

LIKE A TATTOO

Written by

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INT. HAYDEN'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - MAIN AREA - NIGHT

Light floods the corner of basement workshop. A BUZZING fills the air. A mirror reflects HAYDEN, 30s, his muscular body full of ink, sliding a tattoo gun across his chest.

The BUZZING stops as he lowers the tattoo gun from his left peck onto the workbench. He grabs a napkin and wipes away the ink and blood. It leaves the word "Justin" behind.

He sighs as if he just finished a great labor. He bends down and rises holding a pair of legs from an UNKNOWN MAN, 30s. He drags the legs out of frame.

The sound of a saw WHINES in the background at a high pitch.

UNKNOWN MAN (O.S.)

(waking)
What...

HAYDEN (O.S.)

It's okay. That's it. Look at the camera.

The sound of a Camera SHUTTER fires away.

UNKNOWN MAN

Wait! No! No! Please...

The pitch of the saw lowers as if it's cutting through something big.

UNKNOWN MAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

No --

HAYDEN

That's it.

Hayden returns to the mirror covered in blood. He wipes blood from the left side of his torso and reveals a spot clear of ink. He rubs the spot as if something were missing.

INT. TRUMAN'S BAR - LOUNGE AREA - NIGHT

The sound of bass heavy music fills the air. Lights from monitors playing music videos flicker and MALE PATRONS of all descriptions move to and fro.

Three men sit at a booth, three pints in and glasses less than full: JACOB, 30's, a portly man, CRAIG, 30s, a tall and lanky man with a hearty laugh, and MICHAEL, 30s, handsome in a humble way.

JACOB

Come on, Mikey. We finally got you to actually come to the bar and all you can do is look at profile pics on a hook-up app?

MICHAEL

I'm sifting the chaff from the wheat.

CRAIG

Earth to Mikey. All the hot guys on that app are all right here.

Craig scoots closer to Michael and looks at the app over Michael's shoulder. He looks up in the direction of the bar off-screen.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

See, look. Big Romp Lover Twenty-seven is right there?

Jacob scoots closer to Michael and Craig and looks at the app over Michael's other shoulder.

JACOB

Oh yeah, that's him alright.

INT. TRUMAN'S BAR - MAIN BAR - NIGHT

BIGROMPLOVER, early 40s, suave but unkept, his hungry eyes scan the other Male Patrons hovering around the bar.

INT. TRUMAN'S BAR - LOUNGE AREA - NIGHT

Jacob, Michael, and Craig laugh in the booth.

JACOB

He must've had a filter on that photo cause the live action isn't quite as pretty. No, ma'am.

Craig and Jacob chug the rest of their beer.

*

MICHAEL

Check out this faceless profile: Thirty-two, six foot two, and two hundred pounds with tattoos. He's literally on top of us.

Michael looks up from his phone and scans Male Patrons in the distance.

CRAIG

You wish.

Michael pushes Craig playfully and slides his phone on the table.

JACOB

Don't do it, Mikey. If a man
doesn't show you his face it's for
reasons that usually aren't good.

*

CRAIG

He's right, Mikey. They're either
on the down-low, cheating on
someone, or some sneaky religious
figure. All of which are bad for
you.

MICHAEL

You never know. It could be some
famous actor, Nick Jonas, Jason
Mamoia --

JACOB

Jeffrey Dahmer.

Jacob stares at his two friends and moves his tongue rapidly like a snake.

MICHAEL

You're such a buzzkill.

CRAIG

Alright, I think I've had my fill
of beer and beefcakes tonight.

Craig slides out of the booth.

JACOB

I'm going to call it a night too.
I'll go close out our tab.

*

Jacob slides out of the booth.

MICHAEL

No, I got it guys. Go home.

JACOB

You sure, Sweetie?

CRAIG

You don't have to do this.

MICHAEL

Guys, I got this one. Thanks for a great night out.

CRAIG

Next time I'll pick up the tab.

JACOB

Be careful, Sweetie.

Jacob and Craig hug Michael and kiss him on the cheek as they depart.

INT. TRUMAN'S BAR - MAIN BAR - NIGHT

Michael leans forward on the bar and raises his hand. RANDY, 25, a bear of a man, acknowledges Michael with a nod while he performs the mixologist's alchemy.

RANDY

Give me a second.

Michael's phone DINGS. He reaches in his pocket and pulls out the phone. On the screen is a faceless profile with a message notification. Michael opens the message. On the screen, it reads: "Hi there. I see you." *

Michael scans Male Patrons nearby. His eyes meet those of a man seated at the end of the bar. *

Hayden raises his phone and twists it.

Michael walks to the end of the bar and joins Hayden.

MICHAEL

Hi. I guess it's good to put a face to a profile.

HAYDEN

Yeah, sorry. There are quite a few crazies out there. I prefer discretion. *

MICHAEL

I can understand that.

Michael looks at Hayden's hands. Each of his knuckles has a tattoo of a letter: "LOVE" on his left hand and "PAIN" on his right.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Ah, your profile name makes sense, Love is Pain.

HAYDEN

And yours, Hopeless Romantic One
Nine --

MICHAEL

It's silly I know. But I'm --

HAYDEN

You're new to this.

MICHAEL

Very. And a little nervous. *

HAYDEN

My names Hayden. What's yours?

MICHAEL

Michael.

HAYDEN

Michael, do you like art?

MICHAEL

Of course. Well, as much as the
next guy. Are you an artist? *

HAYDEN

Of sorts. I'll tell you what, how
about we go back to my place and
I'll show you some of my work. *

Michael's eyes drop to the bar. His cheeks glow red. *

HAYDEN (CONT'D) *

We can drink some wine, eat cheese,
and talk story?

Michael controls himself and returns eye contact. *

MICHAEL

I don't know. You're not some sort
of serial killer are you?

RANDY

Don't mean to interrupt but it's
last call. *

Michael reaches into his pocket and grabs his wallet. He
removes a card and hands it to Randy.

MICHAEL

This is for the tab. Oh, and his
too.

Michael pulls a twenty dollar bill from his wallet and slides it across the bar.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
And keep this for yourself.

RANDY
Sure thing.

HAYDEN
Thank you for that.

MICHAEL
My pleasure. Now lets see
some...art. *

INT. HAYDEN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The dim light of street lamps penetrate the curtains in a fully furnished modern living room. Abstract photography of screaming male faces line the walls. *

The deadbolt on the door turns and the door swings open. Michael and Hayden enter the room and close the door behind them.

They stumble, hug, and laugh. Hayden reaches past Michael and flips the light switch.

MICHAEL
Did you take those?

Michael walks toward the wall and stops in front of the only photograph with the subject not screaming.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
(singing)
One of these guys is not like the
other.

HAYDEN
That was Alex. He was very hard to
shoot. Defiant to the end. *

MICHAEL
That WAS Alex?

HAYDEN
Yeah. He's dead now.

Michael turns to Hayden.

MICHAEL

Oh, wow. How'd he --

HAYDEN

Do you want something to drink:
Coke, Water? I can make a mean
crown and coke.

MICHAEL

Water is fine. Thank you. *

HAYDEN

Sure, I'll be right back.

Hayden disappears through a door.

Michael turns his attention back to the photos on the wall.
He paces the room's perimeter and stops to look at another
photo. The name at the bottom of the photo reads, "Ivan."

INT. HAYDEN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT *

Hayden opens a refrigerator and pulls out two bottles of
water. He opens a drawer, removes a syringe, stabs the top of
the bottle, and injects a clear liquid. He grabs the bottles
and leaves the room. *

INT. HAYDEN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Hayden enters the room and hands Michael the tainted bottle.
He twists the lid open on his bottle and takes a drink. He
twists the cap back onto the bottle. *

Michael twists the lid open. *

HAYDEN

You know, you're very photogenic.
I'd love to take some photo's of
you in my workshop.

Michael raises the bottle to his lips but stops short.

MICHAEL

I'm about as photogenic as a baboon
on the National Geographic Channel.

Michael raises the bottle again and takes a sip of the water.
Hayden puts his bottle water on a table near him. He walks
closer to Michael.

HAYDEN

Come with me. I want to show you something else.

Hayden grabs Michael's hand and leads him through the Living Room to a door.

INT. HAYDEN'S HOUSE - BASEMENT STAIRS - NIGHT

The light from the kitchen shines through the doorway and down the stairs. Abstract photos, similar to those in the Living Room, line the walls of the stairwell.

Hayden closes stairwell door and leads Michael's descent.

MICHAEL

Theses are incredible but do they all have to look like they're screaming? I mean, a smile works too right?

HAYDEN

Smiles are overrated.

Hayden flips a light switch at the base of the stairs.

INT. HAYDEN'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - MIAN AREA - NIGHT

Lights overhead reveal the basement's workshop and a closed door. Hayden leads Michael to the workbench.

Michael walks past Hayden closer to the tabletop of the work bench and points to the tattoo gun.

MICHAEL

You do tattoos as well.

Hayden unbuttons his shirt.

Michael spies the parting of Hayden's shirt in the mirror.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

You did all those yourself?

HAYDEN

Yes.

MICHAEL

Wait, those names.

Michael stumbles a bit as his sense of balance betrays him. He tries to catch himself.

He reaches out but there is nothing to grab. He falls to the ground. Michael reaches into his pocket and pulls out his phone.

A foot steps on Michaels wrist. Hayden pries the phone from Michael's hand. His blurry image kneels next to Michael on the ground. *

HAYDEN
You're so beautiful. Your name will
live right here.

Hayden points to a empty area on the left side of his torso.

MICHAEL
Please, don't hurt me. *

Everything goes black.

INT. HAYDEN'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - STUDIO - DAY

Michael wakes on a table in a room full of white reflectors, plastic along the floor and walls, and a camera at his flank aimed at his face. He struggles to get up; his limbs bound and unable to move free. *

Michael looks down between his legs at circular saw blade protruding from the table's surface.

HAYDEN
Good Morning.

Hayden enters the room.

MICHAEL
Let me go, Please.

HAYDEN
I'm afraid I can't do that,
Michael.

Hayden walks the edge of the table and presses a button. The saw blade turns and WHINES as it moves up the table closer to Michael's intimate parts.

MICHAEL
No! No! Please, No!

Hayden walks to the camera. The camera's SHUTTER sounds.

HAYDEN
That's it.

The Camera SHUTTER sounds.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)
That's it.

The Camera SHUTTER sounds again.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)
Perfect.

MICHAEL
No!

The saw's pitch changes as the blade makes contact with Michael. Blood splatters around the room and covers the walls, the floor, Hayden, and the camera.

Hayden rises from behind the camera lens.

HAYDEN
Beautiful.

INT. HAYDEN'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - MAIN AREA - NIGHT

Hayden stands in front of a mirror tattooing his left torso. The BUZZING stops as he finishes his work. He places the gun on the table, grabs a napkin, and wipes away the blood and ink to reveal the name, "Michael."

He looks down at his right quad and rubs a space absent of ink as if something is missing.

A DING from his phone sounds. Hayden looks at his reflection and smiles.

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