

HATE

written by

Steven Sallie

September 3, 2021

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - BATHROOM - DAY

DROPLETS OF BLOOD drip onto the sink, running down toward the drain. More droplets follow, chasing the others.

The owner of the blood--

ALAN, 16, trans. His nose is POURING BLOOD, running down his mouth and chin.

DEREK, also 16, hands his friend a large wad of toilet paper.

Alan takes it, presses it firmly against his nose. He tilts his head back, trying to stem the blood flow.

DEREK

Why don't you tell Principle Janisse?

ALAN

I'll be fine, just gotta wait for it to stop.

DEREK

Sure you don't want me to beat them up?

ALAN

I appreciate the thought, but it was a group of jocks. You couldn't take them.

DEREK

I could get a baseball bat.

Alan can't help but chuckle at this, nearly choking.

ALAN

Don't make me laugh.

Alan lowers the bloody toilet paper from his nose. Turns to Derek, angling his face to give him a better look.

ALAN

How bad is it?

Derek looks over Alan's face.

DEREK

It's not too bad... Makes you look tough, though. Girls love that stuff.

ALAN
(sarcastic)
Why didn't I think of this sooner?
I just had to get my nose bashed
in.

Alan checks his reflection in the mirror. Grimaces at the sight. Taking in his nose and blood-stained chin and neck.

ALAN
What do you think the odds are I
broke one of their hands with my
face?

DEREK
Gotta be high, right? One of
them's gotta have a broken pinky
or something.

ALAN
We can only hope.

Alan runs some water in the sink. Splashes some onto his face, washing off the remaining blood.

Derek regards Alan for a moment. He hates seeing his friend like this. He tries to broach the subject gently--

DEREK
I don't think the office would
care if you wanted to go home for
the rest of the day...

ALAN
No!

DEREK
I'm just saying.

Alan rounds on Derek. Fierce determination in his eyes.

ALAN
Then they'll give me crap for
being a wuss. All my other options
suck! It's deal with it, or give
them more ammunition.

DEREK
So your plan is to act like
nothing happened?

Alan nods, then gets back to cleaning his face. He scoops some water into his hand-- SLURPS it into his mouth, then SPITS it out, clearing out the leftover blood he's swallowed.

Alan catches Derek's somber reflection in the mirror.

ALAN

You don't have to look like
someone kicked your dog. I'll be
fine. Just let it go.

DEREK

You sure? We've been in school for
one week and this is how it's
going so far.

Alan glares at Derek's reflection, but can't bring himself to
say anything more. Not wanting to hurt the only friend he has.

ALAN

Why do they care what gender I am?
How does it effect them?

Derek regrettably shrugs. He doesn't have the answer.

ALAN

My mom was right. I should've been
homeschooled this year.

Alan finishes his cleanup, then pulls several feet of paper
towels from the wall. He dries his face, then checks his
reflection again--

The blood is gone from his face, but the front of his shirt is
stained. Too stained to go unnoticed.

Alan points to his face--

ALAN

Well, this works...

--then to his shirt.

ALAN

...but I'm not so sure about this.

Without needing to be asked, Derek removes his button up--
revealing a rather sweaty white tank top-- and hands it to
Alan.

DEREK

Here.

Alan takes it, smiling. Genuinely touched by Derek's
generosity.

ALAN

Really? You sure?

Alan points to Derek's less than ideal attire.

ALAN
You wanna walk around like that
all day?

Derek jokingly reaches for the shirt--

DEREK
If you don't want it...

Alan CLUTCHES it close to his chest, careful to avoid touching the blood stains.

DEREK
That's what I thought.

Alan turns back to the mirror, throws on the shirt, and begins buttoning it up-- all the way, to hide the stain.

His eyes well up with tears. He makes sure to hold them back.

ALAN
Thanks. Really...

DEREK
Don't mention it, dude.

Derek grabs his backpack from the floor, shoulders it.

Alan follows suit, then heads toward the door. He pauses briefly, looking over his shoulder at Derek.

ALAN
You think it's safe to go out?

DEREK
Let's find out.

Together, the pair walk through the door and into the hallway beyond.

FADE TO BLACK.