

# Nature has its own Laws

## Short Story Cycle

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### Kapitel 5: Smoke

Smoke

Though law cries "hold!" yet passion onward draws;  
But nature gave us passions, man gave laws,  
Whence spring these inclinations, rank and strong?  
And harming no one, wherefore call them wrong?  
Don Leon, 1866, anonymous

London, 1810

Eaden was half lying, half sitting on the bed, the one knee he had bent upwards and his right forearm was resting on it. Between his fingers was clamping a half-smoked cigarette. He blew the smoke out and one could recognize in the gentle dawn, how it crept over the skin in smooth curls. He struck with the dumb nail of his right hand over his lower lip. He was thinking while peering into the distance. The grey column, which rose from his mouth, clearly silhouetted against the white walls, due to the sunlight lit in fair amber. Eaden bit softly into his lips and shove his teeth over them.

Beside him, the small Dark-haired slowly bestirred. Smilingly, Eaden watched him awaken. He went with his fingers through his blond hair and returned the gaze of Matthew, who had crossed his arms behind his head while observing him without saying a word. Eaden twisted his lips into a grin and let extend out of his mouth the tongue, on which's tip the smoke was dancing and then slowly withdrew it, whereupon the smoke mellowly toppled over, fading by and by.

Matthew distorted his face in amusement and sat up, picked the curled tobacco out of Eadens fin-gers, lifted the filter to his grin and inhaled the substance deep into his lungs.

Eaden smiled and thought that this characteristic was one of the reasons why he wanted to have the rent boy around him.

He bent down and with his lips enclosed Matthew's mouth, before he had exhaled.

The cold smoke spread out in their mouths and their teasing tongues stirred it. Matthew let his warm breath into Eaden's mouth, with it the heavy air, which Eaden released gradually out of his nose.

"Hmm..." Eaden pressed the rent boy back into the pillows. The same was grinning fairly and scratched with his nails, between the fingers of his right hand clutching the cigarette, over the blonde's back. "You coul'do without your glasses more often..."

The small glasses Eaden was usually wearing on his straight nose and which emphasized his eyes discreetly were lying next to the bed. The spectacles frames were crossed and the rising red sky was reflecting in the polished glass.

Eaden didn't respond anything and hid his face at Matthew's neck. His hot tongue crawled over his lips and along Matthew's skin, licked over the part of which he knew that Matthew was sensitive.

"Mhm." Matthew slightly turned away his neck. "Why d'you actually wear spectacles? You don' even have a failing eyesight."

"Hush!", Eaden growled and softly bit him into the neck. The smaller one grabbed the blonde's shock of hair and, after he had let hear a low moaning, forced him to turn his face towards him. Matthew smiled and held out as naturally the fag in front of Eaden's mouth. Eaden looked at him, let the gaze sweep to the other one and enclosed it lasciviously with his open mouth. Matthew looked at the actor with eyes half shut; he had canted his head back a little and had opened his mouth unconsciously. The paper curled backwards and the ash became too heavy. It fell and left grey dust on his upper part of the body. Matthew raised his hand and shifted it on the floor.

The Blonde handed him over the cigarette and lowered his head. He expelled the smoke steadily and it cockled over the Dark-haired's muscles, over which fair skin strained. Eaden blew it into the belly button and licked it out. Matthew took a deep drag, while his grin whistle-blew courtesy and with a quiet drawn out moaning, the smoke floated out.

While Eaden's tongue slid over his lumbar part, Matthew ground out the rest of the cigarette at the edge of the bed and threw it down. The actor disapprovingly followed this with his eyes. "I told you to desist from this!"

Matthew rolled his eyes to the ceiling. "The glow won't spark a fire..."

The Blonde drew back and flung himself back into the pillows.

"And besides...you've said, we're goin' away, so we don't even need this dump anymore."

Eaden did not reply anything.

Matthew heard excited hustle and bustle from outdoors. Eaden had sprawled himself again next to him and dozed. Carefully Matthew shoved his hand away, swung his legs over the edge of their bed to stand up and lumbered to the window. Nervous screams of people, which had appeared in large numbers on the square of Saint Paul's Cathedral, clanged up. Matthew frowned and bent further to have a better view, after he had shortly ascertained that Eaden had missed the noise.

The rent boy had not been out for quite a long time and so had not recognized how court-men had arranged a pile of wood in the course of the week.

In the middle of the plaza now towered a swank construction over the people's heads. As the mass became agitated and started to move, Matthew made remark of other men, who ap-proached in peculiar clothes. The mob was now all silent and finally hushed completely.

At that point the Dark-haired noticed a dull beat, which resounded monotonously. The public seemed devotional, when the first man came along the small lane of people. He was festively dressed having a big drum strapped around his bulge, beating it hard with bobbins. Behind him paced an important looking man, carrying scrolls. Matthew leaned even further and was tempted to open the window, but he did not dare to do it. Eaden could notice it. Yet the latter was still asleep.

The Dark-haired turned his gaze back to the bizarre cortège. Only now did he notice two men standing out against the others with their dirty shreds of clothes. They were both very scrawny and enervated and had to be held up by the guards to be able to walk. They were pushed and the people rant and raved at them. What the exact insults were, Matthew did not understand, but he did not even want to. Paradoxically no one dared to cast something at them.

Matthew bit his lips, but followed the scenario still.

Behind the procession, ending with another drummer, the lane closed again and people pushed to the pile of wood. The skinny men were tied next to each other; they had not any power to resist.

The boy examined them more precisely. One of them was taller and standing up straight with his back, although one could discern that it incommoded him, and his legs were shivering. His short hair was filthy and adhered to his dark skin. As it did to the smaller man, whose torso dangled exhaustedly downwards, only held by the fetters made of cord, which cut their flesh.

Both had weals over their faces and also on the body parts where the skin stretched over the bones, which one could see through the holes in the clothes. Yet, the most fascinating was the expression in the clear blue eyes of the taller one. His gaze was so proud and so unbowed, and he glared without anxiety into the dark faces of the people claiming punishment.

Eaden placed his arms around Matthew's shoulders. "What are you doin' there?" Matthew stared through the dingy glass. Eaden beheld the pulse of the drums, which died away at this moment. He peered down intensely, and as soon as he knew what was going on, his eyes dilated and his features derailed for a short instant. He grabbed Matthew by the shoulders more fiercely than he had wanted and pushed him ruggedly aside.

Matthew wanted to respond something but he saw in the eyes of his partner that he knew. That their suspicion confirmed. He pressed his lips together and examined the pale face of the Blonde. Outside, it was silent.

Certainly Eaden knew what this meant. He even knew it that well that he could not look into Matthew's eyes, because he did not want to see their comprised expression. His knuckles emerged white as he clenched his fist. For his own naivety, his hopes he now had to pay dearly. Matthew's glance wandered unconsciously and unwillingly back to the action, when people kept quiet for the severe man had rolled out his scrolls and stepped forward in front of the crowd to declare with loud and clear voice:

"After the law of her majesty Henry VIII...the offenders being hereof convicted by verdict confession or outlawry shall suffer such pains of death and losses and penalties of their good chattels debts lands tenements and hereditaments as felons do according to the Common Laws of this Realm. And that no person offending in any such offence shall be admitted to his Clergy..."

Ere Matthew had fully comprehended what he ought to tell, the man convolved the

scrolls and took the torch from the guard, which led to raising voices in the crowd.

"So may London be cleansed with this fire!" With a smirk the man approached the tar soaked stack of logs to allow the blazes to lick.

"...don't look...", Eaden was whispering mutely, although he still did not look at Matthew.

At the same moment the taller man of the two convicts began to speak, and his voice reverberated around the square.

"Love is the most natural thing happening on earth. Nevertheless you amerce humans for it. We are people of your kind. But you treat us like lepers.

But you cannot destroy feelings; of anyone! Love goes beyond death and punishment into eternity.

You are not able to experience love, because you do not own dignity. You can discrete our bodies but not our souls. You will fail miserably and one will shake his head about your inanity and will be ashamed of one's ancestors.

And your fatuities will fade with time.

Even before the last words had faded away, the man of the law had thrown the torch on the pile, and edacious blazes were eating up the logs. Ravenously they climbed stage by stage and soon nibbled derisively at the cruddy feet and trouserlegs. Their screams stood out against the ardent shrieks of the pack, and everything immingled to a ghastly crescendo.

Matthew and Eaden stood by the window and beheld the sky blackened of smoke and grime.

Something warm, soft abate on his skin. It stroked unhurriedly the sensitive parts of his neck.

Matthew flung his eyes open. In front of him dangled some blonde, confused hair. He blew two of the streaks away, run his fingers through and caressed Eadens neck. This one had reached his ear and shortly nibbled his earlobe before whispering: "The time is nigh."

Matthew turned his face to press their lips at each other. The tongue leaped out of his open mouth and followed Eaden's upper- and lower lip, demanding entrance. But Eaden withdrew his head. "We have to go." He got out of bed and vanished in the adjacent room.

Matthew tickled his cheek with his fingertips, moistened his middle finger and bit on the nail. His head was blank. A silent, dark emptiness. His eyes went over the very few things kept in the room.

The chest they used as dining table was old and brittle as was the timber floor board. The surface was scratched, the paintwork peeled of and on one point there was spotting a stain. Matthew had once spilled some cheap red wine. Eaden had disapprovingly drawn off the glass from Matthew's hand and meant to put him on water. They had laughed.

On the top of the chest still stood an inchoate whiskey bottle. When Matthew and Eaden left the last Pub, the younger one had been a little drunk already, and Eaden noticed not until they were home that Matthew still held the bottle. While he normally had to grin about the memory, he now could bring up a sad smile.

They probably were going to die. Both of them.

Then Matthew's thoughts fell upon the last object. A small, inconspicuous bag, out of red velvet. Eaden had cut it out of an old theater curtain. It was everything that

remained for them. Their few belongings secured in it.

Matthew rose and covered the pillows with the blanket. He had not changed his clothes for the short night hours.

Then Matthew closed the breeches of the bag and lifted it. Next to him was Eaden standing. He looked him in the eyes and the expression glooming inside was new, new and foreign. He did not know what it meant to say. Eaden wrapped the scarf around Matthew's neck. The one he had re-ceived at their first humble feast.

Eaden took the whiskey bottle from the chest and passed it over to Matthew's free hand. He grabbed the arched handles on the sides and carried it to the bottom of the bed where he put it down on the floor.

Thereupon he recaptured the booze. With a little movement of his head Eaden asked him, if he was ready. Matthew nodded, his throat was dry.

With a forceful, out-striking motion Eaden dashed the bottle on the bed. It met the bedpost and the chest, burst asunder and the liquid poured over the sheet and the wood. Then he lighted a match with a quiet >Zitt!<. For a moment he starred into the flickering flame, while Matthew gaped into the fire and on Eaden's hand. Quickly he cast the small piece out of his hand. It flew not very far, just far enough to stay on the edge of the bed. The fire gained ground, the sheet caught fire, flames devoured the cloth, mingled with the alcohol and suddenly the whole bed was ablaze. On the chest too the first flamelets flickered. Growing smoke and grime blackened the ceiling.

And in all the game of yellow and red, Matthew saw a malicious grimace, staring at him, and he was not able to turn his gaze away. The heat stroke him in the face, his cheeks began to glow. He hardly felt how Eaden finally hauled him off, because Matthew did not look away. Spellbound he eyed up the smirk of the devilish face. Then the door banged in front of him and he recognized only now that his throat was itching. He coughed once or twice. Eaden dragged him over the abhorred carpet, past the couch, through the next door, beyond the corridor to the huge, red entrance door. Matthew let pull him in trance. The red color of the door burned in his eyes and reminded him involuntarily of the fire in the sleeping chamber.

They hastily tripled down the stairs and rushed into the cold, refreshing night air. Matthew looked up, all windows were dark, partly smashed, some had the rest of a shutter dangling down. Only behind one of them, the one on the top floor leftmost, behind this one glowed a red shadow.

"The fire will soon spread to the other rooms, the flat and the entire house", remarked Eaden briefly. Matthew nodded in silence. In five days' time they would have arrived at the British Channel to escape to Paris.

Only now he understood that absolutely nothing would ever be like it had been before.