

JUST ONE BULLET



ROBIN A MASSE

WWW.ROBINMASSE.COM

"Kill me." The husky whisper of a strange man jolts Clara Sanders out of a dead sleep. Had this been any other night she would have heard the window open to her living room. She would have heard the lamp falling over or the footfalls of a stranger in her third floor apartment. Had she not taken the sleeping pill she would have remembered to lock the window. Had she listened to her father there would have been bars on the window like he had insisted upon.

"Kill me." The voice repeats. "Who's there?" Clara calls into the night. Her body is numb, her mind deep within a fog of the drug. Something hard and cold brushes up against her foot. 'What is that?' Her mind races, 'Am I just dreaming?' She wonders, reliving the horrors of last month when she was pinned down and assaulted at a party. 'Maybe it's the pill. I just need to wake up. Come on, wake up.' The weight of her dormancy lays on her like being crushed by a wall, she moves her finger tips feeling the tingling sensation of restricted circulation. The rest of her body, betrays her every thought as it lay there still, unwilling to budge.

William John Row, woke up this morning, just as he usually did. Today, like every other day, was a mundane succession of all the days of his life. It's not that his life had no purpose but each day seemed to blend into the same shapeless moments

that made up his rather monotonous life. He showered, cleaning his entire body almost to the point of aggression. He meticulously brushed his teeth, combed his hair, styling it into the perfect professional look. Unlike the other pharmacists, he was more handsome, more charming, more intriguing and indubitably more brilliant than his associates. He had his choice of any career before the sudden and unexpected death of his mother. His plan was to be a surgeon but his grades slipped because of those asshole professors. They just didn't understand him; no one did. The pharmacology program was better suited to his proclivities and perversions but no one must know about them. It is for this reason that his hair must be perfect, there mustn't be a wrinkle on his shirt, not an unruly crease on his pants and the most important of his daily costume is the perfectly white lab coat neatly folded in his arms as the car arrives to take him to work.

Dispensing drugs fills him with power; to help or to harm; to ease pain or to cause it. Every pill has the potential to be the giver of life or deliverer of death. Most people would be quite surprised to know how often he finds himself fantasizing about the thrill of accidentally sliding penicillin into the wrong bottle, just one pill could be the difference between life and death for some sad sap with an allergy. The thought brings him joy but the understanding that his name would be connected to the transaction keeps him from accidentally sliding in an unsuspecting allergen into the wrong prescription. The fact that

he would only hear about the death second hand makes the thought a little lack lustre, so this fun little scenario stays just a fantasy.

It was because of this little fantasy that he even noticed the doctor's oversight in a script that he found, this discovery would make him a hero for the day. What made it especially gratifying was that he got the opportunity to scold a widely respected doctor for his near deadly mistake that William caught before dispensing the deadly script. The doctor had erroneously prescribed Clarithomycin and Felodipine on the same note. An interaction that could have been disastrous to the elderly woman who came in, frail with her shaky hand. Nothing delighted William more than making the disparaging phone call to the physician's office. Demanding to urgently talk to the doctor gave him a particular rush. When he hung up with the doctor the other pharmacists congratulated him on his catch. He was the hero of the day, this feeling of heroism was one that typically he would milk for a week, if only he could make this sensation last longer.

It was with this thought that Clara entered the pharmacy, her name itself was cause for celebration; it seemed kismet. Clara, Clarithomycin it was almost poetic. Clara was in to fill out a prescription for Temazepam, a potent sleep aid; being that it was a new script it meant that this was most likely trauma related. Her body language spoke of rape as she avoided all

physical contact dropping the script on the counter so not to accidentally make human contact. Her gaze barely raised to the tip of his nose. She's a perfect little victim. He could see by the bags under her eyes that she hadn't been sleeping, this made her an ideal candidate for his secret obsession.

She resembled his mother, the strong chin, the high cheekbones and her posture was pristine and dignified despite her obvious lack of sleep. "Here, I've got this customer." He says bumping Christine out of the way. Christine swallows hard, knowing that he just did something heroic, she allows his rudeness. Any snideness on her part at this moment will make her look petty or jealous. She hates Will, or William as he insists on being called but her defiant nature just can't bring herself to comply. "Sure Will." Her contempt for him is palatable. There's something about him that turns her stomach. "He's so fake. He gives me the creeps." She once told one of her female coworkers. "He's pretty hot." Was the superficial response and with that, Christine kept her concerns to herself. This wasn't the first time someone made her stomach turn, though she has always been right in the past, this was a coworker, and being that they never socialized outside of work she felt relatively safe. Thankfully for her, she was not on William's radar, in fact, he barely noticed that she was even female, she was cute, not stunning, brash, not refined. She was nothing like his mother.

"How are you feeling today?" He pours on the charm. She nods barely acknowledging him. 'She's perfect!' He becomes convinced. "Oh, ma'am you need to put your address on here." He slyly asserts. She absentmindedly writes it down. Her apartment is a few blocks away, he can walk there with ease. "This should knock you completely out. Make sure you don't need to be awake for at least five hours." He advises, mentally doing the math. "Hopefully, it's straight to bed for me." She gives a weary smile. It's been days since she has slept, these drugs should do the trick if she can just shut off her mind. "Well, have a good sleep." He smiles broadly. The feeling in Christine's belly, rumbles its warning.

3:21 the clock reads. AM? PM? The haze of the pills become a prison in of themselves. She blinks, hoping that her eyes can adjust to the darkness. Is there someone in the room? 'Move, just move.' She implores her body. Her hand twitches; deep breath. "Time to wake up lovely." The voice calls again. There is someone in the room. Her eyes fly open, to a dark room and she feels his breath on her neck. 'This is real!' "What?" She questions. He laughs a diabolical laugh. Shivers run down her spine. 'No! Not again!'

He crawls on top of her allowing the weight of his body to crush her. He glides the cold steel gun up her side, down her

arm and places it into her right hand. "Here you go, my sweet." He coos. She feels heaviness of the cold steel of the gun in her hand. "It's loaded baby. Are you ready to play a game?" She can feel his partially erect penis pressed up against her. 'Move, damn it!' She commands her body but it disobeys. "What do you want?"

"I want you to kill me." He runs his hand down her body, lifting his weight up so he can ram his hand down into her underwear. "What? Why?" Her heart starts racing. 'Move, damn it!' She implores her body. He sits up. "Well, funny you should ask that." He muses wiping his hands off on her bed. "You see Clara, someone needs to stop me." He vaguely explains. "What? Why me? And how do you know my name?" She asks as hysteria starts to take up residence in her. He brushes the hair from her face. "Oh Clara, have you forgotten me already? How did you enjoy the drugs I gave you?" He taunts. She can feel the blood drain from her face. 'The pharmacist. What did he look like? I can't remember. He let me know who he is. I'm dead, he's going to kill me.' Her breath becomes shallow. "Why would you pick me?" She asks, trying to keep him talking while her body regains it's wakefulness. The gun weighs heavy in her hand as she struggles to lift it. Her gut wrenches as she wonders if she can do what she needs to do. 'Maybe I can just knock him out?' She wonders but given the weight that he put on her she knows that he's much larger than her.

"Why not you? But to be honest, you're not the first. I feel like honesty is important in this relationship of ours, don't you?" He lets out a squeak of a laugh. "You are the nineteenth woman that I have posed this little challenge to. Well, little Tamara wasn't a woman, and I have to admit that, handing that gun to her was more amusing than anything." She can feel his diabolical smile. Her eyes start to adjust to the darkness and she can make out his shape. 'Tamara, that's the name of the little girl that has been missing for the past three months, the whole city has been looking for her. Move, body, move!'

"Why don't you just turn yourself in?" She asks. "You could get help, maybe be reformed." She attempts to add her unrelenting optimism. 'She is perfect.' He surmises. "Oh sunshine, after you rape and kill your own mother, I fear that there is no turning back, no curing the urges. The best part is that I am a child of rape, isn't that funny. She choose life and I choose to kill her. It really is quite apropos, is it not?" He seems to delight in this revolution. "Just one bullet and this will all be over." The harsh whisper sends chills down her spine.

"I don't think I can kill you." She admits. "Just turn yourself in." She pleads. "That option is off the table. Here's the game, either you kill me or I rape and kill you." He asserts. "I can't." She sobs. "How's it going to feel to be

raped again? You'll have to tell me, I truly am curious." His calmness is unnerving. "How do you know that I was raped?" She grips the gun. "My dear, it's written all over your face." Her stomach turns. She tries to move without moving too much, alerting him to the fact that her body is starting to wake.

"You have a pretty neck, just like that little girl. Long and slim, it makes me hard just thinking about my fingers being tight around your exquisite neck." He whispers in her ear. She cocks the gun. "Oh, that's surprising." He slides his hand around her neck. "This is going to be fun." He says sliding his body back on top of her. 'I can do this! I can do this!' She tries to get up the courage, the bravery to just do it, just pull the trigger. It's him or her. It's him or her and countless other victims yet to come if she doesn't act now.

She starts to sob uncontrollably. 'I can do this! I can do this!' This is his victory, she won't do it, she is just another weak woman. At least it will be fun taking her life. "I'm going to enjoy snuffing the life out of you, you're weak, just like all the others. Not one of you has had the guts to kill me. That sweet eight year old girl, Tamara, she couldn't even pick up the gun." He breathes deep. "Oh God, it felt so good to feel her life slip away after I had my way with her..." His voice tappers off. "Those tiny little hands..."

BANG! The noise is so loud that it rings in her ears. She can feel the warm liquid pour over her. The weight of his body is heavy as she rolls it off of her crashing on the floor. "Now, I'm awake." She grumbles, reaching over to turn on the light. The light blinds her at first and she can see that she is covered in blood. Lying on the floor is the very dead intruder. She searches for her phone, though it is right where she left it on her side table. The ringing in her ears pierces through her soul. There's a deadness to her soul. 'I feel nothing, except the ache in my wrist from the kickback of the gun.' "Hello. Police. Yes, I just shot an intruder. Yes, he's dead. In the head. Sorry, I took sleeping pills, I'm a little groggy. He said he killed that girl, that little girl you've been looking for, Tamara, he killed her. Yeah, the one on the news."