

One Of Us

A flash by Sonia Ramos

I'm not. One of you, I mean. Not a part of your gang, no member of your social group. I pretend to fit in, of course, things would be more difficult if I didn't, but I'm not really there. You don't see the real me. I have a secret, you see.

We look the same, you and me. You, and all these people around me. They're dressed just the same, we speak the same language, but I am not with you.

There is a small plaque screwed into the back of the seat in front of me. It says "E15". I suppose all of the seats around me have the same kind of numbering, I don't want to look. It's hard to focus with the sweat running into my eyes, I have to keep blinking.

The music is loud. I try to block it out, concentrate my thoughts. I think about my brother, my mother, my father, anything to remain centered.

My brother's face floats in my mind, the way I last saw him, with a halo of blood on the pavement below his head. I blink again. My hair is wet with sweat.

My mother's tears, my father's sorrow, his wounded pride. He is impotent, you see, in every sense of the word. He can't protect his family, nor his land. Our olive trees all bulldozed.

I feel strong, and right, even though my hands are shaking. I try to calm myself and rub my thumb across the plastic button once more. I blink, twice.

I came in here with some people. It was easy to latch on. A smile here, a friendly comment about the weather. They were quite charming and open too, eager to chat, happy to be going to the theatre. A nice group, but not mine. I don't belong.

On the billboards above the ticket office it said "This play will change your life!"

Yes.

The play is coming to its end, the audience stands up to applaud. They have enjoyed the evening; now it is my turn to perform.

I stand up too. There is hot piss running down my leg. I'm not frightened, it's just my body.

The actors are bowing, taking a curtain call, reveling in the adoration of the crowd, smiling.

I shut my eyes.

Oh Mother, oh Father.

Now, do it now.

Now.

Now.

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