Twelve Bodies

Shamus Pape

I headed out that morning like any other, taking, his name was 12 then,out with his chain leash. He fought it as he always did, trying to pull me to the closest female dog, surprised he didn't as young as I was.

The first landmark we walked by, was that shitty drifters car, the black spray paint job being outshone by the stock orange. The drifter never bought from my brother. Wolf was the handle my brother used then. I started off again, letting 12 mark our territory, as I led him through our cut. Some man was walking my way down the street, some shit druggy I was sure.

“Hey, little boy, aren't you a bit young to be out alone, this is a dangerous neighborhood.” 11 was just as dangerous as any other age out here.

his switch blade made a crease in his pocket and his shakes signaled withdrawals placed him as someone with withdrawals.

“12 Corpses, here is plenty old enough for a walk” I pronounce his name perfectly, making sure he heard.

“12 Corpses, why’d you name a pitt something like that?” His hand was fishing for that knife.

“Same reason his name will be 13 if you don't back the fuck off.” He wasn't more than 5 feet off, damn 12 wasn’t looking threatening then though, pissing on something.

“I heard your brother sells, now I don't have anything right now, but I could hook you up.” I fucking hated people like this, trash who wanted a free high.

“No dough no smack, that's how it works. If that changes, you can get something. Now fuck off before 12 here shows what he likes to eat.” I let him out further, the chain was getting heavy anyways.

I hadn't even seen Jim walking up until he was close enough to steal my wallet. 12 didn't seem to care, bending his head so he could easily be pet. Jim had been a friend of my brother and I, buying a bit, but he seemed to buy a bit less each time. I had always thought it was cause he was trying to quit. More important than whether he bought though, was whether he stole, putting his namesake for jimmying locks to use. We never caught him if he did, but he was so good you never could catch him.

He gave his warm smile as he pet 12, he always knew the best way to pet him. “What’s he to now, Derick”

“Dammit, call me Dog, my brother is Wolf, I am Dog.” It was irritating that none of our friends would play along with our little name deal, not that it really mattered whether they did, but I didn't really understand respect then.

“Okay, fine, chill. Dog, what's he up to?” He was behind me now, I hadn't even seen him move. On instinct I turned and backed up, keeping the junkie to my left and Jim to my right. I had felt so safe being near an adult like Jim I had almost forgot about the fucker.

“Why the fuck are you still here, you can’t buy, so fuck off.” I had to show off how bad I was to Jim, so he would treat me like he would my brother.

“Just waiting for someone, chill Dawg, leash that dog a bit more, I'm not doing shit.” 12 was now within 5 feet of him, growling and trying to give warning.

I told Jim what he was at, smiling, knowing that would earn me some respect, he was my dog after all. I was hoping so hard he would somehow say he was proud, hell he was the closest thing to a father I had.

He seemed to have shifted closer when he spoke again, “Hey, it was time

I taught you something, you are getting pretty big after all. You know the business your brother is in, hell you're in it too, it's dangerous. You never know where people's hearts lie, and sometimes they need something a bit more than they care about you.” I didn't have any idea where he was going with it, but I was excited, that was the first time anything like this ever happened. I should have known what he was getting at before he pulled his gun.

“Sorry, but your brother has something I need, and I can't afford it.” His damn gun was bigger than mine, which was a big deal. I had enough sense to keep mine hidden as 12 growled, pulling on the lead towards him.

“Hey, don’t shoot, I'll do whatever, just chill.” I was lying out my ass, but I wasn’t bad at that. That and 12 growling at the knife wielding junkie made Jim think it was safe to get closer.

He wouldn't make a mistake like that again. 12 was on him before he made it within 5 feet of me. He tore out his throat, his favorite way to kill. I stood staring like I had never seen a murder before, it took a while to get used to it. The junkie came at 12. I hadn't even thought about them working together.

He must have been good with a knife, knowing exactly where to stab him. 12 didn't have any time to react, hell, neither did I. I fumbled for the gun. I never used it before.It took both hands to pull the trigger. If he hadn't been so intent on killing 13, he would have made it. My shot was awful, but he was so close a blind man could have done it. He dropped onto 13 and Jim, and none of them moved.

I tried to drag 13 out, I never realized that it was up to him whether he would move, and now he couldn’t. I pulled and pulled, couldn’t even get him a foot. I cried and kissed him on the snout, he always loved it and I had always been afraid someone would think weak of me to do it. I ran for my brother, I was crying so hard I couldn't see what was in front of me. I never felt like I did that first time, I had always been afraid of having to kill, but 13 gave me a good reason.