

## Hallowed Be Thy Name

The hands point up.

Gesturing down, the moaning bend, “Down, this way,” the hands don’t fall.

“Thanks,” the white collared man remarks.

*No response.*

Eleven chimes, eleven times, the clock, persistent, unyielding, ticks on. And on—to what, who’s misfortune be nigh. Prayer beads into thumping heels, laughing shackles, murderous cackles, damned souls sinning their eternal hymns. Adjusting the slipping collar bend, the black and white robed man, walking the line, the path walling perdition, has grown numb to these things. Pilot bound to walk, forgets his place. And such a place he roams. It blends those droning sounds: the ticks, the stomping, the wailing walls. On deaf ears. To assay such pain—

“God forgives.” The man muttered in a hastened step.

*bumft, tumft, krumft, dumft...*

“God is merciful. God loves all his children. No matter how or what...”

*tick, tick, tick, tick...*

The cell door stretches. Open. Just two and a book. Such worn pages, red to death, read like death, red all the same. That sound, nostalgic in most situations but, empty, no comfort in that sound. The muttering begins.

Stumbling, “...Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy...”

“Fuck off,” the tonsured head rises.

*No response.*

“Yeah, that’s better,” the stigmata of his beaten visage lean back.

*Still no response.*

“I thought I said no priest. You’re not the escort girl though, are you?”

The gridiron of stained teeth, devilish delight, all dimly shone against the orange hue of the dalmatic vestments. The shroud, unwavering faith in his virtue, the laughter soon drowns any words of the misguided emissary. This had happened before. Cold, misplaced misanthropy, he had seen this before. “Grant, we beseech Thee, God, the grace to quench the flames of our sins—no, vices—Uh, Thou who didst enable sanctified, holy, blessed, no...” The collar began to slip as he thought of the other prayer. The words, gone, “fuck it,” the collar readjusted. He thought he understood where that anger was coming from, all these years, yet not once did he put aside his true motives. Salvation. Souls. God.

*bumft, tumft, krumft, dumft...*

An answer was needed soon. Time no shorter than normal. Any acknowledgement, any moment, any kind word and he’d feel vindicated. Who was this visit for? Who was preaching?

“The conjugal visit it up Doc.” The hands still point up, time, it seems, gives no reprieve.

A silent nod.

*tick, tick, tick, tick...*

“Hey, I’d still like some head.” That grin.

“Can it Lawrence.” Those hands.

Turning back was a mistake he’d made before. He’d never make it again. He knew the look. Nothing to save by turning around.

“And lead us not into temptation...”

*bumft, tumft, krumft, dumft...*

“But deliver us from evil.”

*tick, tick, tick, tick...*

“Amen.”