



KONSTANTIN BARTOSZ

The Pole

“Shit! I came here for the money and now I’m stuck in a middle of a fucking rainstorm!”

You were born thirty years ago from Polish parents, and all you got for it was a pesky foreign accent that’s only made your life more difficult. Be it finding a job or having a conversation, people only need to hear a word out of your mouth to be dead certain you’re some kind of criminal.

But nine years ago, you made your dream come true: You started a nice American family. Your wife Lilian made you a part of the community and gave you two wonderful sons, eight-year-old Henry and five-year-old James. Everything was fine until last year, when Lilian was hospitalised for an abdominal aneurysm. So little Henry’s college fund ended up paying for her surgery.

You don’t know what happened, one moment the doctors said they’d caught it in time and rehab would be quick and easy, and the next they told you Lilian was dead. Heartbroken, you spent hours sitting on that flimsy plastic chair, unable to stand up and go home, and that was when you heard two nurses whisper about the latest blunder signed by Robert Garland, the pill-popping surgeon. The latest blunder. Ever since then, Robert Fucking Garland has become the cause of your wife’s death and all the misery that followed it.

You’ve looked for him, without daring to ask what you’d do once you got your hands on him. Meanwhile, your life kept going without you:

You neglected your job until you got fired, and that shitty gig left an opening for Social Services to swoop in. You couldn’t pay for Henry’s tuition, so they threatened to take both your kids away. Your Polish curse had come back to haunt you.

In your desperation you put yourself in the hands of a loan shark. You managed to pay off both tuition and your overdue rent, but then Damien Petrishka came to collect and cut off your little finger, threatening to kill your children if you didn’t pay him back in a week’s time. So here you are, with a gun stuffed under your jacket. You’re scared out of your fucking mind, but Henry and James are all you have left of Lilian and you’d give your life to protect them.

Profile

You’re always afraid. Ever since Lilian’s death, your love, your self-confidence, your dignity and all you held dear just went down the drain. She was the last person in the world to deserve such an end. Now all you have left are two children and you don’t even know whether you’ll ever see them again. You begged Damien to just take your life instead, but he didn’t want to hear any of it and all he gave you were seven days.

Fifteen thousand dollars in a week? You’re on the verge of a nervous breakdown! You didn’t think you’d ever end up robbing stores, not when you despise violence and you’ve always kept away from shady dealings. Easy money always brings trouble. And now you’re forced to become a criminal to protect your children, the symbol of what you and Lilian had built together, what that bastard Robert Garland destroyed.

Structure

You're mad nervous. You put an hand under your armpit every time you can: That's where you keep the gun, hidden by your shoddy jacket. You gulp often, in a vain attempt to melt the dense lump life has stuffed into your throat.

You tend to sink your head between your shoulders, although it's not noticeable enough to come off as a physical defect. Your lower lip protrudes slightly more than the upper. Sometimes you grit your teeth on the left side of your face.

You often hide your free hand in your pockets, as it's bandaged and missing a finger. You have a strong Eastern European accent.

Acquaintances

Bob Garland, the butcher that killed your wife and destroyed the rest of your world, tossing you to the bottom of the ditch you're still digging yourself into.

Dante Sparrow, a thug you've seen lurking around the shady neighbourhoods you've visited far too often lately.

Heather Smith, a good friend of Lilian's that you only know by sight. You never liked her much, she has the reputation of being an easy lay.

