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Lead Sinks To The Bottom Of Every Cup

by Tom Ellis Richmond

i always thought of myself as a something good, maybe not a lady, but decent. but then again, who doesn't think they're nice, or good, or decent? the way things are going, though, i can't really think of myself as much more than a thing made for a purpose.

a thing. to think, a thing could be so many things. how vague! what i mean is, i could have been anything; i'm metal. like the engine of a car, something useful, something not so mean. i never wanted to be a gun, but no one asked me.

a purpose. so silly to think of now. what difference does it make? i was asked a question, i gave my honest opinion, and forever i will have killed my owner's son. what can i say in my defense? "i'm a gun, i shoot things?" or, "i thought i was for protection?" no, you can't take these sorts of things back...they have lasting effects and affect (in that "dad worked at the factory because grandfather lost his arm in the war" sort of way).

when i was made, completed...created, whatever it was, i thought that when a police officer bought me i'd be used to protect people. right now i'm not sure what to think of myself. i thought, i thought, i thought, but it's all past tense, and so is brad's head.

i'm sorry for being so blunt, it's just i don't know how else to put it. if there is any fault i have, it's been always telling the truth. that may sound like a virtue to you, but raw truth hurts. if you were to see yourself as you are, you'd want to die the same way brad did-- cold, callous, and hollow. it's better the other way, i guess. it seems the lies keep us alive long enough to have time to forget what we're really like.

and now i see i was the victim of my own game. i didn't take the time to see that i can only throw bullets (like responses) through the air, and those bullets can only miss, hurt, maim, or kill. i'm not left with a

lot of options.

WHAT THE HELL?!

i just killed someone and i'm here trying to pretend i didn't! there's no way around it. he asked the question, he pulled the trigger, i let down the hammer onto the pin, and his head couldn't take that harsh reality. like a melon against the wall, splattered, a sort of example, only this one is permanent. how should i deal with this? how should i fucking deal with this?! it's not like you'll be any help, you're just listening, passive, maybe soaking up things, maybe trying to figure out what's going on, what this has to do with the last story you heard. you people are always trying to find a deeper meaning, always trying to connect every letter to make words and sentences.

meanwhile...i'm sentencing death

some great moral dilemma we have here. i want to be an engine, you want me to stop cursing and be more eloquent, both of us wanting brad to still be alive. i suppose we have that in common.

still, the engine. it does the same thing i do. it uses controlled explosions to push metal...but its bullets always return to be shot again, a cycle, and they're a vehicle because of it. it gets you where you need to go. liar, full of half truths, and i was honest, but i'm the killer. all i did was tell the truth, i was consistent, i did the same thing every time.

so much for securing the peace.

brad. his girlfriend dumped him, and his father, the police officer that bought me, is a lousy asshole. not my fault. i thought i was just a supporting character, not the damn villain, but here i am. the one who tells the truth...not brad's father, the abusive man that can't say anything unless it's harmful.

so brad finally believed his dad when he said he was worthless, so we talked about it. i'm sure you assume brad was delirious, and not

thinking, and blah blah blah when he picked me up, but you're just being judgmental. no one kills themselves unless life has become so painful that any way of escape seems impossible...well, short of death.

so he picked me up, and asked me what i thought, and...

GONE!

i responded, and said what i was meant to say, and now the paramedics are trying to wipe the blood and brains off of the walls, smearing red all over the wallpaper, brad's mom screaming, ripping out her fingernails trying to save a little piece of mind from being tossed into a biohazard bag, and lugged down to the morgue. she still thinks that brad is handsome and could have an open casket ceremony because mothers always love.

if you ask me, he looks horrible. he hardly has a head, what's there to say about it? "well, were it not for the gaping maw of the exit wound he'd be fit for prom?!" who are we kidding? but then again, love does funny things. it lets you lie to yourself just enough to pretend that what you love is perfect. it lets you reject the widely accepted fact that nothing is perfect. that's what love is.

right now i wish i could do that. then brad's mom wouldn't vomit every time she looked at the red stains on her fingertips, and north wouldn't have to deal with this shit the rest of his life.

oh yeah, north!

north angleson was brad's best friend. he walked in right after my conversation with brad, stared, turned around, and left. i knew the second he strolled in that he would look too long to ever forget what someone with a clear head looks like. cleared all over the vertical floral print. it was prettier that way, random and splotched, like a work of art. now it's a disgusting stain and stench brad's mom wants to get rid of, but also keep intact because it's the last thing she has to remind her of brad. her stomach turning the whole time...for a

million reasons.

i didn't really think much about any of this until north walked in. when i saw his entire world start caving in, creating an abyss out of each pupil, i knew this kind of thing leaves an impression. i'm trying really hard to be honest but tactful here.

i wish i could be good...i don't think i could even be good if i were an engine because the stress of taking back everything i did would make me break down, leaving you stranded on the side of the road. brad was stranded, and he didn't look as if he felt good. brad's mom will keep going, though i'm not sure why...even if no one repairs her, and i'm sure they won't.

brad's father walked in on the mess after the paramedics were there and was just glad it wasn't his dog that was hurt. a hairy bag of organs, heart worms, and blind loyalty. his fucking dog! completely oblivious to the shades of emotion that colors the world around us...which is probably why every bigot and louse like brad's father prefers them.

i don't want to think about brad's father anymore. i have to sit on his belt and uphold the law, and make sure every minority doesn't overrun the country. i can't believe i didn't see this before. i thought because i told the truth i always knew it.

i'm not even sure who i am at this point. i never thought i was violent, i thought i was nurturing, and securing. shows what i know. so i guess this means i can't change and now have the added bonus of knowing about it. i'll always be violent, it's not like i can shoot candy, or money, or give people fillings. i just have to choose who i respond to.

currently i'm torn between two choices: i can either choose to misfire every time the trigger is pulled, or i can just wait until brad's father wants to shoot another black man, backfire, killing myself, and blow off his right hand. the payoff for either isn't very great, though...one way i'm tossed in the garbage, and it's no fun being abandoned (i

saw that sense in north's eyes when he realized he was left alone to fight back against a life that was killing him). on the other hand, i could make sure brad's father is jobless, and has to masturbate in the bathroom of strip clubs with his left hand. but then i'm in the garbage, again. or i could just shoot people that might be scared and innocent.

what should i do?

damnit! i'm sorry i told you that you'd be of no use. now here i am needing you. i guess i didn't tell the truth, or whatever, i don't even know what to think. i'm getting practice at being an engine, and you're watching me break down.

so, i've already seen where violence leads...but what if that scared black man really is a dangerous man, a criminal, some sort of killer? how am i to really know? i guess i'd just rather be a paperweight: those can only keep important things from blowing away...

right now i'm stuck, and i think you know what i mean. i've contradicted myself. i said that i killed brad, but also that he committed suicide...which one is true?

fuck it. forget the truth, it just doesn't exist, it's all perspective and convincing fiction. you can only say what you know, and hope the half lies your mom swallows are enough to keep her loving you, and keep the leaks plugged in your boat. otherwise we all drown, or plug the leaks with fragments of skull.

the boat's on its way down, anyhow...don't hold your breath, it's a forgone conclusion,

you're guaranteed a death.

and that's all i can tell you, it's the only bit of truth i have to hold onto...

About The Author

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