

AFTERWARDS

On the floor of the bathroom in front of Eli was a man laying, dead. Eli recognised the man, had seen him before. It was the man who had come to the woman's rescue, the woman who Eli had attacked a few days earlier. The woman had become infected, she must have been. And then ... Eli leaned closer to the man, sniffed. Yes, the smell he thought he had felt was there, the smell of burnt flesh. Had she killed herself ... *that* way? Eli didn't know, but the man had been there when it happened. The unmistakable smell in the man's clothes said so. Yes. He must have been there. Seen it all.

Then he had come here. He had had a knife, it was now lying on the floor next to the bathtub. What he meant to do with it was not difficult to understand. Neither was why.

I would have done the same if it had been me.

Eli sighed. *No more infected now.* He concentrated, commanded the muscles, tendons and bones in his arms and torso to become stronger. Then he leaned forward, took a firm grip on the man's head with both hands. But then something colourful caught his attention.

A Rubik's cube?

Eli let the man go, reached for the cube and took puzzled it up. Had the man brought it with him? Eli turned the cube, noted that it appeared quite new. Came to think of Oskar. Thought he even heard his voice. Eli held his breath, listened. It was no fantasy, it really was Oskar's voice. Eli twisted around, turned toward the bathroom door. Oskar was somewhere in the apartment, humming a melody that Eli knew. But why was Oskar here now? Had he let in ...?

Eli shook his head. *No. Oskar wouldn't do something like that. He ... would try to help me.*

Eli remembered that he had woken up with a feeling of great danger. When he opened his eyes the man had been standing over him, with a knife against his chest. Then ... something must have happened, for the next Eli

remembered was how he crawled out of the tub, got hold of the man, bit and drunk. But then the man had been defenceless, out of balance and without the knife.

Eli looked toward the bathroom door again. *Oskar. Oskar pushed him away. He saved me.* Eli got to his feet, walked out of the bathroom, towards the sound of Oskar's voice.