

the
GALLUCCI
GALLERY

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*To the individuals who have been abused
and must live with mental illness*

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GALLUCCI
GALLERY
K.B. RICHARDS



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What a Wonderful World

I GREW TROUBLED, JUGGLING the authenticity of my reality. I pinched myself, hoping the life I lead wasn't a dream. The mess I made humbled me, allowing me to remove the rose-tinted glasses. There's no cure for what I am, and who I've become. People tell each other they should embrace who they are—that they should live their truth. My truth compelled me to stare into the mirror every single day, facing the ugliness which once laid dormant. Must I espouse the destructive side I possess? Society will never accept who I am once they learn of my interior nature. I will be rejected and shunned to a place distant from their inner social circle. They can't feel my pain. They don't understand my deep-rooted trauma and remorse brimming from the surface of my core.

I hated my husband and wanted him to suffer. He would become an afterthought someday and acknowledge the anguish he rained on me for the rest of his life. Revenge still isn't enough. I wondered if my children would cope without their father around.

Will they despise me one day? Will they act out, due to his absence? People say, "The apple doesn't fall far from the tree." I hoped to God my son wouldn't turn out like his father. Worse, I hoped my daughter wouldn't inherit my illness. My transgressions are etched into the universe's book of karma, but when it came to protecting my kids, I chose to endure any punishment. I would sacrifice my life for their happiness and safety. I would do anything necessary.

A pair of bloody scissors resided in my hand while I contemplated my life and illegal action. And as I departed from the space I created in my head, I fumbled necessity and my sanity, hand in hand.

Oh, God, what have I done? A sliver of guilt migrated from hell and forced its way into my derailed mind. I stood in my gallery comprehending my crime while my victim's blood crept toward my feet like cough medicine crawling out of an open, toppled bottle. *Step back.* I dropped a .38 revolver from my hand while holding scissors in the other. Blood proceeded to claim the marble floor, following me. My thoughts whirled into a scattered frenzy. My cuticles dampened and my clenched grip, unable to release my scissors. They bonded to my hand—tethered by the crimson saturating my pores. *Take a deep breath, Bianca.* My heart slammed against my ribs. A devilish chill conjured its way to my skin's surface, skewing my grip on reality and immobilizing my legs. Nothing but time could stop my unnerved, bloody hand from shaking and drops claiming the floor.

My intermittent, pounding chest forced me to my knees. The adrenaline surged through my veins and a feverish sweat claimed every inch of my face, neck, and forearm. *Breathe, Bianca, breathe.* The shock alone restricted my movements until I was capable of uncurling my fingers. I stared at my hand with a catatonic glare, as if afflicted with Locked-in syndrome. Nausea surfaced while I conceded second-degree murder. My eyes drowned in regret, knowing the likelihood of prison. No forced entry and or signs of a struggle. My prints resided on the gun and scissors. *I had motive.* I allowed the scissors to fall to the floor and acknowledged blood splatter on my gray shirt—the one I deemed worn-out and old. I rubbed it with the cuff of my sleeve, eager to

vanquish the undeniable proof. *What am I doing? It's getting worse.* I contemplated my situation while wiping my cheek, smearing blood on my face.

Think, Bianca. Think. Calm down. Rationalize your thoughts. A small sense of relief permeated the air while I justified my actions. "I did it for the kids," I kept telling myself until I gained the strength to stand. My arms rested by my side while my victim surveyed my presence with furrowed brows. Although she didn't say anything, her eyes spoke to me. They displayed emotions of regret and sorrow, asking for forgiveness. No one witnessed my crime. *No one needs to know. Don't freak out, Bianca. Don't freak out. Think. Think. Think.* No alibi. No one to corroborate my story. *Did anyone see her enter?*

She tried speaking with an abundance of blood flowing out of her mouth. Her body sat upright a few feet from me, as I paced back and forth. I was afraid to touch her, petrified to dial the authorities, and terrified to leave. *I need to call for help. Oh God, where's my phone?* I searched the front desk after scouring my office and found it in the wastebasket. 'What a Wonderful World' played through the speakers overhead.

A familiar apparition merged into my body. My pounding heart accelerated before slowing down, and I existed in a world of complete peace while listening to the melody. *This song—oh, I love this song.* The music grew faint, dissipating with every note that followed. I smiled, closing my eyes—ready to bask in the ambiance of my surroundings.

The walk back to my victim appeared timeless, and the closer I got, the more I enjoyed watching death devour her. I smiled while kneeling to caress her pale, saddened face. Her breathing labored.

"You deserve this. You should've stayed away. Now, you'll be gone forever. Time to clean you up," I said. I elevated to a superior version of myself. Rejuvenated. Renewed.

"I promised to keep Bianca and the twins safe, and that's what I'm going to do. She *will not* rot in prison because of you. We're ready to do what's necessary," I said.

I knelt over her almost-dead body, placing one hand over her mouth while my other pinched her nostrils. It was only a

matter of time until she stopped struggling. She convulsed. *Shh. Be still. It'll be over soon.* She ceased to budge, and the power I possessed from taking her life exalted my superiority. She was no more.

The radio continued playing in the background, cradling my core while I sat next to her lifeless body. I contemplated disposal of her corpse and to finish my painting. The hint of red I desired laid within my reach, and I fell intrigued by the color before me.

I dipped my brush into the pool of blood, smearing it onto the canvas. *There. Perfect.* The mixture of her blood and the paints gave it an astonishing, robust hue. *Beautiful.* One hour turned into two, as I created a masterpiece. *Hide the evidence in plain sight. No one would be suspicious.*

My victim's body and work of art sat side by side. My adrenaline wore off, and I grabbed an opened bottle of wine, sat down on the floor, and gestured a toast to myself. My eyelids grew heavy, consumed by sleep. *I'll deal with the corpse soon.*