiting for you for dinner, Valentine."

We return to the present, and Valentine continues his story.

"They gave me new clothes, a hot bath."

We return to the church. The dinner table. The priest, Valentine, and the two nuns, Mary and Martha.

Quickly back to the present, Y.G. says, surprised,

“Your sisters, Husky’s and the nuns—both Mary and Martha!”

Valentine, tired, responds, “I don’t really know. Maybe I gave them that name. I don’t know what’s real and what’s fiction.”

A look of concern crosses Y.G.’s face.

We return to the dinner table. The priest and the two nuns are talking, laughing, and enjoying dinner while Valentine watches in amazement.

Images flash in his mind—his father dressed as the priest, his sisters dressed as the nuns, and the nuns in the dark room.

“Are you okay, Valentine?” The priest’s voice breaks the sequence of images.

“You’ve never eaten before,” the priest adds.

“Honestly, I don’t know how to thank you...” says Valentine.

“Don’t thank us,” says the priest, pointing to the sky with his finger. “Thank him. He’s the one who brought you here.”

We back to the present, Valentine with a sad smile says,

“God brought me there, what a beautiful Thing to believe.”

5

The fall

THE FALL

A THRILLER DRAMA
BY
PAM SCOTT

THE ORPHAN'S
VALENTINE

FIRST PUBLISHED IN NOVEMBER
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The church, Sunday morning, people are praying.

Valentine is at the back, watching. We see deep sadness in his eyes.

The narrator says, "That morning, all the people I had stolen from—by the river or from the weekly market—every one of them contributed to this church. It was the only place that accepted me."

Back to the present, Valentine smiles ironically at the situation as he looks at Y.G. We see the same sadness in his eyes.

"The priest asked me to stay. He said it was the right place."

The church, a small room, sunlight coming through the window. Valentine is on the bed, hidden under the covers. We only see his eyes, closed, but we can tell he's awake, almost like he's daydreaming.

The narrator continues, "There, all I did was sleep, imagine, and dream."

We see images of what Valentine is imagining, himself, his father, Mary, Martha, and Delilah.

Back to the present, Valentine says, "There, in my mind, everything was perfect."

Outside the church, evening. Valentine is lying under a large tree, eyes closed.

The narrator continues, "Everything was as it should be."

Valentine heads to his room to sleep and passes by the nuns' room. By chance, he overhears their conversation.

Mary says, "You know, Father Joseph told me that the day

before Valentine's father killed himself..."

This grabs Valentine's attention, and he stops to listen.

Mary continues, "He came here, crying. He told Father Joseph he regretted never caring for his little boy. Now his daughters won't even speak to him. He woke up to find Valentine holding a gun to his head and told Father Joseph that he couldn't take it anymore—his first and second wives' betrayals, the fact that one of his kids wasn't his own, the accident that left him unable to walk. But what Valentine did, he couldn't bear it."

Shock, fear, and terror show in Valentine's eyes.

Valentine enters the room, closes the door, and collapses to the floor as if he can't stand.

His breath quickens, struggling to process what he's heard.

With all his strength, he rises, though he's barely able to, and falls onto his bed, hiding under the covers. He struggles to breathe, shock and terror reflected in his eyes.

The old house, in the dark room, the same scene from Valentine's childhood. His hand is shaped like a gun. The adult Valentine watches the scene in shock.

Suddenly, a bullet shoots from little Valentine's hand, exploding his father's head. The adult Valentine screams and cries out, overwhelmed.

He wakes suddenly, still screaming and crying. He falls to the floor, vomiting from the horror of what he saw. After a moment, a shadow appears under the door. Someone knocks and tries to open it.

Valentine feels the same as when he was a child, remembering when he and Irene entered the room and closed the door, with Chuck following them. These memories flash in Valentine's

mind.

Valentine crawls quickly to the corner of the room, trying to hide.

The priest manages to break the door and enter. Valentine starts screaming in fear, panicked.

The priest tries to calm him down, but Valentine becomes more frantic. His vision blurs, and he can't recognize the priest.

The priest says, "Calm down. Everything will be fine."

These are the same words Mary had told him when he was young after he fell. He sees these memories, but his vision is still blurry. He calms down slightly. The priest manages to embrace him. A memory of his father carrying him to the hospital also appears. Slowly, Valentine relaxes into the priest's embrace.

He cries and says, "I'm sorry, dad. I'm sorry, I never meant to pull the trigger." He cries deeply.

Mary and Martha are shocked by what he says. Mary realizes everything and covers her mouth in surprise. The priest understands as well.

He tells him, "You did nothing wrong, boy. You can't blame yourself for those things. It's over now. You need to move on. You have to let it go. I know that sometimes the hardest thing for a man to do is speak, but it's okay. You can write everything down, all of it, and leave it there forever."

The priest turns to Martha, "Martha, dear, bring a notebook and a pen from my desk."

We return to the present. Y.G. says, "He's right. You can't blame yourself for what happened. It's done, nothing will change what happened," with an innocent, compassionate look.

Valentine looks at him with a cold, desperate gaze, "Nothing will change the fact that he blew his head off because of what I

did.”

We return to the church at different times. Valentine is writing in the notebook.

The narrator says, “So I started writing everything, day and night, inside or outside, for days.”

We return to the present. Valentine continues, “I wrote everything, everything here,” pointing to his head.

In the room, Valentine is sitting on the floor, looking tired and restless, as if he hasn’t slept for days.

The notebook is on the other side of the room, and he gazes at it.

The narrator says, “For days, I didn’t sleep. I was afraid of that dream, so I never tried. Until I reached a point where I couldn’t bear it anymore.”

Valentine collapses and finally falls asleep while sitting.

Outside the church, under the old tree, a gentle breeze hits Valentine’s face.

He opens his eyes and hears the voice of Mary, his sister, calling him. He follows the voice and finds Mary and Martha, both in nun attire, and his father in priest attire, sitting happily by the river.

He notices a girl and a toddler barely walking, heading toward him. He focuses, and it’s Delilah.

A smile forms on Valentine’s face.

But the sound of a shovel interrupts the moment and the feeling.

Valentine looks around. Behind the tree, he sees a grave-

digger digging a grave.

“What are you doing?”

“I’m digging a grave.”

“For whom?”

“For you, boy. You killed yourself.”

Valentine wakes up, but this time calmly.

We return to the present. Valentine says,

“This time, I woke up calmly, as if I had accepted it, as if an ending like this fits a story like mine,” we see worry on Y.G’s expression.

We return to Valentine in the room. He maintains his sitting position, looking at the notebook he wrote in.

The narrator says, “And this story, it belongs to this house.”

We return to Valentine. He continues, “Whoever ends up in this cursed house must know what really happened. For once in my life, someone will truly listen to me.”

Evening, before sunset, in the town square, everything is wet, the sky is clear.

Valentine walks, reaching the same alley beside the Diner from the opening scene.

He hears the sound of a small cat. We see the small cat meowing and following anyone who passes by.

Valentine, moved, watches it.

The narrator says, “On my way here, I noticed something, a small cat, following anyone, meowing as if calling to them, anyone, but no one stopped.”

Valentine approaches her, sits in front of her, and they look at each other.

The narrator says, "At one point, she and I were the same. Now we are anything but the other."

We hear Devin's voice from a distance, "Cat, Dad, look, a cat!"
Valentine quickly stands and hides behind a trash bin.

We return to the present. Valentine continues, "I didn't want to spoil the moment, a little girl and a little cat."

Y.G, standing, interrupts passionately, "What are you talking about, for heaven's sake? I'm the one who saw the little girl and the cat."

Valentine, coldly, remains sitting in the chair, "Yes, we saw them."

"Who are you, man? First, you talked about my hand! Then the cane! Now this?"

"Among all the people in the world, you're the only one who truly knows who I am!"

"No, no, no, this can't be! Oh my God!! Who are you, man?"

Valentine remains calm and says, "I'm just another perfect stranger. You needed someone to talk to, and here I am."

Y.G, terrified, holds his head and says, "You're not a figment of my imagination."

"You really underestimate the power of illusion."

We return to the scene of Valentine standing by the window in the living room, but this time Y.G. is standing, alone.

The narrator speaks in Valentine's voice, "Look at me, look at your life, everything that happened was from an illusion, hatred, anger, pride."

We return to the dark room, Y.G. horrified by what is happen-

ing. In a voice full of weakness, on the verge of tears, he says, "Oh my God, you were talking about me all this time. Oh my God, all this happened to me."

"Why did you come here?"

"I brought..." Y.G. checks his bag and is shocked to find the same notebook, which terrifies him even more.

"What is this? How did it get here? You put it here," Y.G. says in panic.

"No, I didn't. You did, when you were coming to leave it here."

"Please, don't say it. Please, I'm not crazy, please."

Valentine responds, this time showing sympathy,

"It's okay. Once you leave this place, you'll leave everything here."

"What are you talking about?"

We return to one of the opening scenes, when Valentine stood at the stairs, but this time it's Y.G, not Valentine.

The narrator says, "We both know what will happen. Just be a man, as you always were. It's okay. You'll find peace at last."

We return to the dark room.

Y.G, as if he has come to a conclusion, says, "Oh my God, oh my God... I'm still too young for this."

"I know, I really know, it's just too late for anything."

Y.G. suddenly wakes up as if he has just had a long dream, sitting under the window in the dark room, the rays of the sunrise slightly illuminating the space. He finds the notebook in his lap, a pen in his hand, and the notebook open to the last page.

we read the text: "The little girl cried while her father held her, wanting him to take the cat with them, and the cat cried, hoping

they would come back, but nothing they cried for happened. I stood next to the cat, it reminded me of myself, I smoked my cigarette, turned around, and left.”

He looks at the text for a moment, crosses out the sentence “turned around and left,” and writes instead, “I took her with me.”

The backyard of Prana’s house. She opens the back door, looking like she has just woken up, her hair messy.

“Oh, it’s you,” she says.

Y.G. hugs her tightly and says, “Thank you for everything, take care of yourself, and I’m really sorry, Mom.”

He leaves and reaches the middle of the backyard. Prana says, “Wait, where are you going?”

He turns around, and for the first time, we see him smile.

He says, “I’m going home.”

Y.G. reaches the alley next to the restaurant and starts searching for the little cat. He finds it, picks it up and leaves.

The End.

6

Thank you

Hello, I'm Pam Scott, an aspiring writer with a dream that my stories will reach anyone feeling sad or going through tough times. I write to remind you that you're never alone. You can also find my stories and watch me talk about the characters, messages, and ideas behind them on social media.

If you enjoyed my story or its message, I would be deeply grateful for any small support, whether on my blog or my page on Ko-fi.com. But most importantly, what matters most to me is that you enjoyed reading and found a warm touch in the words.