

Based on *Killings* – Adres Dubus

I knew who the man in my back seat was. Matt Fowler. Father of Frank Fowler. I knew why he had a gun in his lap.

Really, I should have expected this. But, it had been months since I filled that Frank with lead. Why now? How long did it take to smuggle a man out of some small, seaside town? Of course, if Frank took after his father the way most men took after their fathers then I probably wasn't dealing with the smartest man.

Frank was a predator, I'd done the world a service by taking him out of it. What self-respecting father could leave his sons alone with someone who preyed on vulnerable girls, not yet divorced? My two boys were not going to have that kind of influence in their lives, of that I was certain.

If I had known my father, I wonder if would've taken after him. Would my old man have done what I did?

"Stop here," he said. For a moment, he sounded like Frank.

My chest tightened as I pulled the car over and put on the brakes. Then the cold metal of the gun seared my neck. I felt numb. *Do as he says, go along with it.*

"Turn it off," he spat the words.

I didn't want to. I pulled the key back and gripped the wheel again, then met the eyes of my captor in the rearview mirror. "I'll do twenty years, Mr. Fowler; at least. I'll be forty-six years old." I didn't need to do the math. I knew what would come well before I pulled the trigger.

"That's nine years younger than I am," Matt replied. I heard what he didn't say. The punishment wasn't fitting for the crime. His son would never see those years, and neither would I.

I got out of the car in a haze. I felt the steps I took, the heavy plodding through the dark over pungent earth, but they weren't deliberate. The dense tree line encroached on us, blocking out the stars I longed to stare into. My Mary Ann was sleeping under that sky.

This was my chance. My only chance.

I let fly the suitcase they'd forced me to bring, dropping it against the ground. I knew that I wasn't going to need it. There was no one to take me to the airport, no plane waiting for me.

Even as I twisted to bolt I knew it was futile. But I wouldn't be a slave to the father of that scum any longer.

Maybe I could disappear into the trees. It would be too dark to see me.

Pain split my knee open. I felt my throat scratch with a scream, but all I heard was the echoing gun-shot.

I hit the ground hard with all of my weight.

I had shot Frank twice. This pain must have been something he experienced in his last moments. Maybe I took more after Frank, than I did my own father.

I heard the steps as Matt closed in over me. Trying to run had been futile. But at least I was going to die bold. I wasn't going to die on some couch while the woman I stole, the children I perverted, doted on me.

I didn't hear the shot.