 Over the road, the three skinheads have given in kicking their victim to a pulp and have now turned to trying to pull the handbag out of her unconscious hand.  Even out cold, and possibly dead, the old woman has got one hell of a grip.  One of them gives her body, or possibly corpse by now, another strong kick in the gut.  It bends to the force of his foot.  Another grins and grabs at the bag again.  It’s still caught tight.

    All I’ve seen for weeks now is violent crimes just like this.  It’s all the Angel of the Lord will show me.  We never intervene or stop it.  We just sit and watch, with the angel pointing out the good parts in case I miss them.  I keep feeling like we should do something but, realistically, I suppose me and an angel trying to save people and solve crimes does sound a little bit like some tacky TV show I would've watched as a kid.

“How long do we have to watch this?” I ask, but there’s no answer.  The Angel of the Lord is too busy with the radio again.

    One thing I've learnt about angels recently is that they're more obsessed with music than you'd expect.  Especially this one.  He is always looking for something to suit his mood.  Or her mood.  Or its mood.  Angels and gender specific pronouns can get a little tricky at times.

For over a month now we’ve seen muggings, murders, rapes and beatings.  We’ve seen police coercing prostitutes and old men poisoning their wives.  We’ve seen it all.  And I know, deep down, there’s still more to come.  The Angel of the Lord here is on a mission of tough mercy, or so he/she/it put it when we first met.  He/she/it told me I had to learn that tough love is not always a bad thing.  They came here to show me that hate is sometimes the best reason there is to change the world.  Think of what you have to do as correctional therapy, the Angel had told me as we watched a child push their younger sibling down a flight of stairs.  Think of it as wiping the slate clean.  He told me that sometimes you have to kill the plants to get rid of the weeds.  Sometimes you have to poison the cat to get rid of the rats.  Sometimes the world is supposed to get hit by the meteor.

“I said can we go yet?” I ask, thinking about trying to find a phone box.  She might still be up.  Not that she ever wants to speak to me again.  Not after what I did to her.

“They haven’t technically mugged her yet,” He says, switching back to the station we started on and turning up a classic Frank Sinatra song. “The point was to watch the mugging of a poor, defenceless old lady.”

“But I saw a mugging yesterday.”

“That was the mugging a poor, defenceless old man.  This is completely different.”

“Really?” I lean on the window and sigh, my breath fogs up my view of the street. “Completely different?”

    Across the road, they’ve given in with the bravado and any sort of speed.  Now all three of them are kneeling around her, trying to pry at her rigid fingers off the handbag.  One of them grins at the others and pulls out a knife, the others cheer and high five.  I can’t help but think of the apes from the beginning of 2001.

“The old man gave them his money before they kicked him to death, remember?” the Angel of the Lord tells me. “Whereas the old woman here is going to keep hold of her purse until the bitter end.”

“So, you know how this is going to end?”

“It’s almost done now.”

“She’s dead then?”

“Shouldn’t you already know that?” He asks, watching me with his bright white eyes.

    I’ve got so many crime scenes charging around in my head now that I could write a book.  I could write the kind of film that gets banned within a week of its première and lives on in the mind of impressionable teens as some sort of controversial masterpiece of blood and terror.  I’ve become desensitised to the whole thing.  All it took was time and the lack of the ability to leave.  Sure, the first few deaths threw me a bit, one of them in particular made me vomit all over the stolen car we were in at the time.  But now, as soon as we pull into a town, I’m ready.  I feel my gut clench and my morals sneak out the back door for a cigarette.  I look for the obvious criminals, but I always find the victims easier to spot for some reason.

    There’s a phone over by the old woman’s corpse.  I hadn't noticed that.  I’m so used to focusing on the crime that I didn’t see the damn thing.  Now if these kids will just hurry up and get the purse I can make that call.  Finally.  Although, knowing my luck, she’ll be going to bed by the time I get hold of her.  Either that or she’ll just slam the phone down on me again.