

5:15

By Krystale Turner

“Harris, it’s meal time” the guard announced. Officer Wilkes unlocked the door to my cell as his chubby fingers placed my tray on the metal desk in the solemn jail cell. He looked at me sympathetically, but I turned my head refusing to make eye contact with him. I didn’t need his sympathy.

The metal clank of the door slamming and locking brought me back to the reality I was trying so hard to avoid. I picked up my fork and enjoyed my meal of grilled shrimp, medium rare steak, loaded potatoes, and green beans. It all tasted like rubber. My taste buds held no recollection of the best meal I had eaten since being brought to the penitentiary seven years ago.

I laughed to myself thinking about this was the exact same meal I was eating when the FBI charged through my apartment and threw me in handcuffs. The irony of the situation was somewhat comical.

I ate a little more of the steak and mashed potatoes, but my stomach was already full. My stomach was in knots thinking about my departure from this horrible place.

Their faces ran through my mind. Micheal, the handsome attorney who loved to watch westerns, then there was Shane, the modern day cowboy. He was handsome and rugged his long brown hair framed big blue eyes. There was also Timothy, he was handsome but on the chubby side, he loved to cuddle and watch movies all night. Last, there was Steve, my precious Steve. I hated to loose him. I think I was beginning to fall in love with him, but he had to leave me to.

Soon we would see each other again and I couldn’t wait. I hoped they wouldn’t make me choose. If I had to, Steve would be the man I would spend the rest of eternity with.

I slid the tray across the floor and got up to look at myself in the mirror. It was almost time for me to get ready for my departure. My long black hair hung down my back in one braid. My brown coco skin peeked back at me free from any blemish, but there stood the one scar that reminded me every day why I had to do what I did.

I ran my finger across the scar remembering how my daddy beat my mom on one of his drunken rants. He slammed my mother's body into the table as I reached out to attack him he hit me with the back of his hand. His wedding ring punctured the skin under my left eye leaving a deep gash. My mother lay crying on the floor begging him to stop. This time he didn't. I saw him stomp my mother with his work boots and beat my mother until her screams were no more. His blue jeans and green t shirt was stained with my mother's blood.

After he finished, he went in the kitchen and grabbed a beer. My mother's lifeless body was still in the middle of our floor. I went to check her pulse, but there was nothing. My mom's eyes were swollen shut with black and purple rings around them. Her hair was matted to her head, and her teal housedress was stained with blood. Despite it all, she was still beautiful.

My father was still drinking his beer watching ESPN when the cops came. I showed no emotion as they put my dad in handcuffs and escorted him to the police car, I showed no emotion when the coroner came and pronounced my mother dead, and the only time I cried was when child services told me I was going to live with my Aunt Diane. My aunt had 2 cats and I hated cats.

My aunt Diane reminded me so much of my mother, and for the first time my life actually seemed normal. I didn't have to watch the beatings my father gave my mother on a daily basis, or hear her crying and watch her try to cover the bruises with her Fashion Fair concealer.

Aunt Diane's neighborhood was nicer than ours had been. I loved my new school, and was no longer the loner. I made the honor roll and even joined the drama club. My friends knew nothing about my past, and I tried my best to forget. I was 13 years old and my life was normal, but the haunting lifeless eyes of my mother haunted me.

I can remember my Aunt Diane leaving for the bank. I was sitting in the living room doing my homework.

"I'm leaving to go to the bank Shonda," My aunt called out.

"Okay."

“Don’t forget to take my brownies out of the oven in seven minutes.”

“I won’t”

That was the first time I felt the feeling.

My aunt’s cat was sitting in her chair. His brown and white fur billowed around him like a cape. He sat there staring at me as I finished my Algebra homework.

I hate cats.

I went into the kitchen and poured rat poison into a bowl. Then, I mixed some cream from the fridge into the bowl. I stirred it up slowly as my hands shook nervously.

“Here, Comet. Come drink some cream. Look what I have for you.” I said a little too sweetly.

Comet hopped off the couch and reluctantly came to where I stood in the dining room. She looked up at me as if to say, why are you being nice to me now?

Comet drank the cream greedily and licked her lips. When she finished, I took the bowl in the kitchen and washed it out. By the time I returned Comet was dead.

I picked Comet up and couldn’t help staring at her lifeless eyes. There was a beauty in the eyes of death that fascinated me. I remember staring at my mother while the coroner and medics were with her. Despite her badly beaten body, that was the most beautiful she had ever looked.

I gently laid Comet in a trash bag and took her in the backyard behind a rosebush and buried her.

My Aunt came back shortly and we enjoyed brownies and milk.

“Shonda, have you seen Comet? Charisma is looking all over for her, and I haven’t seen her since I left.”

“No, I saw her earlier sitting on your chair.” I continued eating my brownie.

“She will show up when she get’s hungry.”

I shook my head in agreement.

3 days later and Comet still hadn’t come home. My aunt was depressed and so was her other cat Charisma.

“I just don’t understand. Comet never leaves home for more than a few hours. I don’t know where she is. I put up signs and everything.” Aunt Diane was sitting in the kitchen making sweet potato pies for our church bake sale.

“Maybe someone found her and decided to keep her.” I said

“I love those cat’s your Uncle John got those cats for me before he got sick.” My Aunt said sadly, thinking of her deceased husband.

“Aunt D. I am going to bed.” I kissed her forehead and went into my room. I was startled to see Charisma sitting on my bed. She never came in my room. I shoed for her to get off my bed. She didn’t move. She stared at me looking like a white ghost.

I grabbed her and she scratched me and hissed. It was like she knew I had something to do with Comet’s death. I grabbed her and before I knew my hands wrapped around her neck and pulled until I heard a crack. Her lifeless body dangled in my hands.

“The adrenaline rush that surged through my 13 year old body was exciting. It was like electricity as I felt the cat’s body fight until her body gave up and succumb to the invitation to death.

Footsteps creaked down the hallway.

I threw the dead cat on the side of my pink and white flowered comforter and covered her with a ruffled pillow.

“Honey, is everything okay? I thought I heard Charisma in here. I know you hate cats.” My aunt’s head peeked through the door

“Oh, no. I was on the phone with Jessica. I put her on speaker phone because I was looking for my other boot.”

“Okay, well goodnight honey.”
“Goodnight.”

I waited until I heard my aunt go in her room and close the door. I crept down the hallway to the kitchen and got another trashbag. I smiled to myself as I threw Charisma into the bag. The alarm had already been set so I was unable to open the door without my aunt hearing the alarm beep.

My aunt had to be at work before I left for school so I would bury her after my aunt left.

The next morning after Aunt Diane left, I pulled on some old pants and buried Charisma beside her sister.

I thought about all of this as I sat on top of the scratchy green blanket. Most people were stunned when they found out how such an ordinary black woman could be such a cold hearted serial killer. I looked normal enough.

Today is the day I would meet my fate.

“Shonda, Reverend Mcdowell is here to see you. It’s almost time.” The guard said gently unlocking the door so my Aunt Diane’s preacher could come counsel me.

“Hello Shonda.”

“Hello Reverend.”

“Would you like to pray?”

“I don’t have anything to pray about Reverend. Thank you for coming. Have you seen my aunt?”

“Yes, she is having a hard time grasping all of this. We all are.” Reverend Mcdowell sat down on my bed. I still couldn’t make eye contact as I played with my hair.

“Shonda, are you saved?”

“No reverend.”

“Would you like to accept the Lord Jesus as your Lord and Savior? Jesus forgives and if you accept him you will be made clean. He has no record of wrongs. You will be redeemed and not condemned to hell.”

“Reverend, I have been in hell since the day I was born. Can you please leave now?”

Reverend Mcdowell shook his head sadly and called for the guards. I couldn't understand why he was being so nice. His nephew was the first man I murdered.

“May God, give you peace.” Reverend Mcdowell said softly as the guard escorted him out of the cell.

I looked up at the clock across from my cell. The time had stopped at exactly 5:15. I knew it was later than 5:15. I was scheduled to die at 9:00 and my dinner was served at 7:00.

It was like some force was trying to keep me here but I was ready to go. 5/15 was my precious Steve's birthday. May, 15th. I smiled at the irony. According to the clock his birth would be the time of my death.

All of my lovers I would see you soon.

I loved all the men I killed, but I had to kill them because they wanted to hurt me. I remembered each face as they reached out to me begging me with their eyes as I plunged my blade deep in their chest. Confusion, terror, pain, and surprise filled their eyes right before they went completely empty and cold.

Some people wondered how I managed to kill four men and dump their bodies in a landfill. I was very slender and was only 5'3. All of my lovers had been bigger than me in size, but the adrenaline from the kill pumped me enough to carry their bleeding bodies to my trunk and later throw them in the landfill.

“I love you” played in my mind as I heard all four of their voices say the words that would seal their fate.

“I love you” is what my daddy would say to my mother after he beat her senseless. I hated those 3 words.

The time was still 5:15.

I smiled to myself. It was getting closer to the time. The guards nervously walked back my cell peeking in. I’m sure they expected to see me show some kind of emotion since my life would be ending soon, but I sat straight up on my bed staring through the bars.

The time was still 5:15 as the sun faded and darkness greeted the sky.

I waited patiently picking at a thread on my blue jumpsuit. I was the first woman in the state of Georgia to be executed. I remember the look on my Aunt Diane’s face as she listened to the testimonies against me. She gasped in horror as they showed pictures of the dead men who I had dated and brought to her home to have dinner.

The only thing I regretted was that my aunt was related to the woman they labeled “The Heartless Killer”. My friend Jessica was in a state of disbelief, but I told her just like I told everyone else. I murdered those men because they left me no choice. They should never have loved me.

“Harris, it’s time,” Two guards came to my cell.

Finally! I smiled.

They put me in the metal handcuffs and escorted me out of my cell. The other prisoners shouted taunts at me.

The clock still read 5:15.

5:15 was the last time I would see before I left to meet my lovers.

