

20 Days Left

“20 days until death.” The police yelled.

Honestly after all I’ve gone through I don’t care I killed 20 people. Depression really hits after you’ve been in prison for 5 years for 1st degree murder. Well at least it’ll be over soon.

Breakfast

I’m surprised I’m still able to leave my cell after... well you already know. All the cells opened at once besides mine, mine opened about ten seconds after, because the police officers had to escort me to the cafeteria.

“Move or else you’ll be executed today... by me.” The police enforced.

“At this point does it matter, I’ll die tomorrow, today maybe even in twenty years. Everyday is the same as the other, roll call, breakfast, gym shower, dinner, and bed. It’s inevitable, I’ll die... soon, and I don’t even care.”

“Shut up and move.” The police said. “Freaking weirdo.” he mumbled.

Breakfast was cool I guess, but the cafeteria was horrible but I guess that’s because I was eating alone.

Gym

I don’t go to the gym because it’s optional but prisoners who go to exercise time get special treatment, such as free food, dessert, longer sleep time and more. But people like me on death row like me wouldn’t get any type of special treatment even if we did extra work.

19

I had a dream of my death just like every day. Being tied on both hands and having my head chopped off. But the thing is, it's not even a nightmare, it's just a regular dream.

I woke up and stared at the ceiling. Cracked, stained, and flaking like it was trying to rot away just like me. I laughed a little. Not because anything was funny, but because sometimes laughter keeps you from screaming.

They brought breakfast again. Cold eggs, dry toast, something that looked like meat but wasn't. The guard didn't say anything this time. Just tossed the tray onto the table like I was already a corpse. I took a bite anyway. Not because I was hungry, but because chewing gave me something to do.

Shower

The water was freezing as always. Not like I expected anything better. The pipes groan like old men, and the water comes out in sad, weak drips. The soap smells like chemicals and regret. But I stand there, let it all soak in. Scrub skin that doesn't even feel like mine anymore. I think about that—how five years can make you forget the shape of your own hands.

A guy two stalls down hums when he washes. Every single time. Some old gospel song, I think. He's in here for robbery. Three strikes. Life. He still thinks he's getting out. Still believes in something. I envy that.

18

They gave me a pen today. Don't know why. Maybe they think I'm gonna write some confession, some last letter to the world. But what would I even say?

"Sorry for killing 20 people?"

But I'm not. That's not the way people want me to be. You do something like that, it stays in your bones. You become it. Regret is for people who think they can be forgiven. Me? I'm just waiting.

So instead, I drew a picture. Just lines and shapes. A face, I think. But not one I recognize. Probably someone I buried in my memory. Or someone buried me.

The guard didn't say anything when he saw the drawing. Just nodded and left. Maybe he saw something familiar in it too.

17

They let me outside today. Not because they wanted but because they had to. Something about routine. Vitamin D. Help keep us from going insane.

The sun hit my face and it felt like touching something I forgot existed. I closed my eyes and let it soak in. Thought maybe this is what peace feels like. But then the smell hit—sweat, urine, metal—and I remembered where I was.

Some of the others looked at me like I was already gone. Some smirked. Others just ignored me. That's how it goes. The closer you get to death, the less real you become.

I sat on a bench and watched birds. One of them landed near the fence. Free thing. Could've flown anywhere. Yet it chose to land here.

Idiot.

15

The priest came today. Sat outside my cell with a Bible which was too clean to belong in a place like this.

“Son, would you like to talk?”

“No”

He stayed anyway. Started reading verses about redemption, forgiveness, peace in the afterlife. I didn't listen. I just stared at the floor, wondering what color blood really is when it's dried on concrete.

“God still loves you,” he said.

“No he doesn't! And you know it.” I replied with anger that I have locked up for years... Years I don't want to remember.

He didn't come back the next day.

13

A kid got brought in today. Couldn't have been more than nineteen. Cried when they took his fingerprints. Cried when they gave him his uniform. Cried all the way to his cell.

He's two doors down from me. Kept saying he didn't do it. I didn't answer. Nobody cares here. Guilt, innocence—it's all noise.

He asked me how I sleep at night.

“Same way you will,” I told him. “Eventually.”

11

I remembered the first victim, whose blood was on my hands. Her name was Stacy. I hadn't thought about her in years, not since the trial, not since they showed her picture and asked me if I felt anything. I didn't and I still don't. But for some reason her face came to me in the dream last night. Not screaming, not crying. Just... staring, like she was waiting for me to explain why I did it, but the thing is, I don't know the answer to that question.

9

They changed my cell light today. The old one kept flickering, but I'm pretty surprised they even had the thought to change it. But the good thing is that this one's brighter. A little bit too bright. It makes it hard to hide from myself.

My hands look older than I remember. Skin cracked. Veins rising. I guess death isn't the only thing creeping in.

7

One week left. The warden visited. That never happens unless your executions close. He asked if I wanted a special meal. Anything I wanted. I told him I didn't care. He said I should think about it.

"Surprise me." I said in a boring voice.

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He didn't laugh. Not a single smile, smirk nothing. But what was I expecting, him to burst out laughing?

5

The kid from two cells down killed himself with a fork from the cafeteria. He didn't even last a week. They cleaned it up fast. Guards don't like when people mess up their schedule. I didn't feel anything, like if it never even happened.

I just lay on my bunk and stared at the ceiling. There was a crack shaped like a knife. I smiled at that.

3

They let me write a letter. I didn't send it to anyone. Just wrote it and folded it and put it under my mattress.

It said:

"If there's something after this, I hope it's quiet. If not, that's fine too."

2

They shaved my head today. It's part of the process. Everything gets taken away. Hair. Identity. Choice. You're just a body they prep for

disposal. I watched the clippers buzz through what was left of me. No mirror. Just cold steel and colder hands. The barber didn't speak. Neither did I.

Today is the day.

They woke me up early. Gave me real food. Eggs that weren't powder. Meat that tastes like meat. Even pie. Cherry. My favorite.

I ate in silence.

They let me shower longer than usual. Gave me a clean uniform. Said it was custom. Starched. Pressed. Like dressing up a mannequin.

The priest came back. I let him read this time. Not because I believed. Just because I didn't want the silence anymore. He asked if I wanted to say anything. I shook my head.

They walked me down a hallway that smelled like bleach and memories. I saw the room. I saw the chair. I saw the end. I sat down. They strapped me in. Asked if I had last words.

I said:

"Every day was the same. This one too."

Then the lights got too bright. And then—