

AN ARRANGEMENT OF SKIN

Written by

Cayden Turnbow

1 INT. BEDROOM - MORNING 1

It's dark, save for a sliver of light that shines through a doorway.

MALACHI (m. 23) sits with his head hunched over something laying on a mattress covered with a blue tarp. His hair is unkept and his clothes look like they haven't been washed in weeks.

He rocks himself back and forth to the rhythm of the humming.

There's a shovel covered in dirt laying on the ground next to his feet.

TITLE: AN ARRANGEMENT OF SKIN

2 INT. PARKED TRUCK - MORNING 2

A pair of hands grip a steering wheel.

This is ABRAHAM (m. 28). His hair is long, he wears an old flannel and a 5 o'clock shadow. His head is leaning against the steering wheel.

He raises his head and looks out his window at a small cluster of condos.

A deer stuffed animal toy sits in the passenger seat.

He picks it up, it's old and dirty. There's a hole in it's side.

He takes a deep breath and opens the car door. He gets out and slams it shut.

3 INT. CONDO HALLWAY - DAY 3

Abraham stands in front of an open screen door.

Daylight leaks in from a window up above illuminating the dusty hallway.

He knocks. No answer.

He reaches above the doorframe, sliding his hands across it.

He pulls his hand back down. He's holding a key.

4

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

4

The lock clicks. The door creaks open.

ABRAHAM

Hello? Mal?

Abraham steps into the space.

He closes the door behind him. The room is dark, save for the parts of the windows not covered in heavy curtains.

He tries the light switch. It doesn't work.

ABRAHAM (CONT'D)

Anyone home?

He turns toward the living room.

The walls are covered in taxidermy deer heads, half-finished taxidermy fish and animal pelts. Dusty photo frames and paintings litter the walls. Dirty dishes and dead flowers cover the dining table.

He walks through the space.

Overwhelmed, he leans over a couch. His head is perfectly framed within an empty mount that hangs above the fireplace.

He spots something on the coffee table.

He walks over to it. His back faces a long dark hallway.

He sets down the deer stuffed animal and picks up a picture frame.

It's a photo of his mother. She's wearing square glasses that take up half of her face.

At the end of the hall, a silhouette of a deer head peeks out of a doorway.

Abraham looks at the photo longingly. He lifts it up to the light to get a better look.

The hallway is clear now.

THUD. Abraham spins around to see a taxidermy deer head on the ground. Standing behind it is Malachi.

MALACHI

It's really you?

They hold a stare that feels like it lasts forever until-

Abraham hugs his brother.

He pulls away, a giant grin on his face.

ABRAHAM

It's good to see you. You
look...good.

He hands over the deer stuffed animal.

ABRAHAM (CONT'D)

I brought you something. I found
him in an old box, must've
accidentally packed him up when I
left.

Malachi slumps down into the couch, he stares at his long
lost friend.

He notices the hole in its side.

ABRAHAM (CONT'D)

You remember when I convinced you
that deer make neighing sounds. You
used to run up and down that
hallway whinnying up a storm until
mom yelled at you to be quiet.

Abe chuckles.

ABRAHAM (CONT'D)

I don't know why you believed me.

MALACHI

I used to believe a lot of things
you said...

Abraham sits down on the couch next to Malachi, there's
distance between them.

Abraham sets down the photo of their mother on the coffee
table.

MALACHI (CONT'D)

You missed her funeral.

ABRAHAM

She probably didn't want me to be
there anyway.

Malachi bites his lip.

ABRAHAM (CONT'D)

You know what got me to come back after all these years? That stupid stuffed animal. Every time I looked at it I thought of home.

Malachi isn't convinced.

ABRAHAM (CONT'D)

I should have never left. It must've been hard on you and mom...If I had known she was sick-

Abraham takes a moment before grabbing Malachi's shoulder.

ABRAHAM (CONT'D)

Listen, I understand if you can't forgive me. I don't think I can forgive myself if I'm being honest...all I'm looking for is another chance, another chance at being your big brother.

Malachi stares at Abraham, unsure of whether to believe him or not.

Mal hands Abe the stuffed animal.

ABRAHAM (CONT'D)

You don't want it?

MALACHI

Keep it...as a reminder.

Malachi stands up.

Abraham grabs his shirt.

ABRAHAM

Hey Mal, can I borrow some gas money? You should still have plenty of mom's inheritance right?

Malachi looks his brother up and down.

He makes his way over to a cabinet under a wall of taxidermy heads.

He opens it. Inside is a variety of animal skins and memorabilia. Behind an animal skull is a lunch box.

He picks it up and opens it. He grabs a hundred dollar bill then puts the lunch box back.

He hands the cash to Abraham.

ABRAHAM (CONT'D)

Thanks.

MALACHI

You thirsty?

ABRAHAM

I could use a drink.

Malachi walks down the hallway behind Abraham.

Abraham watches him leave before looking back at the cabinet.

Quietly, he makes his way over to it and pulls out the lunchbox.

He checks behind him again before opening it, it's filled with cash.

He looks at the deer stuffed animal sitting on the coffee table, a reminder.

He picks it up and rips it open.

He stuffs it full of cash.

Abraham hustles to the front door.

From the other end of the room Malachi steps out of the kitchen doorway. He's holding a glass of red juice in one hand and a sewing kit in the other.

MALACHI

I got you some juice.

Abraham stops. Malachi walks over to him, he hands him the drink.

ABRAHAM

Thanks.

MALACHI

Don't mention it.

Malachi guides Abraham back to the couch.

ABRAHAM

So the uhh taxidermy, how did mom feel about all of this?

MALACHI

My collection started after she
died. Things got pretty lonely...

Abraham takes a swig of his drink.

Malachi watches the juice go down his throat. He pulls out a
needle and string from the sewing kit.

MALACHI (CONT'D)

They keep me company.

Malachi reaches out his hand.

ABRAHAM

What?

MALACHI

The stuffed animal. It's ripped.

He gestures toward the sewing kit.

ABRAHAM

Oh that's okay, I wouldn't want you
to go through the trouble.

MALACHI

It's fine. Give me the deer.

ABRAHAM

Seriously, I don't-

Malachi snatches the deer from his brother, the money stays
hidden.

He stabs into the felt skin with the needle.

ABRAHAM (CONT'D)

Mal give it back. Seriously.

Malachi goes in for another stitch.

ABRAHAM (CONT'D)

I'm fine with it the way it is-

The room starts to blur.

The corner of a hundred dollar bill peaks through the
stuffing.

Malachi pulls it out.

ABRAHAM (CONT'D)

Half of that money is mine.

MALACHI
None of it's yours.

Malachi looks up, his right eye is shifted down in an impossible way.

Abraham drops his glass and falls over to the side of the couch. He's hallucinating.

ABRAHAM
What's wrong with your eye?

Malachi lifts up the taxidermy deer head from earlier. Antlers pointed at his brother.

Everything is getting blurrier.

ABRAHAM (CONT'D)
What was in that drink?

MALACHI
You know how I know you're a liar Abraham. The first time I ever killed a deer it didn't whinny. It screamed, and it kept screaming, so I stabbed it's neck and put it out of it's misery. Only that didn't stop the horrible sound.

Abraham tries standing up, the floor slips under him.

He scrambles onto his feet into the-

5 INT. HALLWAY - DAY

5

ABRAHAM
Mal, lets talk about this.

MALACHI
I still hear it, even now. I hear all of them. Oh it's awful Abe, the anguish and torture that constantly bounces around inside my skull. But I can't stop myself from adding more heads to my collection.

Sweat drips down Abraham's face. He looks behind him. Malachi struts towards him.

ABRAHAM
What did you do to me?

MALACHI

There's one voice that stands out
above the others though.

The hallway spins around Abraham. He falls to his knees and looks up.

Malachi hums his terrible tune.

The door at the end of the hallway is ajar, he can see into the room.

A shovel lays on the floor next to a bare mattress. On top of that is a blue tarp that wraps around Abraham's decomposing mother.

Her head hangs off the edge of the bed, mouth agape, eyes glossed over. She's wearing her square glasses from the picture before.

MALACHI (CONT'D)

Mother doesn't scream, she sings
because I'm the one keeping this
family together.

Abraham's mouth fills with foam, he falls to the floor.

Malachi steps over his brother. He sets down the taxidermy deer head in front of Abe's face.

MALACHI (CONT'D)

Will you sing for me Abraham?

Malachi's face is distorted, eyes, nose, and mouth all in places they shouldn't be.

Abraham's eyes grow heavy. The deer head stares back at him.

CUT TO BLACK.

6 INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

6

Malachi sews together the ripped stuffed animal.

Above the fireplace is a taxidermy human head. It's Abraham.

His skin is patched together with a series of stitches, his eyes bulge out of their sockets in opposite directions, and his smile is stretched from either end of his face.

Malachi continues to hum that haunting tune.