The Killer

by verless doran

You wrestled Ric Flair once. Yeah, the Nature Boy himself. One time. A long time. Ago. In front of 20,000 screaming fans. Screaming mostly for Ric. But you was there. And that was something. That was The Thing. Actually. The Big Thing that happened to you. Everybody gets one. Yours has come and gone. It was all downhill from there. All the way down. Right back to where you started from. But this time you ain't starting with no 18” biceps and a six pack gut and shoulders as wide as a door. This time you ain't starting with no thick, long blonde hair and tree trunk legs. You starting with a bald head and little wisps of white hair at the back. Stragglers. Hangers on. You starting with a big old gut that you can't get your tights to come up over no more. You starting with arms with not too many muscles on them. Just skin. Hanging on. You starting all hunched over. All hurting all the time. You got you a herniated disc in your neck. You got you a broke right heel. You got you a tore labrum in your left shoulder. You got you a tore ACL in your knee. You missing some teeth. You missing some hair. You missing two wives and six kids. You missing that time when you wrestled Ric Flair in front of 20,000 screaming fans.

But you still standing in front of that mirror. You still getting ready. You still psyching yourself up for the match. Ain't much else you can do. Wouldn't make much sense to quit now. Never did learn how to do taxes. Never did learn how to fix cars. Never did learn how to build a house. Just wanted to wrestle. That was it. That's all you know how to do. Even after the knowing of it don't measure up to the thing that you are no more. You never did see no danger in putting everything into one thing. It never did seem wrong to you. The dream was too real. Too ready to have everything put into it. Too ready to be filled up with your life. Ain't much else you can say about that. Can't make nobody understand. No way. Not if they ain't never had a dream like that. They won't get it. They just smile and go back to doing their taxes and fixing their cars and building their

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houses. They don't end up like you, though, do they? The dream don't kill them, does it? Their dream is different. It don't break fingers and hearts and minds. It don't tear muscles and families and hearts. It don't knock you down to the goddamned ground and push your face into the mat and dare you to get back up. Dare you to follow. Just so it can knock you down again. They don't have real dreams. Dreams that make them wake up in the middle of the night. Hurting. Wanting. Wanting.

Five minutes. Morristown, TN ain't New York City. But you still here. You still ready. Ain't much else you can do. They calling your name now. Playing your music. Fans don't like you. You a heel, now. You ain't no good guy. Ain't much else you can be, in the shape you're in. Just a punching bag for the younger guys. Make them look good. That ain't no kind of way to be. But here you are. Going out. People booing. People throwing things. Little kids giving you the finger. People telling you to go back to the rocking chair. People offering you Geritol. People wanting to know if you took your Viagra. Laughing it up. Having a big old time. That ain't no kind of way to be. Old, with your shirt off. Walking up to the ring. Getting your old fat ass up in the ring. Ain't got no decency. But here you are. You right here.

Young guy gets in the ring. They all cheer. They all smile. Make you his bitch. They do. And he does, too. Make you a fool. You a fool. But here you are. Right here. Let him do all that to you. Ain't no “let” to it. He just do it. You can't stop him now. You ain't got it in you. All you can do to stop it is get out of the ring. Not come back. Figure out how to do taxes. Figure out how to fix cars. Figure out how to build houses. Little kids laughing at you. But you here. You still here.

Get cleaned up in the locker room. Get you some clothes on. Look like somebody. Walk out. Walk passed the young guys. Walk passed all the little kids with autograph papers wanting them to sign them. Walk passed the young girls wanting to get their pictures made with them. Walk passed the daddies and the mommas. Walk passed the little boy with the dream in his heart. Don't nobody see you. Don't

nobody know you. Walk out to your car. There's a bottle of Jack Daniel's underneath the seat. There's a little bit left in it. Drive on to the next town.

Ain't much else you can do.