

The Town Drunk

by Tom Lombardi

The town drunk's living room was remarkably orderly. In fact, it kind of emanated a mid-century charm, what with its Danish couch, art deco coffee table, and asbestos crackers.

"Living rooms," said the town drunk, taking a seat across from me, "are incapable of emanating." He was wearing a tuxedo with an orange bow tie; his face so freshly shaven I wanted to run a pen across its cheek.

"Can you read my mind?" I asked.

"State your purpose!"

"There is someone," I offered, my throat beginning to quiver slightly, "I want . . . dead . . . someone very close to me."

"I am close to you presently," said the town drunk, "is it me?"

"No, sir."

"Why then, dear boy, do you seek the town drunk for such a gruesome affair?"

"Well, I figured if you, like, carried out the act, no one ever — I mean, no one suspects the town drunk of anything, except for errant urination or something."

"I've been sober for fifteen years."

"Wait," I said, shifting in my seat, "what?"

"Ask the village idiot to carry out this dubious plan of yours." The town drunk stood up in a rush. "Make sure to shut the door on your way out!"

"But that's where it gets complicated."

"Ah! *You* are the village idiot."

"My *father* is the village idiot."

"Jesus!" He fell back onto the couch so abruptly the walls shook, at which time he toyed with a cuff-link before adding: "You want your father dead?"

"No." And now my heart began to rattle to such an extent I had to place a hand over my chest. "It's my sister I want dead."

"Your father's keeping your sister from you so as to protect her?"

“Yes, but he's the village idiot, so he keeps her in my room.”

“A misfortunate guardian,” said the town drunk, adjusting his bow tie, “this father of yours.”

“He still tries to breast feed me.”

“You indeed have my sympathy, young man. Alas, I'm afraid a rather beautiful and — thank the heavens — *willing* damsel awaits my presence. Now, if you don't mind, I must —“

“I was going to give you this fifth of whiskey.” I removed it from my jacket, waving the debaucherous prop in a desperate plea to persuade him. He merely exploded into laughter, taking a moment to rub his clean face before adding: “You think I'm a dog who salivates at the mere sniff of a butcher's apron?”

“I'll give you my iPhone!”

At which point the town drunk rubbed his gigantic hands together in a kind of sandpaper fashion and said, with an eyebrow raised, “Is it the 5?”

[...to be con't]

