

SLICED



by
Hannah
Kidder

A man walks the street at night. He didn't have a mouth, so he cut one himself and grew long teeth to fill it. His shirt is crusted brown, layered beneath fresh red. He still bleeds.

He wanders as if he's searching for something, but doesn't ask for help, never speaks at all. I wonder why he bothered to cut a mouth.

He's here now, standing under a lamp on the empty street, watching the flickering light. His bloody mouth hangs open, as it always does, and his stare is still. The light flickers on and casts harsh and sharp shadows on his face. It flickers off and he's soft again, blinking.

My sneaker squeaks on the pavement, echoing into the sleeping town.

His eyes snap to me. One of his fangs glints, a tear of blood rolling down and splattering onto the sidewalk. He breathes, raspy and wet. He raises a hand in greeting.

"Good evening," I say.

His eyes smile, but his jaw hangs. He turns back to the street lamp.

I continue on my way.

A tabby picks along the sidewalk toward me. She meows, rubbing her head against my shin.

"Hi, there." I smile.

She walks a figure-eight between my legs, meows again, then looks at me.

"I hope you had a lovely day," I tell her. "It's a bit cold out."

She blinks. Meow. She leaves.

I wiggle my fingers. They can move and flex and spread out and clench into a fist. I clench them now. Then spread them as far as they will go. The spaces between glisten red.

I glance back at the man under the light. His fingers are dry, solid flesh wrapped around each. I wave to the empty street, just to try it out. A thin stream of blood trails down my arm. I drop my hand and keep walking.

#MMPPisLIT

www.meowmeowpowowlit.com

