

The
Prisoner
Mickey Pfarr

ANOTHER DAY HAD PASSED BEFORE THE PRISONER EVEN SAW SUNLIGHT again. Blinded by the rays, he cowered into the corner of his dank cell and let out a small whimper. Carefully, the prison guard backed away from the small opening he had made — that sliver of light that was freedom and a warm bath. Dread filled the prisoner when he thought about the heavy door closing again, encasing him in a darkness that was more than a lack of light, but a lack of sound, smell, and it suffocated him entirely. Everything he knew — hope, love, life — was entrapped in that small bit of light that cast a yellow glow along the floor. Fear gnawed at his organs from the stomach up; he could feel its jowls clenching on his heart. Guilt knocked on the back part of his brain, where he had thrown it after so many eyes had lost their gleam at his hand. Had he been a different man—a creature more sly than brutal—would he even be rotting in a hole in the ground somewhere over the enemy line? If he hadn't been so careless, so caught up in his work, would he be home receiving praise for his good deeds?

Jackass, he thought, *getting caught was your only mistake*. Killing was never just an order for him; it was the one thing in his life that he enjoyed. Loyalty was won through his brutality and his cold, black stares. Murder was what earned him medals and titles, and never once did he blink an eye when his kill count grew or when his pale skin was stained red. Never did he wonder if the man he gutted had a wife, or if the woman whose throat he slit was a mother.

Obscenities flowed through the gap as the complaining guardsman set down a plate of bread for the pathetic man inside. People were murdered like livestock by this prisoner, and all the dirty, sweaty man cared for was whether or not he was going to see the sunlight again. Questionable acts were committed under no other authority but his own and in the name of a god he wasn't even sure existed, but fought for nonetheless; as long as he could justify his bloodlust.

"Release me," the prisoner demanded, "and I will be sure to pardon you."

"Sorry," came a voice from beyond the cracked door, "but no." Tears of frustration welled up in the prisoner's eyes as he focused his attention on the light, ready to plead for a moment of the enemy's time. Undoubtedly, this was the worst kind of trouble he had ever gotten himself into. Victims of his own madness haunted the darkness of his cave, but he didn't care for them; all that mattered was the sunlight he so desperately needed.

"Will you please," begged the prisoner of war, "leave me some light?" Xenophobia is what he believed the Government had called the enemy's hatred for the Americans, for the war; it was a hatred of all things foreign that was plainly plastered on the faces of his keepers.

"You t'ink you deserve ta light," the guard spat, "after all of my people you have slaughtered so mercilessly in the name of your nation and your god? Zaqar plague you with nightmares and madness." The guard slammed the door closed, sliding the lock home, plunging the prisoner into nothingness once more. Δ

Author's Note:

"This is an ABC story, in which (almost) every sentence begins with a new letter of the alphabet."
