

Brianna Sorne

Sutton

Draft 1

The oncoming months were going to be brutal and he noticed these things when there was a certain coloration that the sky spread on the mountains. This was only recognized as signs the winter ahead would be especially bitter and unforgiving. There is a never ending conversation between the mountains and the sky. The sky says to the mountains and the mountains nod and nod, tall and superior.

He nodded too, as he looked over and around. Stepping onto the porch that had grown grayer still with wear and age, particles and dirt sifting towards the earth, he pulled on his boots and stretched. As he walked the extent of the land, he eyed his destination closest to the mountains. He walked the lines, eyeing still the growth he wanted to pick from. At the far end of the line he grasped up arugula leaves, blunt and blundering and walked back towards the small cabin. Something like the sun struggled up, heatless and hollow through the thickened sky and he came upon the porch through the frozen miasma that laced through the town and beyond. The coffee was on the stove and his pot with meat and broth was steaming already. He rinsed and broke up the leaves and threw them in as well. When it surged some more, he threw in the corn. He walked over towards the stove and put his hand to its belly. Stone cold. The basket next to the stove had little coal left. He looked down the iron gullet and poured what was left down the chute and crumpled a newspaper and lit it and threw it down as well. Initial spark but quickly ceased. He tried again. Fleeting heat and tortured ash. Then nothing. The frigid air was becoming unbearable. Squat down with his hands on his knees he looked up to see movement outside

beyond the window. The Cityrat was walking up the path with his awkward skittish walk. He could already hear the boy mumbling dumbly.

Hey Bud you alive in there?

He walked to the door and opened it, leaning against the doorway, arms crossed.

Hello Francis

Aw, hell could it get any colder? I've been looking for yeh all day

Well, here I am. Who told you?

Some crazy old bastard up on Market Street

He walked past and into the cabin.

You gonnuh let me stay for awhile

It depends

Shitfire, it's cold as hell in here. You try starting a fire?

The thought didn't occur. You can have at it.

He squatted down and went to work.

When yeh coming into town again?

When I need something I guess

Well, the boys are askin about yeh. Should come teh Jimbo's fer drinks.

I'll do that. Where are you staying?

Oh I have a nice slick setup down yonder. Otherside of town. Yeh should come by. It's this nice shack under the south bridge.

You be careful with that. A fool like you'll get caught up in all the wrong people by that bridge

Aw I'll be fine geeze