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Dio

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"There's a corpse on your floor," I said.
"Yes."
There was. Where Dio's floor was usually occupied by a cheap, heavily-worn green rug, there was now a cheap, heavily-worn green rug with a corpse on top of it. The body was well-dressed in the classically-homeless sense, a man with what was once a nice haircut now grown haphazardly long, in what was once a sharp, gray suit, now ragged and torn. He was lying face down on the rug, in that super-still, non-breathing way that normally suggested that he'd leap up, screaming, "Surprise!" But also in that rigid, unmoving stillness that suggested there were no more surprises left. There was no blood that I could see, but the rug would make it pretty difficult to spot anyways. I was, instead, focused on Dio, who sat in his easy chair, looking anything but easy; ass perched on the edge of it, back leaned forward, elbows resting heavily against his knees, his fingers entwined together and supporting his chin, covering his mouth. "Why is he there?"
I asked.
"That's where it fell."
"I realize that, Dio. Did you kill him?"
Dio sighed, turning emerald eyes to meet mine. There was a disquiet in them, yeah, but he didn't look quite as bothered as I imagine I would be in the same situation. "No," he said. "Well, yes. This time, at least."
A ragged sigh escaped my lungs, and I leaned against the doorframe behind me. I closed my eyes. I pinched the bridge of my nose. It was late, and Dio had called me over. Said it was important. Here I thought he'd gotten his hands on a Playstation 3. Those things are running a thousand dollars on E-Bay, you know. Instead, I come in to find a corpse on his rug. That rug cost a lot less than a Playstation 3. I felt deceived. Betrayed. Confused. Mostly confused; "What the hell do you mean, 'This time?'" I asked.
"Well, I mean, it was dead before I killed it. I guess that doesn't sound right. It was dead. Then it wasn't. So I killed it. Again. Re-killed it." Dio shrugged, returning his eyes to the body. Here he was, having ended a life, and he sat in his chair, barely disturbed. If it wasn't such a big deal, did he really need to have woken me up?
"Like a zombie, then. Actually, exactly that. A zombie, then," I said, looking at the body. It didn't look particularly pale.
"Yes," Dio replied.
"How'd you kill him?"
"I strangled it," he said.
I let a silence drop over the room, but Dio didn't seem to notice. I felt like my eyes should be burning through his temple, but I couldn't smell burning hair. Mostly just whatever that spicy-wood scent Dio's air-freshener gave off. "Dio. You can only kill zombies by destroying the brain. That guy's head is completely intact. You don't kill zombies by strangulation. That's why they're zombies. Haven't you ever seen a single movie?"
"Well, I strangled it. Now it's dead. And George Romero is a terrible director."
I wasn't getting into this discussion again. Dio knows that I love zombie movies, and he wouldn't insult George Romero, legendary director of Night of the Living Dead, if he wasn't trying to get at my temper. "Whatever, man," I said. "Whatever. Look, is there something you really needed me for? I have finals tomorrow, and it is way – WAY – too early."
"This isn't big? I killed a zombie. You don't see that every day."
"That's not a zombie, you dolt. That's a person. I do see them every day." I rolled my eyes. "I watched Die-Hard last night. You didn't even shoot him, or throw him off the top story of a skyscraper, or blow him up. Weak." I checked my cell for the time. Three-thirty. I had work in four and a half hours. I imagined this body had to be taken care of sometime before class tomorrow, or it'd never get done. Dio was like that. "So are we going to move him, or get rid of him, or what?"
Dio shrugged, looking back up at me, and smiling for the first time of the night. "I guess we can just roll it up, kinda jerry-rig it into something manageable. If we can just get
it out of the way for now, I can get it done properly tomorrow morning.”

It didn’t take that long. The body was pretty heavy for its size, but the two of us managed to roll it up into a bundle of tattered-green rug, and set it upright in the corner. I wiped my hands of imaginary dust; I always saw people on TV do that whenever they finished with some task. I dunno, it just felt right.

“How’d you know he was dead... before. Not dead. Undead. How did you know, anyways?”

“It was actually like the movies like that,” Dio said. “You know. ‘Braaaaaaains.’ Awkward shuffle. Uncoordinated grabs for my body, tried to bite my head. Can the human jaw even break a skull? I don’t think so. Seems like natural selection would kill off the zombies pretty quick that way. Hey, did we have Art homework?”

“I don’t think so,” I said. “Don’t worry about it. Just get to bed, and care of it in the morning.”

Dio sighed, sinking back into his chair. “Like I don’t have enough to do in the morning,” he said. “I always feel like putting stuff off leaves the night with an unsatisfying end. Like it’s incomplete.”

“Me too,” I replied. “But what can you do? Some things just don’t wrap up nice and neat. Get some rest; I’m going back to my room.” I flicked off the light-switch by the door.

“Dude,” Dio said, before I slipped out completely. “Do zombies really need their brain destroyed to be killed?”

“Yeah,” I said. “Every film I’ve seen, they do.”


“Goodnight,” I said, and left.

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**MAKING LOVE TO GOD II**

*Greg Harris*

“How do we make love to God?”

— St. Teresa of Avila

I would unpack the sorrows of my heart
Assigning each a colored glass shard.
A soldering iron would fuse the parts
Into a whole pane to take outside.

Stripping naked and holding the glass to light
I watch the colors play across my flesh
The yellow humiliations and purple slights
The blue disappointments and charcoal fears.

Feeling their warmth at the deep core
My heart swells and thrusts into love.
The heat creates a molten, golden dove
Who holds my life to her breast and soars.