

Kingsingers

The courtroom smells of mahogany, a cologne reminiscent of tanned leather and dried meat, and sweat. It is cold, the idle air latching onto the bare skin of legs exposed through suit skirts and soft palms. The manicured nails and cowlicked hair of the liver spotted congressmen are glossy, reflective, even, in the fluorescent lighting, the artificial rays warming their plump, black office chairs behind the wall of their benches.

“Be seated, please,” says the first, his face tight and pulled back.

A drop of black sweat falls from the tip of his nose, and the smallest patch of his black hair exposes a blotch of white tousled whiskers over his scalp.

The audience sits on the opposing side, their features unanimous: gray, faceless blobs with limbs like that of a human, clothesless, voiceless, and indiscernible.

The first congressman looks down. He stares at the flattening drop of black water, the dye oozing through the membrane of the liquid. He clears his throat and looks up at the audience. One of the gray blobs now has a pair of white eyes, only white, as if they are blinded, the irises in a murky gray haze, watching him.

“This meeting is in regard to the discussion of bill 1120. Congressmen,” he looks both left and right, broad men with stern looks and laundered blue suits wait for his words, “what say you of its terms?”

The second congressman, to his left, creaks his neck to the audience and says, “This is a momentous occasion, celebrating the rights of women and little girls.”

He coughs, a sound of phlegm and mucous mixing within each other, hardening from the years of dust and dirt forming inside his body, and a spew of black blood covers the papers he

holds. He feels the backs of his teeth with the white tip of his tongue, the gelatinous substance stuck to the yellows of the bone. He takes the cuff of his suit and wipes the blood, smearing the rot around, failing to dab the stain over his leaflets.

“Uh, congressman?” he looks across and motions with his hand, its softness now wrinkled, textured, sagging, and the nails turning into shades of mustard and bruised bananas.

More eyes form over the blank visages of the blobs, white and still.

The third congressman nods. “There is a problem in this country, and it is men thinking they are anything but men.”

His face is crimson, and his gut protrudes through the buttons of his collared dress shirt, the single button of his silk coat pulling at its sewing thread.

The other congressmen grunt in agreement, the second holding his mouth as black liquid drips out through his thin lips, the first scratching his head as granules of black, melting hair clump in his drying palm.

The third continues. “The people may state their opinions, each for a minute, but know we care greatly for our women, our young, little girls and the privacy they deserve in their bathrooms and locker rooms. Begin.”

A white-eyed blob approaches the stand in the very center of the congressmen. It mumbles, stretching the silver-gray skin, a silent gurgling vibrating through itself.

“Thank you, miss,” the first says, scraping the wet clumps of hair against his desk, his hands blackened.

The second gurgles and nods, his blood covering his neck.

“Your courage is admissible,” the third says. His fingers begin to inflate, and his cheeks grow chubbier with every word.

A mouth rips open in one of the blobs, and they raise their hand. The first congressman grunts and points at them. The blob walks over to the center.

“I feel more danger from you three than I do them,” the blob says in a light voice.

The first growls, flaring the whites of his teeth, barking at her. The third groans, wheezing with every exhale of his breath. The second chokes again, puking another pool of his blood, his hand failing to block the flooded tunnel of his mouth. His forehead drops onto his desk, strands of the black liquid flailing outwards, indiscriminately, at the crowd of blobs and congressmen, and a long, quiet breath leaves him.

“ESCORT IT OUT!” screams the third, his frame becoming more porkish and stuffed, his fingers more like sausages than links, the fingertips purple as they suffocate within his silver rings.

A blob with a badge pulls the mouthing one away from the stand and walks them through the door at the end.

The first continues scratching his head, red, blistering craters forming between the white whiskers of his scalp. He winces with each dig of his jagged nails, aching in its pain.

“This,” he begins, moaning in his self-flagellation, “is for the sanctity of women! They want to touch your kids! They want to expose their genitals to you!”

The third heaves, his body spherical, planetary, and he floats from his chair. His limbs are spread out, the rising helium within his entirety pulling him towards the magnetism of the ceiling’s hot lights. He groans and wheezes, words absent in each attempt. As his rubbery skin touches the glass of the ceiling’s lamp, he pops, and a cloud of his blood, bones, guts, organs, and tissues spread and cover the entirety of the courtroom.

The first, his white skin now red and viscous, peels his flesh, exposing the marbling of his muscle beneath.

“I call for those monsters’ extermination!” the first says, rolls of his skin falling off and slapping against the floor and desk.

More mouths rip through the blobs’ faces, and they fall on their knees, prostrating.

“PROTECT US, CONGRESSMEN!”

“PRAISE GOD! IT WAS WRITTEN IN SCRIPTURE!”

“GUT THE ANIMALS APART!”

The first melts, bubbling, screaming in agony. The searing heat of the light burns him alive as he coddles himself, holding his body, churning into a pool of innards and shrieks.

“KILL THEM ALL!”

“BASTARDS! BEASTS! PEDOPHILES!”

“SAVE US, CONGRESSMEN!”

The first solidifies, his flesh hardened like a polished glass mound. The blobs cheer, rancorous in their cries, yelling into each other in praise, in gratification, in the marvel of this spectacle. The room fills with echoed roars, guttural screams that blend into the other, a white noise sluicing each membrane within one’s skull, and the blobs, covered in the sanguine liquid of their congressmen, blackened by just moments of exposure to oxygen, start to jump in unison. They meld the stubs of their blob hands and jump with each other, cheering.

The blob with a badge returns with the head of the outspoken blob, and the blobs grow silent, ever so briefly. The severed head’s spine drags along the bloodstained velvet runner, their face more defined than before, with a bluish aquiline nose and sickly drooping eyes, and a

gaping mouth that hangs and moves like an unliving pendulum. The badge tosses the head before them all, past their circular dancing, and it rolls to the end in silence.

“Damn thing was a demon, I say! It called us evil and blasphemous and inhuman, and I knew only the devil could force it to say such vile things!” the blob with a badge said, spitting from its ripped maw.

“Good riddance,” said a blob, lost in the crowd, their voice scratched and coarse.

“I say we find more of them demons, send them to hell!” another spoke with a sickly sound that troubled muffled ears.

“CONGRESSMEN!” the blob with a badge shrieks. “WHAT SHOULD WE DO!?”

The blobs stare at the pools of blood, the strings of crimson liquid dripping from the ceiling, the ironblack glass figure dead on its desk. Steam rises from the charred skeleton that sits where the first sat, and none can writhe in the smell of putrescence as they lack the vestibule for scents.

“Yes, yes, I understand, congressmen,” the blob with a badge says, its caged, fleshlike mouth leaking in black blood, a gush of it staining his golden badge, the shield undefined, unnamed, the same as many other blobs with a badge.

“What did they say?” a voice asks, the blobs’ white eyes wide and open.

“What do they demand of us, officer?” another pleads.

The blob with a badge, its craven skin cracking, its smile stretched beyond its very visage, and shards of teeth lining its insides, bleeding and stained with a violent yellow, says, “Burn the demons, they say! Burn them all, with the fire of god! The fire of man! The fire of iron! The fire to cleanse them until there ain’t any left to speak their demon words!”

And the blobs danced, reveled, locked arms and trotted in circles around the badge. They bowed and prayed to the dead congressmen and said, “Chaos! Destruction! Today our city, tomorrow the world! Praise! Praise! PRAISE!”