

A loud knocking came from Mason's door as he was lighting a cigarette. He was currently sitting in his favorite chair in the living room watching TV. Well really he was sitting in his only chair in a not so lively room, except for him and his dog Sumo, while occasionally glancing at the static which would sometimes show part of the news broadcast. The only light on in his small apartment was the overhead sink light in the kitchen, which emitted a faint glow across the kitchen and to his chair. He would purchase more furniture if he would bother to clean the rooms or even get more company to come over rather than his occasional drinking partner.

"Just a minute!" His yell muffled, still trying to light the cigarette. The knocking came again this time but louder. Mason finally gave up lighting the stick when the knocking came for a third time. "Geez Sumo what a man gotta do to have some quite." Sumo, who was a massive St. Bernard, just rose off the corner of the room he was laying in with his shaggy hair in his eyes and strolled lazily over to Mason who was currently opening the door for his guest who was ruining his peace.

"He-Hello Mr. Willow," came the shy voice of Angela from the other side of the door way, "I was hoping you were awake..."

"Yeah yeah well now I am and it better be worth my quiet time. Also stop calling me Mr. Willow, I'm just Mason." Mason Replied in an unnerving manner.

"Ye-Yes of course it's important! But I would prefer to talk once you uh wear something nicer." Angela looked him up and down. After all who would want to talk to an old man wearing only a sloppy white t-shirt with white undies on.

"Now if it were important," Mason started angered by her judgment, "You would tell me now sooner than later."

"Right right," Angela was saying still disgusted by his appearance, "Well your still in the detective business right?" Mason looked shocked for a moment by this but then returned to his grumpy self immediately.

“No I retired ten years ago,” He gestured towards his living room, “Come in.”

Angela stepped inside the magazine, empty glass bottles, wrapper filled apartment full of disgust but hid it whenever Mason looked at her direction. Sumo followed her to the chair and lay next to her while she took her seat, which she sat jumpily in. Mason headed towards his closet in his bedroom and changed into a more dignified look. A pair of jeans, boots, shirt, and a tie which hung loosely from his neck and over his rounded figure as well an trenchcoat. Typical detective fashion. When he reentered the living room where he found it completely tidied and Mrs, Angela cleaning up the rest of the wrappers.

“Alright if you’ll take a seat ma’am,” Mason said in a somewhat loud voice to let his presence be known. Angela took her seat back beside where Sumo was and rubbed the big dogs head which he took gratefully. Mason paced back and forth in front of her. “So what’s the case?”

“Oh right well one of my dear friends Jason,” She started and then looked curiously at Mason. Quite thankful he had changed. “You might know him?”

“Heard of him,” Mason replied. Jason was actually his drinking buddy he’d go out with on friday nights. Which was actually last night. “What about him?”

“He was found murdered in city park! That’s what!” She said in her ‘loud, you didn’t read the news?!’ old woman like voice. “I was hoping you could find out who did it considering local police wouldn’t take my case. Those rats.” She found herself carrying on her hate of the dirty policemen while Mason thought about what she had said. My first case back and it’s a murder that the police wouldn’t take? Boy that’d look good on my resume Mason chuckled. He would of course never need to use it but still the thought humored him.

“I might as well check it out,” He said after waiting for her to finish her rant.

“Oh thank you detective,” She stood up and did a small salute, “I always liked that dear boy.”

“Right well it’s about time you leave now.” Mason said grabbing Angela by the arm and hurrying out the door, “I’ll see you another time.” He then violently slammed the door shut in her face. Sumo got up and walked over to him. “Sumo oh boy I’m in a mess now.” He chuckled and rubbed the big dogs head.

Mason arrived at the park at 9:36 Pm. Late enough for the cops to have gathered and gone yet early enough so he wouldn’t fall asleep on the scene. He walked up the leaf filled sidewalk with his trenchcoat brushing the leaves on the ground and his flat cap pointed downward. The most a person could see was his grizzly, poorly trimmed chin and the light of his cigarette and that was just how he liked it. Finally arriving on scene where poor Jason was laid wrapped up, not even taken to the morgue. A lousy job but why would the cops care? Not their case anyways. Mason bent over Jason’s body and unwrapped him. There seemed to be several scratch marks torn across his chest. “Scratch” perhaps wasn’t the right word. Let’s go with, “Deep trenches.” Jason old boy what in the world have you gotten yourself into? Mason stood up frowning at his drinking buddy’s condition. There was still alcohol traces across his face and his eyes seemed to be frightened by something terrible. Mason looked around for anything else suspicious and could only find some shoe shining casually tossed next to Jason. Guess he had one last shoe to clean Mason thought in a manner to which he laughed a good “Uh huh” and was right back to being disturbed. Something wasn’t right about the place and he knew it. But just what was it? Then it struck him. It was the same road him and Jason had walked while drunk and they both passed out on. He returned home later safely and had presumed Jason had done the same.

He took another brisk look and decided that there was nothing more and bent to close Jason’s eyes. What are these? He saw curiously two

perfectly cylinder pills laying next to Jason's head. Between the amount of light and the pills being perfectly white like the sheet, of course no one would notice them. Mason picked them up and landed them in his coat pocket. He snuffed his cigarette out and began to walk home.

The next day Angela came over again, arms filled with two newspapers and a well hot and ready cheesecake. She found Mason's door unlocked and allowed herself in. She called his name to no appeal and found out why. Poor detective was tuckered out from his investigating last night and found himself a perfectly suited spot to sleep on his favorite chair with his clothes still on. Poor soul must have gotten in a fight She thought as his clothing seemed quite roughed up with a couple of holes, Or maybe it was already like that? Either way she put the cheesecake and newspapers on the kitchen counter and spotted what seemed to be an open bottle of pills with no label and simply half filled with what looked to be...

"Don't be snooping around my stuff," Mason said startling the soul right out of Angela. "What do you got?" He questioned taking the bottle of pills and putting them in one of his lesser messy cabinets which looked fairly well dusted.

"Well before you gave this little old lady a heart attack, I had found sighting of another murder which is possibly connected to Jasons."

Mason huffed, "And how would you possibly know that?"

She grabbed a newspaper, "Because it says right here, 'Another Killing By The Same Possible Murder of Jason Maroe and Police Do Nothing'" She read quite excitdley. Proving the old man wrong was a great victory in her book.

Mason jerked the newspaper from her hands reading the same headline word for word and then headed to the door.

"Where ya headed?" Angela called after him but was rudely denied an answer with slam of the door on her face. Sumo bounded next to her

and pawed seeming to want food. She had nothing to do either way and looking after the dog seemed like the pleasant thing to do.

Mason arrived at the most recent destination of the murders and found poor young man dead on the spot. He was on Dallington Road. Right across the street from the city park. He was peering over a corner building and down the road at two police men looking at the body and who then got up, shrugged at each other, exchanged some words and went their separate ways, one who was headed directly to Mason. Mason had decided to play cool and walk down the road to the policeman, when he saw who it was he decided his choice should have been to just stay home.

“Mason? Is that you old guy?” the policeman asked rhetorically. The terrible clothing and beer belly was enough for him to confirm it. He was Thomas Reach. Formally an understudy of Mason, he had seen all of the detectives sides. Decent, bad, worse, even worse. He was promoted when Mason had been “retired” because Thomas had, in the mayors words, “Been able to put up with that rag for six whole years.”

Mason was stricken ill at Thomas’ face. “Yes chump it’s the only old man around. Now if you excuse me I have a case to wo-”

“Woah woah a case? You mean this crack nut on the ground here? Listen, in all due respect, you were retired and shouldn’t be working anymore,” Thomas was stepping in Mason’s way while talking, Mason didn’t take this as a challenge and rushed on, “Besides wouldn’t you prefer to just be by yourself anyways?”

Mason stopped for a minute and this let Thomas relax. Then his face became sour and angered, “I said outta my way!” Mason shoved Thomas off the sidewalk and into the road where he laid for a couple of minutes watching Mason walk off towards the scene.

“Stupid old man.” He huffed, got up, brushed himself off and went on down the road. He didn’t bother looking back. “Tell the mayor about it is what I’ll do.”

Mason was now officially at the crime scene. The man here did not seem to be anybody he knew but was still familiar somehow. He bent down to see the same kind of marks on Jason's body but no pills or shoe shiner. He searched the sidewalk a little more and found a hotdog pin that you could stick in someone's shirt. Oh the hotdog salesman Mason frowned. He had just gotten a hotdog from him last night. Mason walked back over to the hotdog man's body and put the pin in his shirt. He searched around a little longer and could only find a piece of brown clothing. Made of leather he was sure. Hey wouldn't be funny if- Mason's thought cut short. His original joke was to match the hole in his shirt with the piece of clothing. To his avail it fit. Must be just a coincidence He thought even though he was clearly sweating and he walked a brisk pace towards his home.

"I'll tell you Sumo, this place looks a lot nicer when it's cleaned up," Angela was sitting back down in that old chair petting Sumo's massive back. He seemed to be enjoying the attention for once, "You should tell your owner what a good maid I am. Yes you should."

At that moment Mason slammed the door open. "Why on earth are you still here?"

"I'll have you know mister I have fashionable clea-,"

"Yeah yeah just leave." Mason cut her short. Angela sighed and walked out the door. She was about to close it behind her before a hand caught it.

"Uh just so you know Sumo enjoyed the company." Mason said in a heartfelt manner before furrowing his eyebrows and closing the door. He then went to the cabinets and brought a single pill to his mouth and gulped it down dry. Sumo walked clumsily with Mason as he got into bed. Then a knock came to the door. Which Mason took after putting his clothes back on and left Sumo by himself.

“Say you ever believe in vampires?” Angela asked Mason as they strolled back down the road. They had just finished a quite large meal, well to them it was anyways, and were headed after some Ice Cream. It wasn’t quite dark yet but a subtle chill blew as they walked.

“Are you kidding me?”

“What about werewolves?”

Mason frowned at this idea and ignored it with a simple, “I haven’t had a case that involved such hideous things before so I believe them to be just an old tale. Why do you keep asking?”

“Well you keep saying you find scratch marks all over the victims and those don’t sound like a typical murder. Besides, I’ve been seeing these articles about a witch that sells cures to such devious creatures.”

Mason shrugged as they turned a corner. The clear moon was now in the sky and the street lights were cutting on. “You just read too much I guess.”

Angela knocked him on the head, as little as she was, with a, “You can never read too much. Who knows that might be why your retired.”

Mason face took to a surprised look before quickly changing back to himself. “Trust me I can read, just only when I want to.”

Finally they reached the ice cream parlor and entered. Mason hadn’t had any since... Well forever. He figured a rocky road would do. Sounds like the road I’m going down anyways.

Mason woke up later in the morning at about eight thirty. For the first time in seven years he didn’t even have a hangover. He got out of bed and went to get dressed. A knock came from his door. Sumo, who was laying on the bed even when Mason was asleep, simply tilted his head at the noise. “Peace and quiet are an unnatural thing isn’t Sumo?”

Sumo simply responded by bounding off the bed and into the other room.

When Mason had finally come to the door he happened to find their quite important guest to have let themselves in.

“Sit Mason. We need to talk.” The voice came.

“Oh my why we have the mayor himself to come visit us Sumo! Why I forgot to break out the china plates!” Mason said knocking himself upside the head. The truth was Mason had no china plates. Let alone cabinets. Or anything really.

“I thought you were retired,” The mayor said unmoved by this sarcastic comment. His hands were placed in a cross fashion which was fairly easy to do considering how skinny he was, and young, “You shouldn’t be getting yourself into something you don’t want to.”

“Thank you oh so much Josh but I think I’ll be just fine. Please the exit is this way.” Mason opened the door and waved a hand out while bowing. “Your limo is waiting.”

Josh simply lowered his hand to his side and said, “I think I’ll be staying here. Please shut the door.” His hand was now gripping a revolver which he must have borrowed from the rotten sheriff.

Mason closed the door gently and walked over to his kitchen where he simply brought out some crackers and cheese. If he was gonna die, he was gonna have breakfast first. Josh allowed this and took a seat in Mason’s chair quite pleased with himself.

“So what you come here to shoot me?” Mason said with a mouthful of crackers.

“I hoped it wouldn’t come to that. Just had to talk some sense into ya, ya know?” Josh now had the revolver out and was gently waving it this way and that. “So what happened to the whole ‘retirement’ plan?”

“Oh you know I completely forgot I WAS retired. My old mind must have been getting to me.”

“Cut the crap Mason. I’m trying to be as nice as possible but your jokes aren’t helping very much.”

Mason looked very taken back by this phrase, “Why my word Josh, I would never!” He said waving his hand and shaking his head.

“Listen all I ask is that you leave this case alone. Then you can get back to doing some relaxing and trashing all you want! You wouldn’t want a



permanent retirement would you?” Now he had the revolver pointed directly towards Mason with a look of amusement on his face.

“Why I think I would. You know I always dreamed about what the pearly gates looked like,” At this Mason leapt at Josh and knocked the chair he was sitting in, over. They wrestled for a moment each taking the gun to this side and the other. “Sumo, you stupid dog, attack!” Mason yelled and Sumo came over and promptly laid himself over Josh who then loss control of the gun and was stuck underneath the massive dog. Mason now had the gun and dumped all the bullets onto the floor and slung it away.

“Gah get your dumb animal off of me!” Josh begged. Sumo simply licked Josh’s face which was of disgust. Mason called the dog off and jerked Josh off the floor. Josh was amazed at the strength of the old man as he was lifted off the floor and held in one hand by the shirt collar.

“Now listen here. Go back to your own fairy land and get off my back.” Masons said slamming Josh through the now open door and slamming and locking it shut.

“This isn’t over you fool!” Josh yelled back and when he got no answer he took off back to his home.

Mason laid against his door and Sumo came over to lay next to him. He patted his dogs head saying, “Good dog,” and was then happily licked in the face. Then Mason went to sleep with his favorite, and only, dog in the world.

Surprisingly Mason had woke up in his chair the next day! He got up to check the date and sure was. He had slept the whole day. He shook his head and decided to start walking down the sidewalk. Sometimes a little fresh air was all he needed to help him think. This time though, Sumo was with him. He wasn’t leeshed of course as he would follow his father anywhere he went. Mason had been thinking about the case and how the mayor was tied up in it, why he didn’t want Mason in the business. Of course both of those answers could come simple to Mason. Josh was

simply letting the crime happen and he must have been paid to keep quiet about it. That simple sentence solved the case but there must have been something more he was sure of it.

“After all Sumo nobody kills someone with a giant claw.” Mason began to chuckle about this before he realized something. A claw. That’s what could leave those marks, why didn’t I think of that before? Mason shook his head. No there’s nothing THAT big that could live in a city like this and stay in hidden this long. He began to go over all the scenes. “A werewolf. No that doesn’t sound right.” But it did and he knew it. Sumo looked at him curiously. Mason looked back at him and hunched down, petting the old dog on his head and shaking his own. “That couldn’t be right.”

That night when Mason and Sumo had had their fill of walking and Cheeseburgers, (Their go to hotdog guy was of course dead) Angela let herself into the apartment. Mason had gotten used to this by now so he always wore shorts now.

“Let me guess another murder?” Mason said not bothering to turn his head.

“How come I couldn’t just be coming to say hi? After all we are neighbors and neighbors need to chat every now and then?” Angela replied in her little voice.

“Right where and who died.” Mason said getting up to put on his clothes.

“The mayor, right at his front door.” This made Mason stop.

“So old Josh finally tumbled?” Mason replied trying to be his usual self.

“Yep same scratch marks and all. You might want to go check it out anyways. I’ll have a pie done by the time you get back.” Angela said. Mason didn’t notice till now that she had been carrying a bag of ingredients for this said pie.

“Of course I will. Take care of Sumo and don’t burn the place down.” Angela smiled at this joke and got to work. Mason on the other hand hurried out the door with an unusual sense of fear and dread.

Mason had now arrived at the mayor's beautiful sweet abode. Too big for Mason's taste. Too stolen as well. It was about the size of a mansion and had a side walk big enough for a car going up to the stair cases. Also big enough for a car. Bushes scraped by each side of the sidewalk and were trimmed neatly. Can't have a mansion without proper bushes. Mason joked and chuckled before he saw exactly what he was here to see. Josh was laying exactly where Angela had said. Directly on the steps of his home. The part she forgot to mention was how he had been thrown and slammed into each side of the stairs, which caused chunks of the marble to be where they should not be, as well as tore apart with his insides strung across the rest of the steps. A good detail to not mention.

Mason started searching, for well anything really. Josh did in fact have claw marks that reached from the upper side of his chest, all the way to his bottom half. Not deep enough to finish him Mason had thought, pressing his finger into one of the openings. It reached just as far as an ordinary cut wound would reach. If not half that length. It wasn't meant to finish him off. Just gave him something to look forward to. He got up and saw that drops of blood had gone away from the staircase into the bushes directly across from it. He followed the trail which then led over the fence, which was supposed to keep off intruders, and onto the road and down the sidewalk a little ways before heading into an alleyway. He paced back over the trail he had followed and back to Josh where he looked at his upper half more closely to see anything else he could find. Stolen items, notes of revenges, anything of the sorts he could hide in his shirt pocket. He turned him over and then he saw it. Mason's very own watch laid underneath Josh. The jerk must have stolen it when I wasn't looking. Mason's own thought didn't even sound right to him. Of all things why he's watch? Maybe it just fell off when Mason when was walking up the steps to investigate Josh. Maybe it wasn't his watch just

one like it. Mason wasn't the type of guy to scrape his name into everything he owned but right now he wished he was.

There was nothing left to investigate. Mason got up and left his watch with Josh's untangled corpse and fled back home.

Just as Mason was getting home Angela had just finished baking her pie.

"Your back soon. What did you find?"

"Nothing," Whispered Mason in a tired breath. He got to his kitchen table and ate the pie in almost one sitting.

"Woah your gonna have to save a slice for me!" Mason saved exactly one slice of pie for Angela, told her goodnight, took five of his pills, and went to sleep. For about a whole day.

Mason got up late the next night. He had slept an entire twenty four hours. The only thing that got him up was Sumo's begging for food. Mason decided to turn on the news. It was the first time he had ever seen the news in five whole days. It was at first just normal rants about the political up side of Josh's murder and how the future looked more pleasant. And of course the opposite side saying how Josh's death would be an unfortunate event in the years to come and whoever did such a thing would be sorry about it. Then it all changed. Sudden news live on the spot. Someone was found dead in an old alleyway.

Pressumbe by the same murderer on foot right now. It happened to be just a little old lady with no way of saving herself. Too fragile they were saying.

This got Mason's attention. He was in fact thinking about Angela and how she hadn't woke him up today. He hurried to put on his coat and grabbed the gun left by Josh. This would be the last straw. He took the bag of dog food on the floor for Sumo and opened it. Hopefully he would eat it in considerable amounts and not all at once. He was a good dog like that.

“I’ll see ya Sumo. This might be the last time we ever see each other.” He lowered his hand onto the massive beast’s head and patted Sumo’s side. They stayed like this for about ten minutes before Mason was on the verge of tears because he knew what was coming. He got up off the now clean floor of which Angela had clean and gave his apartment one last look. He walked out the door and began to lock it. Then with a sudden change of look for the future, left the front door wide open, letting the cool air flow into the apartment. Mason had a goal. And he was going to finish it. Or die trying.

Mason slowly gazed up and down the streets next to the alley. He was in no hurry to get to the scene. What was the point? If he got there and he had enough evidence he would know who the killer was anyways. Might as well take his time.

He was getting right up on the alley now and noticed a cop car was sitting in the middle of it. Lights blinking red and then blue and then back to red again. The gun he carried rested in the inside of his coat pocket. Concealment was always the best weapon. The old man peeked around the corner to see there was in fact two officers. One was just some low down scum and the other was of course Thomas.

Why is my luck always so terrible? Mason thought shaking his rattled bones and began walking down the alley a ways before Thomas looked up from the body and saw him.

“Hey! You’re still not supposed to be here. You know that dontcha?” Thomas yelled hoping this would stop Mason. Of course it didn’t. Mason didn’t care if he got torn down by the same way Josh had died at this time.

“Yeah yeah yeah I heard it a thousand times just let me-” Thomas took out his own gun and pointed it directly at Mason.

“Yes we know you have old man now it will be the last time. Just move out of the way and let us search.”

Mason took this funny and began laughing as he finally made his way to the scene. He carefully just pushed Thomas's gun down and looked at the body. The face was torn to pieces so there was no way of identifying the person at all, but Mason still took it to be Angela. He reached in her pockets and found what he had been trying to keep secret for so long. His bottle of pills now lay in his hands.

Thomas collected himself and raised his gun again. "Listen I'm not backing down this time so it's either you or-" His professional monologue was cut short with his own loud yell and fell backwards. This beast in front of him picked him up and simply tossed him aside like a chew toy and then looked at the other officer who began to fire shots into him. The massive monster simply shrugged at each one and grabbed the officer by the arm and ripped it in half. The officer began to scream but was cut short of the beast's claw cutting his throat. When it was all over the beast fell close to the wall and beside it sat Mason. Not literally but close enough.

"You stupid thing." He said lowering his head and began shaking it. It looked up at him and tried to swipe at him to no avail. It then laid back down on to the cold rock as the rain began to float from above and thunder struck like drums on a metal roof. Mason got right in front of this thing and lowered down on top of it.

"I'm going to end this. You're not gonna like how it ends either. Not this time." The beast simply swiped at him again but with less energy. It began to whine and then howled one last time.

Mason woke up on the cold wet concrete. His clothes were soaked and it was becoming day. He stood up and looked at the sun rise, it had finally stopped raining. It was going to be a good day. Not too many clouds in the sky but enough to lay down and wonder what they were. It would be a perfect day to take a dog on a walk or even spend the day with your favorite person. It seemed like an outside kind of day and that was how he liked it. A single shot rang out and another grotesque

demonic howl and screeching blew in the wind before anyone woke up that day.

The police officers were found in the alley after a worried wife (Not so much worried for him but for his life insurance) called about her husband not coming home. Along with them Angela Parker was identified as the victim with Mason Willow as the culprit. Somehow Thomas Reach was still alive. He had major injuries to the head and had two broken ribs and a broken leg. He was given the medal of honor award for his heroic sacrifice in slaying Mason, who had a single bullet wound in his head. Thomas would go on later to his wife and confess he had not killed Mason but Mason had killed Mason and it was in fact a monster that he fought and not his dear old, believe it or not, friend. His wife would laugh at him and say "Oh you those head injuries must have gotten to you!" He would then confess it a hundred times over to everyone in the city. No one would ever believe him except the occasional few who had... well certain talents about them.

Oh and dear old Sumo. He was found wandering his owners apartment. He still had food left and even with the front door open would not leave. People tried to sell the dog and then others tried to buy him. But he would never leave because it was the only place he knew that his father would come back to him. Sometimes he would bark at the strangest things and no one would know why. Sometimes he even ran his head into the wall like he was trying to get petted.

But on those crisp and cool fall nights, you could hear him howl as if in tune to another. After all Sumo's father would never leave him.