

# Number Seventeen

by Wrestlr

[M/M]

Synopsis: A driver, a hitchhiker, and a lonely stretch of road, late at night with a telepathic serial killer on the loose. A story set in the Institute world.

Disclaimer: There's sex, sodomy, and maybe a few other minor perversions in this. If you don't like that sort of thing, or if you're under legal age, go elsewhere.

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I had the car pushing eighty, but the long, flat road in the darkness made our speed feel only half that. The redheaded kid's eyes, a little wild, caught flecks of the dashboard lights as he listened to the radio. When the news bulletin ended, he reached over and turned down the volume.

He wiped the side of his mouth with his hand. "So far they found sixteen of his victims."

I nodded. "I heard." I took one hand off the steering wheel, rubbed the back of my neck, trying to work away some of the tightness.

He watched me with a half-sly grin. "You nervous about something?"

My eyes flicked in his direction before returning to the road. "No. Why would I be?"

The kid kept smiling. "The police have all the roads blocked for fifty miles around North Hampton."

"I heard that, too."

The kid almost giggled. "He's too smart for them, though."

A minute passed in silence. I glanced at the backpack he held on his lap. I'd picked him up hitchhiking a few miles back. "Going far?"

He shrugged. "Not sure."

The kid was about average height, and had a build that appeared a little more athletic than average but not enough to be intimidating. Most people would find him more cute than handsome. He looked about seventeen or eighteen, but he was the baby-faced type and could have been five years older.

He rubbed his palms on his pants. "Do you ever wonder what makes him do it?"

I kept my eyes on the road. "No. Never wondered about that."

He licked his lips. "Maybe he got pushed too far. All his life somebody always pushed him. Somebody was always telling him what to do and what not to do. He got pushed once too often." The kid stared ahead. "He decided to push back. A guy can take just so much; then something's got to give."

I eased my foot off the accelerator.

He looked at me. "Why are you slowing down?"

"Low on fuel," I said. "That station ahead is the first I've seen for the last forty miles. It might be another forty before I see another."

I turned off the road and pulled to a stop next to the three pumps. An elderly man came around to the driver's side of the car.

"Fill the tank," I said. "Restroom open?"

The old man nodded, otherwise paying no attention to me.

The kid studied the gas station. It was a small building, the only structure in the ocean of crop fields. The windows were grimy with dust. I could just make out a payphone mounted on the wall inside.

The kid jiggled one foot. "That old man's gonna take a long time. I don't like waiting." The kid turned to watch him fiddle with the pump. "Why does anybody that old want to live? He'd be better off dead."

I considered this. "He wouldn't agree with you."

The kid's eyes went back to the filling station. He grinned. "There's a payphone in there. You need to call somebody?"

I exhaled. "No. You?"

"Naw. Got nobody to call."

I acknowledged what he said with a grunt. "I'm going to take a leak."

The men's room was nothing fancy but clean. I'd barely finished peeing but hadn't tucked my dick away yet when the kid slipped into the restroom to join me. He pushed the door shut and locked us inside. With my cock still hanging out, I turned to face him. He looked at me. "You got about the same build as me," he said

quietly. His eyes angled down at my crotch. "About the same size down below too, looks like. I like that."

He knelt. I let him do the work of pulling my jeans and underwear down to my knees. He took my half-hard cock in his mouth. I put my hands on his red hair and felt the appreciative sound he made along my shaft.

My cock hardened. My hips thrust at his face. His hand worked in his crotch, jacking himself. The smell of men fucking filled the small room. I liked the way his lips slid down my shaft, the way my prick-head hit the back of his throat and he gagged a little. My cock slipped out, but the kid shoved it back in real quick. He was the hungry type, hungry for new experiences. He probably found a lot of them hitchhiking on this stretch of road.

He came up for air. "I'm gonna cum soon," he muttered quietly, as if someone outside might overhear. I turned and pointed my cock toward the urinal again. Five, ten quick strokes, and I was there--I was cumming--shooting my cum into the urinal. The kid groaned where he knelt and shot his load onto the tile floor.

I flushed the urinal. I took a paper towel from beside the sink, wiped off the head of my cock, tucked it away. I dropped the towel in the toilet, flushed that too. "Clean that up," I told the panting kid, nodding at his sperm on the floor, as I zipped up, unlocked the door, and slipped out.

I paid the old man for the fuel in cash. When he came back with my change, the kid in my passenger seat leaned toward the window. "You been keeping up with the news, mister?"

The old man shook his head. "No. Ain't nothing going on out there in the world that I got to worry about."

The kid grinned. "You got the right idea, mister. When you don't worry about stuff that don't concern you, you live longer."

Out on the road, I brought the speed back up to eighty.

The kid was quiet for a while. Then he said, "It took guts to kill sixteen people. Did you ever hold a knife in your hand?"

"I guess almost everybody has."

His teeth showed through his lips. "Did you ever use one on anybody?"

I glanced at him.

"He's some kind of low-level Talent too, like a telepath. That's what they said on the news. That's how he gets people to go with him. Like he keeps them from realizing they should be afraid of him or something."

I said, "I don't think that's the case. Most killers like for the people they kill to be afraid of them. If he is a telepath, maybe he likes it a lot when they're afraid."

His eyes were bright. "It's good to have people afraid of you," he said. "You're not a nobody anymore when you got a knife or a Talent."

"No," I said. "You're not a nobody anymore."

He nodded slightly.

"You're the biggest man in the world," I said. "As long as nobody else has a knife or a Talent, too."

"It takes a lot of guts to kill," the kid said again. "Most people don't know that."

"One of those he killed was a five-year-old boy," I said. "You got anything to say about that?"

He pressed his lips together a moment before he replied. "It could have been an accident."

I shook my head. "No. No one is going to think that."

His eyes seemed uncertain for a moment. "Why do you think he killed a kid?"

I shrugged. "Hard to say. He killed one person, then another, and then another. Maybe after awhile it didn't make any difference to him what they were. Men, women, children--they were all the same."

The kid nodded. "You can develop a taste for killing. It's not too hard. After the first few, it doesn't matter. You get to like it."

I drove. He was silent for another five minutes, then: "They'll never catch him. He's too smart for that."

I took my eyes off the road just long enough to glance at him. "How do you figure that? The whole country's looking for him. Everybody knows what he looks like."

The kid shrugged with both shoulders. "Maybe he doesn't care. He did what he had to do. People know he's a big man now."

We covered another mile without a word, and then he shifted in his seat. "You heard his description on the news?"

"Sure," I said. "For the last week."

He looked at me curiously. "And you weren't afraid to pick me up?"

"No."

His smile was still sly. "You got nerves of steel."

I shook my head. "No. I can be scared when I need to be."

He kept his eyes on me. "I fit his description perfectly."

"Yes, you do."

The road stretched ahead of us, and on both sides there was nothing but the flat plain. Not a house. Not a tree.

The kid giggled. "I look just like the killer. Got the same Talent too. Telepathy. Not strong enough to get me sent off to the Institute, but enough juice so sometimes if I really concentrate I can put an idea in people's heads. You never know--maybe I got inside your head and made you pick me up back there."

"No," I said, "we both know you didn't do that."

"But I could have. I look just like him, and I got just enough telepathy to make them scared. Everybody's

scared of me. I like that."

"I hope you enjoyed yourself," I said.

"I've been picked up by the cops three times on this road in the last two days. I get as much publicity as the killer."

"I know," I said. "And I think you'll get more. I thought I'd find you somewhere on this highway."

He looked away at the ribbon of road ahead, stretching into the night.

I slowed down the car. "How about me? Don't I fit the description, too?"

The kid almost sneered. "Hell, no. You got brown hair. His is red, like mine. And you're no telepath."

I smiled. "But I could have dyed my hair. You should have known that when you saw my pubes."

I stopped hiding my Talent. I wasn't that strong, so it was easy to keep hidden. I had just enough to get into the kid's head and prevent his mind from working his arms and legs. He found he couldn't move. The kid's eyes got wide when he knew what was going to happen.

He was to be number seventeen.

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