



Blood Rats
Celestial Dung

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BLOOD RATS

by

Celestial Dung

<http://celestiald.blogspot.com/>

She stood up from the toilet and saw a swarm of rats covered in blood. Patricia screamed while running from the stall and hunched in the corner of the bathroom. The other girls looked into the stall crowding over each other to see. At the sight of the rats they screamed and vomited. Men in blue coveralls and red plastic gloves appeared and killed the rats and placed them in black plastic garbage bags. Patricia was still kneeling in the corner of the bathroom crying hysterically. Julie was trying to comfort her, Julie was the recent transplant from New York. There was a bit of glitter in her hair and her makeup was excessive. On her feet were high top black flip-flops. She taught English three honors and was maybe twenty-seven.

"It's ok girl. Everything is going to be ok. No problems at all."

"Rats, rats, rats." Patricia kept muttering those words to herself over and over again. As she cried Julie put her arm around her and rocked her into stability.

"Happens to everyone lass, happens to everyone."

"But the rats the rats oh my god the rats."

"It's ok happens to everyone don't you know. Happens to everyone you see. We all make our mistakes. You just have to learn to get past them that's all. Everything is going to be fine. Nothing bad is going to happen."

"But the rats I don't understand. There not supposed to be there I just don't understand."

"It's ok. What's your next class young miss?"

"Latin."

“Then go on over to Latin. It will be ok you’ll see”.

As Patricia left the restroom the girls were muttering something about Julie. It was obvious Julie could hear them but she didn’t answer back. Patricia walked on down the hall quietly holding back tears. She walked into Latin and sat down without looking at anyone.

Everybody was staring at Patricia. They did not look in her direction but they were staring at her. Mr. Subaru was giving examples of Latin verbs when an office assistant came into the classroom. Mr. Subaru was handed a note. After reading it over he told Ms. Patricia Jones to please see the principal. The stares were more apparent as she walked out of the room.

Mr. Bobbitts office was a shrine to the UT football program, decorated in a orange décor and nonexistent of sensibility. There was a football autographed by obscure players on Mr. Bobbitts desk surrounded by four orange and white pom poms. Behind his desk centered on the wall like a shrine to Mother Mary was a poster sized glossy of Peyton Manning. Mr. Bobbitts walked into the office shortly after Patricia arrived . Broad shouldered and crew cut he fit into the sports suit perfectly.

“I heard there was a problem in the ladies bathroom. We can’t have that around here ok? I mean we have standards we have to follow Ms. Jones. Patricia isn’t it?”

“Yes sir.”

“Patricia you just have to learn how to control yourself when these things happen. It’s unsanitary.”

“But I don’t know how..”

“Speak up I can’t hear you.”

Patricia was unable to say anything at all. She ended up looking down at the orange carpet.

“Look Patricia this is just something your going to have to control. I

just can't have you doing this all the time. I understand that as a woman you have certain rituals that you have to go through. That's a good way of saying it don't you think? You have certain rituals you have to go through and I understand that. But there is a way with dealing with these rituals that you have to conform to."

"But" and now Patricia didn't care that she was crying or that her voice was at a higher octave than what was conversationally required. "I don't know what's going on! I don't know why this is happening or what's going on. I didn't do anything I didn't do anything!"

And while Patricia was crying, her tears staining the orange carpet, Mr. Bobbitts became very quiet. He hated to deal with girls. Boys were much easier to deal with. They didn't have as many hang-ups as the girls did. It was not fair, he thought, that he should have to deal with girl's issues when he knew so little about them. He wished to god that the great government of the United States would see the wisdom of segregating boys and girls in school. It would make his job so much easier.

"We're going to let you go home ok Patricia? I mean I don't think that it would be right for you to continue with your classes today. I think you need to go home and rest for the day. Now do you need a ride home or anything? You can call your parents if you like. Well, no, let me call them for you ok? What's their phone number?"

After taking down the number Mr. Bobbitts took the cell phone into the reception room and started talking in a voice too low for Patricia to hear. She was nervous to go home, nervous to see if anything had changed. She waited in the principal's office quietly until twenty minutes later her mom showed up and took her home.

Nothing happened on the way home. Her mom asked her what she wanted for supper. Hamburger Helper was fine. Did she get to turn in her art assignment and did Mr. Joseph appreciate the effort? He seemed to like it. Her father was coming home early. He cared for her a great deal. Thank you mom.

Everything was fine. The Jones family ate a good Hamburger Helper meal with some biscuits on the side. They watched soap operas together and laughed at the corny lines. Patricia got out her stuffed giraffe and

held it for a while and her parents never said a word about it. Patricia felt well enough and that feeling of filth was finally alleviated. Everything was fine. When she got up to use the restroom there was no apprehension in her. She sat down to relieve herself and then the blood rats started to crawl out of the toilet.

Her mother was into hysterics. "What the Fuck What the Fuck What the Fuck do you think you are doing. You can't be doing this. Not over and over gain this is indecent do you hear me indecent. You can not make this family indecent!" She yelled at Patricia while father was on the phone calling the crew. The men in blue coveralls came in and captured the rats even attempting to clean up the blood that was left behind. Patricia ran into her bedroom crying her pants still around her ankles. She cried herself to sleep with the blood still running down her leg. She woke up at two to take a shower being careful not to wake anyone.

She woke up early and fixed herself a breakfast of sliced apple and toast. Her mother slept in. She waited on the porch for the school bus to arrive as her father walked out to go to work and did not notice her. She watched as he walked remembering two nights ago when he tucked her into bed kissed her on the forehead and assured that she will always be his little girl no matter what. She remembered and grieved as the bus pulled over to take her on to school. She climbed in and noticed that everyone stared at her without looking at her direction.

At school Patricia hid in the auditorium. Nobody used it in the mornings. She walked on stage in the cool dark air her curiosity covered her anxieties. There was stage props badly painted and a piano deep in the back of the stage. Patricia started to twirl around and around with her hands extended. She was oblivious to what had happened the day before, she was oblivious to the auditorium, she was oblivious to everything save for the imaginary music that was performing inside of her.

"Wooo hooo Patricia you go girl Give us another performance!" Julie was standing at the third row clapping. She startled Patricia badly. There was a second of blushing and Patricia walked off the stage.

"Hey now don't go girl I wasn't trying to scare you or anything. How

are you doing? I think you're the only person in this redneck town whose more out of place than I am.

Patricia smiled a little bit. Julie was down there with purple hair spiked up. Jeans with red and blue scarves tied around the knees. An over sized blouse. Junk rings on her fingers.

"Hi"

"Hello my dear of little words. You feeling a little bit better today maybe. Look I know you had some rough times yesterday but today is the start of a new day you know. A better sunshine a better day for tomorrow that sort of hokum. Things will be better they always have to be."

"The rats. The rats."

"It's ok. Speak a little. Speak a little and it will be ok."

"I went home yesterday and the rats came out again. I don't understand the rats came out again. I didn't want he rats to come out I don't know why they are coming out it doesn't make any sense."

"It's ok girl now you listen to me ok? I've been thinking about this as I do sometimes. Think I mean. I've been thinking that maybe you need to accept what your doing here. Honest I think it would be a good idea really.

"What do you mean?"

"Well you know maybe what your doing here is the wrong way about it. Maybe what you need to do is accept the rats coming out of you. Just kind of stay on the potty while they come from within you. It's kind of new agey I know but I was thinking that maybe it's something you need to do."

Patricia shook her head wildly. "No no no no I'm not going to do that. No the rats the rats the rats." And she cried again. Patricia cried deep tears on her cheeks and they did not stop no not for nothing.

“Now your gong to have to do this. I think this is something that your gong to have to get yourself into.” Julie held Patricia and rocked her while talking in a motherly tone. “See sometimes what you have to do is face up to what’s attacking you. I think this is one of those times. Just call it a hunch if you will.”

Patricia looked up and she realized that there was a sort of truth to the statement. It’s the kind of thing that you heard all the time on the television movies so naturally it had to have some sort of universal truth to it. She nods her head “I’ll try.” She said. “I’ll try as hard as I can.”

“Good girl see that’s all you really needed to do. All you need to do. Look why don’t you try that now? Go to the restroom and let the beasties out. Accept them. Trust me on this love, things will be fine when you do this. “

Patricia nodded her head. She made her way to the nearest restroom to free herself.

As she sat on the toilet there was a feeling of fur coming out of her. Several droppings of fur fell into the reservoir of water. She could hear the rats raise their noise. She could feel them coming up to her rear as she sat on the toilet. They devoured her from the ass to the head she stayed seated in the toilet. Afterwards the men in the blue coveralls came to clean up the mess.

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