

Title: Syn

Author: David A. De Ryckere

I crouched on the peek of a roof top about six stories up hidden in a dark shadow. I stared up into the clear night sky. The moon was so full and bright you could have almost thought you could throw a rock at it and hit it without effort. It seemed to almost fill the sky with nothing but a barely visible cloud passing subtly in front of it, centered in a sea of an infinite number of specks of light.

The whole scene just seemed so cliché, I almost considered scratching the whole mission—too much of cliché can be annoying, and God knows my life is already stacked with a pile of it. But I know that I was just trying to find an excuse to turn on this mission.

I wasn't really sure what it was about it. I've done missions that most people with something that resembled a "set of morals" might maybe considered a lot worse. But as I thought more about this, the more I wanted to just turn around and go home, forget all about it—let the client get mad for the few days he probably had left before the target got to him. It could have been that I've been doing this too long—maybe this was really the one that so many before me would call the "one too many".

The moon just kept staring me down, like it was taking in everything I was thinking, and I was almost hoping it might re-

spond, telling me if I should continue on or go home. Such clichés on top of all the clichés. My name is Syn, at least the only name that anybody alive knew me by anymore—but those who knew me, were usually people that never had any reason to care what it really meant, only what it sounded like it meant—the cliché of it seemed to amuse many of my more straight out of the comic books-type clients. Syn is all I ever was anymore—it's all that really matters anymore—so you can know me only as Syn also.

I looked down to the front of the building, dimly lit by street lights and a red neon light mounted above the door that I was waiting for my target to come out of. I knew very little about my target other than what was sent in the file delivered to me by the client—but that was how I preferred it to be, it's easier if you can avoid humanizing the target. I remembered looking at the photos of the target—there were an odd number of them, telling me that the client might have had someone tailing her already—I hated that, it adds to the things I had to look out for while I did *my* thing.

The many pictures lingered in my photographic memory. From the few details given about her, she seemed to be for the most part an innocent nobody, but from the details of the black and white photos, she was beautiful. And I don't use that word for just anybody, as a matter of fact, I'm pretty sure I've never used that word for anybody else in my entire life, it was actually the first time I've ever even spoken such a word—so you know that when I say it about her, I don't use it lightly.

This girl was completely breathtakingly beautiful—and I had some meaningless no-name telling me to kill her—to take this pixel out of his big picture. And I accepted the job—but then was there ever a job I didn't accept. Luckily no one's tried hiring me to kill a kid before, I'm almost afraid that I might accept that too. The thought truly tells me that maybe the clients' version of my name is right because I sure live up to it.

Finally the door opened, and loud music with an almost tribal beat pored out of it filling the silence. And there she was. In full three dimensional Technicolor. My heightened senses could see every detail of her perfectly from where I was. Her hazel eyes that seemed to sparkle light precious gems, her long dark red hair, that drop just about her shoulders and seemed to add to the fine outlines of her face. The dress she wore was a sparkly black, which went down to her ankles with a slit that went up the left leg just slightly above the knee. I've seen dresses like it on many others before, and splattered their blood on them, and never even thought a thing about it, but some how it just all looked so perfect on her. Each sparkle that would almost be considered tacky on anyone else seemed to highlight her every beautiful curve. The dress showed very little skin, but she seemed to somehow show everything simply with her beautiful presents.

She hugged the door man who was letting her out—I already knew she came to this club on a regular basis, it was mentioned in the file. She seemed to be on first name-hugging relationships with everyone there, so many, one could have almost gotten

the impression that maybe she was starting to hug random strangers—maybe she was, maybe she was a light-weight and had a few too many umbrellas in her drink—that would at least make what I had to do easier, there'd be almost no resistance, not that there was ever much chance of it to begin with.

Then finally the constant good-byes ended and she was standing at the curb waiting for her ride. The file had told me that her ride would be running slightly late tonight—being given details like that sometimes disturbed me, but it was at least useful.

My palms sweating, I had my own little battle still running through my head. Ever seen one of those bits on TV where the guy has an angel on one shoulder and a devil on the other, and they're debating with him over what he should do? I can tell you, I can truly relate. Both sides seemed to be screaming pretty loudly and getting nowhere so far. But I just clenched and unclenched my fists a couple times and forced myself to stand.

My body was almost asleep from the position I was crouched in for so long, but I recovered quickly and walked over to the edge of the roof. Each step seemed like forever despite it only being a little over a foot from where I was. I stood on the edge, just slightly teetering on the back half of my boot heels with a solid stance. I glanced over at the target one more time who was beginning to pace impatiently and I step my right foot forward directing my balance towards it, and felt myself leave the roof and reach the ground all in almost the same instance. I landed in the unlit alley between the club and the building that I was perched on.

I looked over at her; the contrast of light seemed to make her somehow glow with almost an angelic halo. Every second I kept trying to force any feeling and emotion out of my mind, the sight of her seemed to just cause them to flood a hundred fold. It was enough to almost force me to my knees and beg whatever divine being put me in this life to just take me out of it now so that I wouldn't have to be the cause of destroying its most perfect masterpiece.

I walked with my ever step completely silent to the opening of the alley and stood in the shadow that lay before the street lights. I just stood there watching as she randomly paced with somewhat of a bobbing motion increasing with each turn, her silently moving lips suggesting that she had a song running through her head. And just as she was about to turn again to pace in the next direction, she suddenly stopped, and turned towards me with curious eyes. I was startled, she couldn't possibly see me—what could she be looking at?

“Hello?” she yelled out with an unsure tone, “Is someone there? I have mace.” I doubted that was true, she wasn't caring a purse, and I doubt she was the type to get creative with storing something like that.

I looked behind me and all around that I could think to look. Maybe she was just hearing the wind blowing or perhaps being alone in the night was making her paranoid, certainly understandable around here. But there was no possible way she could see me, no one could see me unless I wanted them to.

She walked slowly towards the alley, and I could feel my skin begin to crawl, unsure of what I should do. Something wasn't right, and I wasn't in the mood for the unexpected tonight. Should I leave now, or play it out.

"Who's there? I know the bouncers at this club; it will only take me a second to get one of them out here..." What happened to having mace?

And then she looked directly at me, I could feel my stomach and every nerve in my body tie into knots, "Who are you?" I looked around again, "Yes, you. Who are you—what are you doing creeping around standing in dark alleys? Are you trying to make people think you're crazy or something?" I don't know if "people" would be wrong.

Thoughts running rapidly through my head, Why could she see me?

She puts a cigarette to her lips that seemed to be manifested out of nowhere, "You don't happen to have a light do you?"

Still unsure if she was somehow talking to me, I slowly shook my head "no" in a semi-response.

She puffs out an air of frustration taking the cigarette from her mouth, "Figures. I managed to find a way to stash some squares in this stupid thing, and I somehow managed to not bring a lighter with me."

"Smoking's bad for you anyway..." I subtly blurted out.

She rolled her eyes, I had to almost force myself not to smile at how beautiful it made her look, "Yeah, well, a lot of things

are bad for me.” I’ve never understood that type of argument. “Why don’t you come out here and keep me company until my ride *eventually* arrives.” The emphasis she put on “eventually” was almost cute—“cute,” another first for me.

I almost stepped out from my hiding spot, but then I hesitated, as if I was suddenly snapped back into the reality that I was supposed to be here to kill this girl, not make small talk and flirt. But she could see me, my place of hiding was already pointless, I would have to find a means to improvise anyway. But maybe this was a sign, the answer that I was looking for to tell me that I should blow this whole thing. Maybe this is my way out, to just keep her company, then go home and sleep it all off.

With already the idea in my mind that the mission is over, I slowly stepped out towards her. She gave me a smile that completely knocked the wind out of me, “Good. Now why is a cute guy like you lurking around in alleys?”

“Cute”? A first of *any* compliment of that nature. I never thought of myself as “cute” before... or really anything at all. But she seemed to at least *say* I was cute—maybe she was just being really nice.

“So, my name’s Lynn. What’s yours?” She asked with her hand out to be shook.

I hesitated at first, and then spoke in a low voice, “People call me Syn.”

“Syn... Lynn... haha, we rhyme.” She smiled, and I could feel myself smiling back, I don’t even remember doing it, I was

just... smiling. It wasn't even that good of a joke, it was actually pretty lame. But just seeing the joy that she got out of her own cleverness, I just couldn't help but return her smile, and forget how to stop smiling.

Then a black sedan suddenly came around a corner towards us. She glanced at it and huffed, "Finally, I thought I was gonna have to call a cab or something soon." She turned back towards me, "Well, that's my ride. It's been nice talking with you though. Maybe we'll see each other again sometime, I come here pretty much every weekend..."

She put her hand out again, and I lightly put my hand in hers. Her skin was so perfectly soft and smooth. And then, out of the corner of my eye, I see the gleam of gun metal catch in the light of the street lamp poking out of the driver window of the sedan. Five rounds went off like thunder, each one hitting its mark.

Her eyes looked at me, wide, stunned and in shock, and she falls limp into my arms as the black sedan screeched away.

I looked down at her lying in my arms as if she were a rag doll. Her blood completely covered me—covered every sparkle of her once black dress. Her eyes still staring up at me, and I looked into them and see her light as it grows dimmer, and dimmer.

Her eyes filled with so much uncertainty and fear. She just can't understand what has happened—the pain flooding her to numbness. I watched as a single tear streaks down her cheek and finds its way to free air, and splashes into the concrete sidewalk.

And her light leaves her. I watched as another tear splashes into the sidewalk, and I gently lay her down as delicately as I could.

I gently brushed my hand over her face, pushing back her bangs. And I walked back towards the alley, and merged back into the dark shadows.

Killed by a drive-by from a black sedan—just too many clichés.