

Wilderness House Literary Review 17/3

Zachary Forsberg
The Field

"James?"

"Yeah?"

"This is a field."

"Yep."

"A profoundly empty field."

"Yep."

"One might even go so far as to call it a plain."

"One might."

"So, I guess I'll ask. What did you do?"

"What?"

"What, James, did you do? What did you do to put us here?"

"What are you talking about, Ryan?"

"Well, I was sitting on the couch watching a flamingo documentary and fell asleep. When I woke up, I was here. I can only assume this was your doing."

The pair sat upright in the mid-morning sun. The grass rolled in the breeze akin to ocean waves as they come into shore. For miles in all directions, neither party could see a thing except for the fields of grass.

"This wasn't me." James stood up and scanned the horizon. "I do, however, understand why you would think that."

"No, I've had enough of this James."

"What are you talking about?"

"I've had enough of this. All this crazy shit happening whenever you're around. I feel like I can't ever get a moment's peace because of you."

"Okay I think that's exaggerating a bit."

"Does it matter, James? You said the same thing last time something like this happened."

"Okay, yeah, but it has been months since anything happened last."

"That's just it. There shouldn't be a last time!"

"Ryan, what's going on with you?"

"What's going on with me?" He stood up. "Are you serious? Look around us, James! We're in the middle of a fucking field."

The breeze was sweet on the tongue and filled the silence as the two men stared at each other. The sun shown down on them, cut intermittently by the few stray clouds that dot the sky like sheep grazing over them.

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"I'm telling you I didn't do it."

"Bullshit."

"Ryan, I'm sorry about all the other times I ruined your day, but I didn't do this."

Ryan turned away and paced in front of his friend. He rubbed his black beard a moment before he pressed his hands into his eyes and screamed into the empty field. He dropped down to his knees and stared at the grass sprouting from the soil below him.

"When we get back. I want you gone. I want you to move out when we get back. You can take some time to find a place, but I want you gone."

James sat next to his friend. He plucked a blade of grass and began to play with it. He wound it between his fingers and felt it stick and grab his skin as he pulled it across.

"You know, I didn't mean for any of that other shit to happen. You can't blame me for your car breaking down."

"You wrecked it, James."

"That was an accident. It's in the name. 'Car accident.'"

"You were drunk, and I told you not to go."

"You could have stopped me."

"James, I want you gone. I don't even want you here now. You have ruined so many things."

"The car is just one thing that I didn't even ruin. It's really kind of your fault all those things happened you know. I didn't even do this but you're blaming me. I don't even know how we could have gotten here."

"James--"

"If you would just accept some responsibility for your own life for once--"

"James--"

"You wouldn't have any of these problems."

"That's enough--"

"Hell, your wife wouldn't have left you if you would just be assertive for fuckin' once."

Ryan stood up. Blood dripped from his clenched fist. The sting of his nails as they dug into his palms bring him back to reality. He begins walking.

"Where are you going?"

Ryan said nothing. He only walked.

"What? So now you're just going to walk away?"

Ryan stopped, "you said you wanted me to be more assertive, right? Well, I am. I'm leaving. Whenever either of us gets back to the apartment, pack your shit and get out."

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"So, you're just going to quit?"

"What do you want me to do, James? You don't fucking care how I'm feeling about this and you don't care how you fuck up other people's lives. So, I'm done."

"Where are you even going? We don't even know where we are."

"I'm just going to walk. I'll find people at some point. Don't follow me. Find your own way back."

Ryan walked until James was a faded smudge of a memory on the horizon.