

FLASH FICTION

The News

by Sergii Pershyn



"Mirrored Glare" by Nathan Cho

The news about the killing of a newspaper delivery boy did not spread in the neighborhood. Because the Sunday paper was never delivered.

Evan's Saturday morning started like any of the other 254 days he delivered the New York Times between West 86th and 90th streets in New York City.

People were getting on with their weekend routine. Which, on Upper West Side, meant eating sturgeon on a bagel and minding their own business.

Lifting his hangover head after all-you-can-drink margaritas, Dylan wanted some cold ice cubes and maybe even iced coffee, not the latest news from Afghanistan. But Dylan did not kill Evan.

Neither did Estel, who was the only person on 86th Street actually awaiting the paper. However, after going through the Arts section, she left the paper on the porch and went back inside.

Evan was still alive when he passed by Estel's door and approached a brownstone on West 87th St. The first thing he saw was an ornament. That was odd. It was only 25 November and they had already put a Christmas ornament on. It was not a new one, not from a store, like it had been in the family for years. There was some old-school feel to it. And who would buy an ornament around Thanksgiving? No, this should be something they keep and put on from year to year. The color was odd, though. The traditional ones were white and red, maybe some blue if you needed some for a snowflake or a frosty man. Well, who cared? Still orange was odd. Christmas is all about the familiar figures and colors. You did not just put an orange snowflake on your door for no reason. Or if you did, there was usually some meaning behind it. Like if you just moved from Florida and want to be reminded about the Orange State, or something you saw on a vacation in Italy around Christmas time. In Italy, however, they throw their stuff out of the windows on New Year's Eve, and they don't put orange decorations on their —

The door in front of Evan opened, returning his mind to reality.

"Well, hello," said Mrs. Ann Robinson, who was standing in the door, holding a plate. "Would you like a piece of cake, young man?"

It was a lemon tart, the recipe of which she had seen in the previous Sunday edition of the Times and really wanted to make her signature dish. The kind that people would say, "Oh Mrs. Robinson, please bring your famous lemon tart to our afternoon tea!" So far, only Mr. Anton Robinson had tried it and he was less than impressed. So, Mrs. Robinson now needed a loyal audience.

When you are 13, you never say no to cake. Evan entered the house and readily bit into the savory dessert. Too savory to his taste. And to the taste of Mr. Robinson, who was in another room, inserting a brush into the barrel of his rifle. There must be one lucky turkey out there as the bullet destined for its neck was still in the rifle.

The next one tenth of a second felt like an eternity. When Anton accidentally pulled the trigger, the firing pin struck the primer, causing it to explode; the spark ignited the gunpowder, and the gas converting from the burning powder expanded in the cartridge, forcing the bullet out of the cartridge and spinning out of the barrel, going through the drywall and hitting the boy in the head.

The news about the killing of a newspaper delivery boy didn't spread in the neighborhood as the Sunday paper was not delivered. On Monday, when a new delivery boy brought the paper, the agenda switched to a rare duck seen in Central Park.