

NO GOOD

written by

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INT. DARK CORRIDOR - NIGHT

The heavy door at the end stays closed. The wooden boards creak softly with the heavy wind outside.

Muffled grunts sound from outside the door, getting closer.

The door crashes open with BANG to reveal the hulking silhouette of FRANK (60s), a rough, grey beard, weathered face and a cruel look in his eyes.

He stands menacingly in the doorway, then staggers forward a few steps.

A man's voice sounds from outside the door:

MAN (O.S.)
Piss off, Frank, you're not welcome
in this town! Go back to your hole,
you drunk bastard.

Frank bends down and picks up a large wooden barrel that sits next to the door.

He flings it towards the voice. A loud crash echos.

FRANK
(slurring)
LEAVE ME ALONE!

He stumbles inside and swings the door closed behind him.

He totters down the corridor, down into the dank kitchen.

He mutters incoherently to himself as he disappears into the room.

He emerges a few seconds later, holding a brown bottle. He takes a swig, hacks a cough, and lurches into the bedroom.

Frank places the bottle heavily on the cluttered beside table.

He pulls off his shirt and staggers out of his trousers.

He collapses onto the bed, face down, in his underwear.

His hand reaches up, feels around and grabs the bottle, then swings back to hang down the side of the bed.

In moments, he begins to snore.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

The tattered curtains are drawn closed - not that it does much. Soft morning light still filters through the thin fabric.

The dusty clock on the wall reads 5:00.

Frank wakes with a grunt. He's confused, disoriented.

His hand swipes at air and hits more unmarked, brown bottles that litter the bedside table.

He wrestles himself out of the stained sheets and stumbles towards the bathroom.

He trips slightly on the bottle from the night before. As he enters the dm room, he lets out a hacking cough.

He spits, groans.

He totters out of the bathroom and sits heavily down on the bed.

He pulls on a brown, woollen shirt and rough trousers, then stands to fix his blood-speckled suspenders with shaky hands.

He pulls on his scuffed, leather boots and waddles towards the front door.

He staggers along the corridor, past a cramped, messy kitchen, scattered with dirty pans and plates. A half-gutted fish lies woefully on a chopping board, a bloody knife next to it. A small, wooden table sits in the middle, one lonely chair askew from it. More bottles litter it.

Frank continues to cough in the background.

Frank holding the camera, and a YOUNG GIRL, no older than 12, with long blonde hair and a beaming, triumphant grin stands in a small dingy and brandishes a small fish. Frank's smile is almost as wide as hers and he grasps her shoulder, pride radiating in his face.

Frank leans against the wall, hacking.

He clears his throat with a wet grunt and takes his long trench coat from the hook.

Shrugging it on, he opens the door.

The cold air hits him in the face, bringing with it the stench of salt and dead fish.

He squints slightly in the soft light as he looks out over the harbour, at the fog settled on top of the water, the rotting boardwalk that leads to the shore, and the seagulls squawking softly in the morning sky.

Frank begins to trudge towards a small dingy tied to the dock outside his house. He kneels down to untie it.

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWN STREET - LATER

The cobblestone streets bustle with merchants, waving their products in the faces of passersby. Sunlight has begun to lilt through the thinning clouds, glimmering softly over the nearby sea. The fog has begun to lift.

Dead fish fill the wooden handcart that Frank drags down the street.

They look...off.

Their eyes are black as sin, their mouths gaping wide. Many of their glistening, silver bodies look rotten and littered with raw, red sores.

Frank lumbers down the town street, his face twisted in an expression of exhaustion and anger, coughing that guttural cough as he walks. He looks genuinely cruel.

Townpeople shoot him glances of utter dislike, some even with a hint of fear. Mothers steer their children by the shoulders in the other direction. Others cross the street, and one lady closes her shop door, her eyes narrowed as he passes.

Frank doesn't care. He prefers it. As long as they leave him alone.

CUT TO:

EXT. FISH MARKETS - MOMENTS LATER

Fresh fish lie bountiful in wooden crates along the fishmongers stall, their silver scales glistening in the soft sun. The scent of stale salt fills the air.

SAMMY (40s), dark, grey-speckled hair and an air of nonchalance, sits behind the crates, legs kicked up as he watches Frank approach.

Frank trudges up to the stall and lets his cart drop with a loud THUMP.

He hacks phlegm loudly.

Sammy extends his arms in greeting as a grin spreads across his face.

SAMMY

Frank! Old friend, has the sea
fared better to you today?

Frank grunts and gestures at the cart. He coughs.

FRANK

(gruffly)
See for yourself.

Sammy stands and leans over the counter to take in the sorry state of Frank's haul. He grimaces.

SAMMY

Aye, she's got a quarrel with you,
that's for sure. All of your poor
bastards are sick. So strange...

He trails off as he looks quizzically at the diseased fish.

Frank looks at him expectantly. His patience grows thin.

FRANK

(snappy)
Well?

Sammy looks up at him, that stupid grin slapped on his face again.

SAMMY

Well what?

FRANK

How much can I get for 'em?

Sammy laughs. Frank does not.

SAMMY

You're pulling my leg, Frank, I
can't sell these.

Frank's eyebrows furrow with the first stir of anger.

FRANK
(growling)
What do you mean...you can't sell
them?

Sammy sighs.

SAMMY
Look, Frank, I want to help you.
But these fish are no good. Look at
'em, they're rotten, diseased.

Frank continues to stare at him with murder in his eyes.

He coughs, not breaking eye contact.

SAMMY (CONT'D)
This is the third day now that
you've brought this sickness to my
stall, and this is the third time
that I'll tell you no. I won't have
it, it puts me off, it does.
(he shudders, looking at
the fish)
Never in my days have I seen a fish
with black eyes, my friend. You
ought to change your grounds.

Frank feels the anger in his belly begin to stir, but before
he can let out a cruel retort, a snicker sounds from next to
him.

He turns to see a younger fisherman, TOM (20s), a good-
looking man with a knack for fishing and an ego to accompany
it, watching the interaction.

TOM
I doubt it's the grounds that are
his problem, Sammy.

FRANK
Aye, you stay out of this, boy.

Tom gestures to the cart.

TOM
You wanna know what I think,
Frankie?

FRANK
(turning back to Sammy)
Not really.

TOM

Well, I'm gonna tell you anyways.

He steps closer. Frank watches him carefully.

Sammy sits back down and kicks his feet up to spectate.

TOM (CONT'D)

See, what I think, is that the sea's had enough of you, Frank. And now she won't give you her beautiful bounty, because she don't like your attitude no more. She's fed up, Frank.

Frank takes a step towards the young man. A darkness crosses into his eyes.

TOM (CONT'D)

Look around. It's only your haul that has the disease. No one else has caught a whiff.

FRANK

Don't trifle with me, boy. My heart's been with the sea since before you were even a thought in your mother's head. She's always been good to me, she has. She has my heart, my soul, and my whole being.

A cocky smile forms on Tom's lips.

TOM

Yes, see, but your heart's all black now, Frank. And you give all of that blackness to her, so she gives you blackness back.

(he looks down at the fish)

Tit for tat, old man.

Tom leans in closer to him.

Frank can feel his fist tighten as he prays for this ignorant boy to say just one more word...

TOM (CONT'D)

You're full of hate, Frankie. She can't even stand the sight of you now. You make her sick.

Frank explodes.

He raises his fist, lunges forward, THWACK! Tom falls, then-

CUT TO:

EXT. DINGY - LATER

Heavy fog has settled again over the dark sea. Clouds that shield the sun cast moving shadows across the water.

The dingy rocks gently in the ocean, alone. Franks hulking figure sits slumped forward in it, silhouetted against the grey.

Franks hands move frantically as he rifles through the rotting bodies of his latest haul. His eyes are dark, angry, his eyebrows twisted in frustration. A small radio sits beside him.

He coughs.

He mutters to himself as he works:

FRANK

No good, no good, no good...

With each phrase, he throws a diseased fish to the side. Some land in the boat, some overboard. He doesn't care.

They're all no good.

A wet, guttural cough echos from across the silent fog. Frank stops, just for a moment, listens, then continues.

He becomes more frantic, more frustrated.

FRANK (CONT'D)

(getting louder)

No good, no good, no good, no good!

Fish land haphazardly around him, some still flop.

Frank slams his hands down on the boat, rocking it.

FRANK (CONT'D)

(shouting at the sea)

YOU'RE ALL NO GOOD!

He begins to cough violently.

His fist beats the side of the boat as it rocks side to side, disrupting the water into white foam.

Frank stops coughing, hacks up the last of his phlegm and spits it overboard. The boat stops rocking.

The waterlogged cough continues to echo across the still water. It echos for a long time. Too long.

Frank listens, cautious. The cough gets louder.

Static crackles over the radio.

Frank jumps and looks at it.

It stays silent.

The cough sounds again. It's closer now.

Frank stands quickly and the boat rocks. He's on edge now. There's something else out here.

FRANK (CONT'D)
(voice catching)
Who's there?!

The radio crackles again. It almost sounds like...laughter.

The cough sounds again, wet and rasping.

It's right next to him.

Frank peers slowly, carefully, over the side of the boat.

The top of a head pokes out of the gloomy water. Its dark, sunken eyes peer back.

Frank jumps back with a yell and watches in horror as the THING crawls up over the edge of the boat.

It slithers in with a sickening squelch.

It towers over Frank. He stares at it in terror.

It's Frank.

It wears his clothes and his face, but it is not him. It's diseased.

The thing is dripping. Its rotting flesh emits a stench so bad that Frank almost gags, its eyes the deepest black, skin hollowed and gray and covered in red sores. Its mouth gapes open.

Frank tries to crawl back as the thing lurches towards him, but there is no room.

The thing takes another step towards him, and Frank kicks out with a grunt to send it toppling over the side.

Silence returns.

Frank sits in the bottom of his dingy, breathing hard. Horrified. WHAT WAS THAT?

He crawls forward and peers carefully over the side of the boat.

The water is still.

The radio crackles. Frank looks at it, then back to the water.

Calm.

Frank watches the water for the thing.

The thing stands behind him.

The radio crackles to life and a wet, deep laughter bursts through it as the thing grabs Frank by the back of his head and dunks him under.

Its mouth gapes, turned upwards in a smile. It looks like it should be laughing, but no sound comes out. The laughter instead sounds from the radio.

Frank's arms wave frantically, desperately, as the thing holds him down. The laughter sounds louder, harsher.

It's no use.

Frank's struggles become weaker, his last efforts of life nothing more than dissipating foam.

The thing leans down and pulls his head slightly out of the water to place its mouth next to his ear.

It rasps:

THING

No good.

Frank's eyes are black as his last breath leaves through his gaping mouth.

His limp body slithers into the depths and disappears into the darkness.

Silence returns. The dingy rocks slightly in the calm sea. It's empty.

A fish jumps out of the water and lands in the bottom of the boat.

It flops on the bottom. Silver. Shining. Bright eyes.

Perfectly good.

CUT TO BLACK.