

Stranger Pals

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FADE IN:

EXT. OUTSKIRTS STREET - SIDEWALK BENCH - LATE NIGHT

The place experiences the silence of the dead night.

Under a street lamp post sits, LUKE(30s), well dressed with a lean physique.

He listens to upbeat music from his headphone and rejoices with it.

A BLACK PLASTIC PACKET rests beside him on the bench.

His body appears stiff while he bobs his head to the beat of the music.

From a distance approaches, RAY(50s), drunk with a bottle in hand. He wears an untidy blazer, crumpled shirt with his tie hanging loose.

Luke takes no notice of Ray. He is still into his music.

Ray staggers towards the bench, knocks himself by its side, and flops on the bench.

LUKE
(removes his headphone)
What the fuck!

The bottle slips from Ray's grip and shatters, and the beer spills on the ground.

RAY
Nothing. Nothing. It's nothing.

LUKE
What nothing? You f... Moron.

RAY
Hey! Relax. I just want to sit here. That's it.

Luke smells the air.

LUKE
Fuck! How much have you drunk?

RAY
Why do you want to know? You care for me?

LUKE
Not to care, but for the aroma in the air that I smell now.

Ray chuckles a bit.

RAY
You just look at my wasted beer on the ground. It is fucked.

LUKE
Where did you drink so much?

RAY
In a fucking sewer.

LUKE
What?

RAY
Why. Do you. Care? Let's just sit quietly.

LUKE
Fine. I said I don't care.

Luke proceeds to put back his headphone over his ears.

RAY
That's the thing. No one cares. No one fucking cares! Just like my wife.

This catches Luke's attention.

LUKE
What? You said something about your wife?

RAY
No, I didn't.

LUKE
You said the word wife. I heard it.

RAY
YES. Yes, I did.

LUKE
She doesn't care for you.

Grief covers Ray's face.

RAY
Yes, she doesn't. She doesn't give a damn. She just thinks of me as a loser.

Luke is fully engaged now.

LUKE
Why does she think of you like that?

RAY
It wasn't like this before. This happened over the time. Slow and steady.

(MORE)

RAY (cont'd)
(chuckles)
Slow and steady wins the race.

Ray looks at Luke with a smile. Luke also smiles a little.

Luke turns and faces him.

LUKE
So... You both fight?

RAY
Oh! Of course. A lot. We fight a lot. Even our neighbours hear us.

LUKE
Your neighbour?! Are you se-

RAY
Yes. Of course, they hear-

LUKE
You both fight?

RAY
Yes yes yes. We do. And I'll admit that it is shameful to go out in the morning and to see that look on their faces. The disgust. The sheer disgust with just one look. It feels awful.

LUKE
I know that feeling.

RAY
You do?

LUKE
Same problem.
(extends his hand)
I am Luke.

RAY
Well. Now the smell ain't bothering you.

LUKE
(smiles)
Not even a little bit.

They shake hands.

RAY
Ray.

LUKE
I have to say this. I am really pleased to meet you, Ray.

RAY

And I am grateful that at least
someone is happy to meet me.

They break the handshake and sit in silence.

All the while, Luke seems to be in anticipation.

RAY

Can I ask you something?

LUKE

(excitedly)

Yeah yeah, sure. Go ahead.

RAY

How do I say this?

LUKE

Let it out, Ray. Just let it out.

RAY

What someone can do when it is -
just too much? When you are pushed
to the extreme?

LUKE

And?

RAY

And you start hating that person.
(his face twists in
anger)
So much so that, the mere sight of
that person wants you to just...

LUKE

What is it, Ray? What do you want
to do?

The hate is visible on Ray's face. It increases with each
spoken word.

RAY

You just want to...

Luke waits. His eyes spark with a creepy fervency.

RAY

You want to-

LUKE

Kill that person.
(grins)
Right?

RAY

I mean y- n- no. NO!

Ray exhales deeply.

RAY
I didn't mean that.

LUKE
Hmm. Too bad then.

Luke leans back, relaxed.

LUKE
Too bad.

RAY
(chuckles a bit)
Look. I was just fucking around,
alright? I was not serious about
this.

LUKE
Oh! So you made a story?

RAY
No. I mean - yeah we do fight but I
never had any dark thoughts.

LUKE
You're sure?

RAY
A hundred percent.

LUKE
OK. I believe ya.

Ray tries to get up but his legs wobble. He still not completely in his physical control.

LUKE
Sit down. I want to tell you
something.

Ray sits down.

RAY
What?

LUKE
I did something.

RAY
What something?

LUKE
The dark desire you have, but you
won't be able to fulfil it. Coz you
don't have the guts.

RAY

What the fuck you are talking?

Luke looks Ray straight in his eyes.

LUKE

I killed my wife.

Ray takes his time to process this information.

RAY

You... Did what?

LUKE

I had a wife who just used to trash me every single day of my life. Just like yours. So I killed her.

RAY

What you just said is not easily believable.

LUKE

Really? So want a proof?

RAY

Sure... That will help.

Luke grabs the black packet, digs his hand in it, and pulls out a BLOOD-STAINED KNIFE.

RAY

What the fuck!

LUKE

Look.

RAY

Are you fucking serious?!

LUKE

(candidly)

Yes, I am. And this right here, proves that indeed I am FUCKING serious.

Ray looks confused and shocked at the same time.

LUKE

You want to touch it?

RAY

Hell no!

Luke shrugs and puts it back in the packet.

RAY

Why are you carrying this? It's not a trophy.

LUKE

A testament of my deed, my good friend.

RAY

Then I should be calling the cops.

LUKE

Don't bother yourself, Ray. I won't be the seeing the light of the day.

Ray seems to consider this.

RAY

Fair enough. You will be saving the judiciary a lot. The number of trials and all... A thoughtful decision I'll say.

LUKE

Thank you.

A moment of silence.

RAY

Well, I should be on my way to home to get my ass kicked.

LUKE

Good luck with that.

RAY

I really need it.

Ray gets up, still a bit unsteady but better than before. The shock of sitting beside a killer has knocked him to his senses.

A MINI HANDGUN falls from the inside of Ray's blazer on the ground.

Ray looks shocked.

Luke is surprised.

LUKE

(smiles)

Well well well. So you were looking for a way out, my friend.

Luke picks up the gun. Ray takes a step back.

RAY

(hesitates)

No... It's not mine. Someone might have slipped it in my coat when I was... I was... I was-

LUKE

Drinking.

RAY

Drinking! Right. Drinking.

LUKE

Hmm. What are the odds of that?

Luke checks the gun.

RAY

I swear it's not mine.

LUKE

Chill, Ray. Just chill. I am not blaming you. You want to listen to some music?

RAY

No, I just want to go home.

LUKE

It's loaded, by the way.

RAY

I don't have any idea. I swear.

LUKE

Acceptance is a great thing, Ray.

RAY

I seriously don't know ab-

LUKE

OK OK. You can go to your lovely wife. She's waiting for you.

RAY

You are going to shoot me, right?

LUKE

No. I already have a count on me. Of a bad person. I don't want another. Of a good person.

Ray looks tensed.

LUKE

Ray, go home, hug your wife and enjoy your life. Nothing's gonna happen to you. I promise.

RAY

I hope it was true.

LUKE

Just... Let go, Ray.

RAY
(swallows hard)
OK. Do me the favor. Please.

Ray slowly walks away.

Luke detaches his headphone and plays the upbeat music out loud. He gives a weak smile, puts the gun under his chin.

Ray looks scared as he walks further.

BAM!

Ray stops dead in his tracks. Shockingly, he looks down at his chest, which has a BLOODY HOLE in it.

Ray falls to the ground. Luke stands behind with the gun.

LUKE
Live long, my friend.

Luke puts the gun on his temple.

BAM!

Blood sprays from where the bullet exits his brain and Luke falls sideways with a thud.

Chirping of a flock of birds somewhere distant mixes with the upbeat music still playing from Luke's phone on the bench.

The first rays of the dawn slowly crack the sky as we...

FADE OUT