

## **Pedestrian 10**

Diana poured herself a glass of red wine upon arriving home. She had been surprised by nobody wishing to speak about Ray Townshend at the gathering. People came and sort of paid their respects and then left, mostly by themselves.

But then Ray had become more and more of a solitary person over at least the past decade. He would meet people for one-on-one tea dates but would always have an excuse to avoid parties or soirees. Perhaps Ray Townshend really had led a double life?

But he had never been closeted about his sexual orientation or preference or whatever the correct term. So did Ray have another community...mostly if not entirely consisting of middle-aged to senior gay men? It didn't seem likely. He had lived downtown in what had formerly been an artist neighbourhood...now characterized by endless cannabis hops and nail salons.

Also, Ray Townshend had stopped taking care of himself. He had been a lifelong nail biter and he had stopped using face cream let alone putting any effort into self-grooming. He did not work out at any gym. If he had been dating somebody, he'd never let this on to any of his faculty colleagues.

She noted that she hadn't seen Ray Townshend at an art gallery for a longtime before his death. He had been an art historian but that hardly meant that he should ignore what people were doing now...especially young artists.

The accident was odd. Ray must have been walking with his face to the ground. Why hadn't he made eye contact with the oncoming driver? Queen and Spadina was not unlike a lot of secondary stop light intersections in the city. Pedestrians had the right of way on green lights but that didn't mean that all drivers were playing by the rules.

Diana sipped her wine. The whole thing just didn't add up. She had been surprised that Mercedes Frank, for one, hadn't spoken at the gathering. Mercedes had often told her how supportive Ray had been during their transitioning process. And then Lewis Taylor....he and Ray had gone way back well before becoming teaching colleagues. Lewis had shown up at the gathering and not spoken a word to anybody. And wasn't the man supposed to be on sabbatical?

Diana wondered whether or not Ray had a will. If so, who would be the executor? Ray had never talked about family to her or probably anybody else in their mutual circle. He had lived modestly but surely not in poverty. Ray might well have had a rainy day bank account. Or he may have been planning some mysterious overseas vacation? But now she would never know.

And who would be taking over his courses? Somebody already part of the faculty, or someone from outside?

Diana decided to watch the local news. The anti-vaxx mob that had besieged Ottawa was threatening an action in Toronto over the coming weekend. She shook her head. Protesting was an honourable tradition in a free country for sure but blocking access to hospitals was completely unacceptable. Doctors and especially nurses were commendable and certainly not agents for some stupid nanny state.

Between the looming weekend demonstration and the explosive situation involving Russia and The Ukraine, the news was depressing. It was happening in an outside world that she had no way

of regulating or controlling. She turned off the news stream and tried to distract herself by playing WORDLE. This new word game had become an actual haven of sanity on social media.