

Revenge Waits

*If you prick us do we not bleed? If you tickle us do we not laugh? If you poison us do we not die?
And if you wrong us shall we not revenge?*

William Shakespeare

While seeking revenge, dig two graves - one for yourself.

Douglas Horton

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The man standing in her kitchen would be the last person she ever saw. She did not know that, nor would she have believed it. He would be the last person to see her alive, having carefully planned and schemed for this inevitability over the past few months. He was her path to revenge; she was his means to an end.

What had started as a tense conversation had now escalated into a loud shouting match. This wasn't their first argument, but the intensity was at its peak. It would be another wasted effort since a resolution was unlikely; still, that wouldn't stop them from trying to tear each other apart. The arguments had devolved into threats, with each one vowing to destroy the other. Sadly, destruction seemed to be the only possible outcome.

She wanted him out of the house, so she threatened to call the police, which he didn't believe she would actually do. Storming from room to room, she threw a tantrum, opening drawers and rummaging through the contents. What was she looking for? It was probably too late to worry about it, but for a moment, he wondered if she had a gun. Would she actually use it on him if she did? *Nah, no guts, just empty threats.*

Her hysterics grew more intense, but she eventually found what she was searching for, pulling a gun from a drawer. Turning sharply to face him, she aimed the weapon and issued increasingly loud threats. She was trembling; the gun felt heavy in her hands, yet she taunted him, swearing she would shoot and claim he was attacking her. He barked back, telling her she wouldn't dare pull the trigger. Reminding her that she had a daughter who would be devastated if she went to prison, he watched her wavering resolve. They exchanged insults and more threats with the gun between them for another ten minutes. The scene became almost comical.

He could not bear to listen to her screeching any longer; he was reaching the end of his patience. She gave him a final ultimatum to leave the house or she would shoot, and she didn't care if it killed him. As she stepped toward him, the menacing look on her face made him laugh. Confident she did not have it in her to pull the trigger, he lunged for her hand, the one holding the gun. He was able to grab her wrist and twist it so that the weapon dropped to the carpet with a soft thud. Holding onto her wrist, he forcefully twisted her arm behind her back. She slumped to her

knees, pushing against him, yelling for him to stop. He dragged her by the neck across the carpet until they reached the hallway to the kitchen. He was hurting her, but it was hardly the first time. She thought she knew what to expect and how far he would go. This time, she was wrong.

Holding her arm in a contorted position behind her, he forcefully picked her up and slammed her back to the floor. Her head hit the tiled floor with a crack, but she had no time to register the pain. He released her arm, but only to thrust his hands around her throat. The muscles in her neck were pulled taut as he stood behind her, towering over her as she slumped against him. He pressed against her throat with maximum force as he whispered in her ear that he would decide the outcome for them, not her. His anger was rising. Her long, slender neck was so small that his hands almost overlapped as he tightened his grip. Her guttural sounds, the only sounds she could make, permeated the room. She clawed at his arms, thrashing to get up and away from him, but she soon blacked out, unable to breathe. The man maintained his grip even as she went limp and sagged to the floor. Finally, he let go of her throat, throwing his arms to the side as if to signal victory. She lay on the floor, lifeless.

It was quiet now; her moans and cries had ceased, and all he could hear was his own heavy breathing. *Maybe now you will finally shut up.* He stood still, half-expecting her to stir again, then moved to the other side of the room and sat on the couch. Daylight had faded, and dusk cast eerie shadows across the room. He had to be sure she was dead, so he sat there. A clock struck 6:30 as he waited. Now, he sat, realizing what had just happened, but felt no remorse or sympathy; he only felt relief that it was over.

Once he was sure she was gone, he went upstairs to the linen closet, where he pulled out a comforter and a wash rag. Returning downstairs, he scanned the room for the gun and signs of the struggle. He saw her body lying like a rag doll on the floor, then noticed a small amount of blood under her head. *Damn, didn't want that. Now, I'll have to clean it up.* He moved to the other side of the couch and found the gun on the floor. Using the rag to pick it up, he found there were no bullets in it. He stood over her, laughing but wanting to shout. *It didn't have to end like this. You could have just been reasonable.* He leaned over, placed the comforter next to her, then rolled her onto it, wrapping her tightly. He picked her up and carried her through the kitchen to the garage door. In the garage, he opened her car's trunk and dropped her body inside. He also threw the gun in with her. With a loud sigh, he closed the trunk and went back inside to clean up the blood.

When he was sure the house was in order, he grabbed her purse and phone from the kitchen counter. He turned off the phone before tossing it, along with the purse and the rag he used for cleaning, onto the back seat floorboard. Then, he backed out of the garage and down the driveway. He planned to dispose of her body in the park and leave her car elsewhere. There were challenges with that plan, given the number of cameras everywhere, but he believed the police wouldn't be able to get a clear shot of his face, so he thought his chances of getting away with it were good.

Driving her car, he left the Farms subdivision, passed the stables, and drove to the hospital parking lot, where he found a spot in the far north corner to park. He waited there until 10:00 before heading to Simmons Park, a small, densely wooded area with walking trails that lacked night lighting. The man backed into a parking spot at the entrance of a trail and waited a few minutes to make sure it wasn't in use. Pulling the woman from the trunk, he let her fall to the ground. The comforter was a jumbled mess, so he untangled her from it and threw it back in the trunk. Then, he half-carried, half-dragged her down the path to a spot with a slight drop-off. He picked her up, carried her down the incline, and laid her at the bottom, where he shoveled leaves and other brush on top of her. He wasn't trying to hide her exactly, but he also didn't want her to be found quickly.

Before returning to the trail, the man heard voices approaching, so he crouched next to the woman. The darkness provided cover, and the couple walked briskly by, unaware of the sinister actions happening around them. Once they had safely passed, the man took one last look at his victim. With a touch of affection that surprised him, he pulled her hair over her face. After taking a few steps up the slope, he turned again to survey the scene. She was not easily visible, even though he knew where to look, and it was a quiet spot that wouldn't attract much foot traffic. The man exhaled as he returned to her car, started the engine, and sped out of the park. *Revenge waits, my dear, but my patience has run out.* He felt only exhilaration as he drove to the spot where he would leave the car, convinced he was finally able to escape the depressing state of affairs that had been ruining his life.

She never expected this would be the outcome when he came into the house earlier that day. The argument had been staged, intended to lower her guard and make her believe she still had the upper hand. It didn't take long for her to realize the tables had turned, but by then, it was too late. Soon, she would be just another statistic, and the issues she caused for him would fade away.

When life's slights, whether real or perceived, ignite a relentless desire for revenge at any cost, the path of destruction often consumes both the hurt and the innocent. As past sins resurface, the response can either build or break everyone involved: those who can control the situation and those who cannot. Once the truth, thought to be firmly sealed in the past, surfaces with a vengeance no one expected, reality will reveal itself with unforeseen horror.

One of the most frustrating things in life is that you don't realize those realities until you have to; you don't know until you know. But once you do, nothing will ever be the same; everything you've worked so hard to build will be lost.