*27 November 2015* **|** **Versus Reicer**

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| **🡨** | **🡪** | <https://secure.odc.cryandefence.gov/owa/#path=/mail> |
| To: Icarus Caan  From: Jacen Caan  Subject: The Attacks in Xrite  Following my failures in preventing the attacks in Sherlo and Edge in Xrite and my failure to capture the fugitive on home soil here in Verne, I feel as though I have not done my duty to uphold the responsibilities and trust that this great nation has presented me with and am unworthy to continue to try.  The truth is that my obsession with this case, and this suspect, has become detrimental to my work. She controls my every thought. Since my attempts to distance myself from her have all failed, I can see no other option.  Therefore I hereby tender my resignation with immediate effI | | |

On any given day and at any given time one could walk into Jacen Caan’s office and find him sitting at his desk beneath a sea of files and documents, all of which were in varying states of disrepair. This was not due to negligence, quite the opposite in fact, but because he took the appropriate caution to modify each document to make sure that no one person, even within his own organization, knew everything. He forwarded the appropriate information to the appropriate people. Everyone else would see the remains once his black marker work its magic on sensitive details.

On this night, however, his desk was atypically empty. Only his laptop, a single folder and a mug of lukewarm coffee were present. As he started at the laptop screen, typing out an e-mail, he decided to pick up the folder and go through it once more.

As he started at the profile inside he mused on what would happen in the morning once his secret was out.

There is a serious problem with telling any kind of honest narrative – be it in print, television or even on the internet - about people who live lives of extreme villainy. It lies in the fact that the reason these people do the kind of dangerous, debauched, horrifying and down-right crazy things that they do is right there on the surface: because it’s fun. When these kinds of people are involved, the general audience expects a story of comeuppance and redemption. They want to know that the bad people have either repented or been punished so as to affirm their world view. The audience doesn’t realise that these people are so far gone and absorbed in their villainy that they won’t or can’t be saved anymore. They won’t be redeemed and they won’t be forgiven. The people don’t realise that in real life, the villains are often the ones who get away scot-free.

On any given day one could walk into my office and find me sitting at my desk beneath a sea of files and documents, all in a varying state of disrepair. Not due to my negligence mind you but due to me taking the appropriate cation to modify each one before passing it on to the next person. In my line of work it was important to make sure that no one, even within my own organization, knew everything. Appropriate information was seen by the appropriate people. Everyone else saw the remains, once my black marker had worked its magic. On this night, however, my desk was atypically empty. Only my laptop, a folder containing a profile and a mug of lukewarm coffee were present. As I stared at the screen, wondering whether or not to send an e-mail, I decided to pick up the file go through it just once more.

There remains one principle issue with telling any kind of narrative about people who live lives of extreme villainy. Be it in print, television or even on the internet, the problem lies in the fact that the reason these people do the dangerous, debauched, horrible and down-right crazy things that they do is right there on the surface: because it’s fun. That these are bad people who will get bad ends is something that the audience expects to be a given but, in truth, it does not work that way. In real life, the villains are usually the ones to get away scot-free.

**[Should probably open with talk of audience expectations first and then get into what they have to do]**

The degree to which the audience can enjoy, or even just appreciate, this type of narrative to the point of true understanding is heavily contingent on their ability to see the aforementioned debauchery taking place. Yet throughout it they still must have the presence of mind to realize that despite the fact that such stories typically stand as documents of bad behavior, the people involved are so absorbed in their villainy that they most likely won’t or can’t stop themselves anymore. They won’t be redeemed and they won’t be forgiven.

Having stated this, the villain of this narrative has lead an adult life that, when written down, serves as a literal document of bad behavior. Is Scarlett Reicer a good person underneath it all? I have absolutely no idea! But I can tell you that she is perfectly cast in her role as the kind of woman who, through a combination of her beauty and intelligence, can get nearly any man to throw his life into potential ruin in exchange for one solitary moment of her attention.

Vicious, vivacious and spellbinding, Ms. Reicer is has wreaked havoc on the lives of rather a few unsuspecting souls. They are fooled by the intense sapphire of her eyes, constantly threatening to drown them underneath a tempest of their own desire. She lures them with her golden hair that catches the light as she enters the room, serving as her crowning glory; a frame for her visage, bringing out her rosy lips and cheeks that seem untouched by time’s bending sickle even as his compass draws ever nearer.

To put it bluntly: women despise her, secretly wanting to be her, and men just want her. Her body, her sex, her leggy frame wrapping itself around them while she throws her head back, choking on the ecstasy of their closeness. That which they hope will temporarily serve to appease the desires of their bodies by using hers.

Before you get the wrong impression of me as some bastion of chastity, the virtuous defender of an ideal or an asexual hunter getting ready to poach the wild, untamable lioness. I want you to know that I include myself on that list of those who have fallen under her spell.

The problem for her victims, and myself, is that Scarlett knows of the effect that she has on others and she uses it. Like the phoenix she has died before, only to rise out of the ashes with her shimmering blonde hair. Picking herself up and beginning again to eat men like air. Though that is not to say that she doesn’t deal well with female adversaries. Scarlett has met her fair share of women along her path of destruction and, like the men, they too have fallen. The danger of Scarlett Reicer is not that she has beauty, brains and the cunning to use them both efficiently. No. The danger is that she has no morality in her usage of them. She uses her beauty for fun and sells her brains to the highest bidder.

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| The Effulgence Hotel - Incident Report  *Date: 23 January 2011*  *Victim: Holden Equarr*  An anonymous guest called hotel security after hearing elevated voices and seeing another guest apparently running away from their hotel room with their pants around their knees. The runner, Mr Hassan, had been seen with a tall blonde woman in a white dress at the bar that evening but when security searched the room they could not find any trace of her. The hotel has no record of a Juliet Stone ever checking in or out.  Notes:  Frankly this was a smart play. Married and prominent businessmen will always be afraid to come forward when something goes awry with one of their affairs. The odd thing was that nothing was reported stolen – though I don’t believe that Mr. Hassan has told the investigators entire story here. It’s clear to me now that she was not after money but leverage. How exactly she intends to use her leverage over Mr. Hassan I’m not sure. |

I like to imagine, possibly to appease my own vanity, that with every mark that she hit, she would spend time thinking about them. She would laugh to herself while sitting in the bath, a glass of wine on the tiles and a sponge in her hand. In my fantasy, Scarlett would offer an elegant chortle –a small but brief glimpse into the humanity behind the monster- at the latest sucker that she and her team had managed to defeat.

In classic literature every hero has a hamartia. A fatal flaw which, while glaringly obvious to the reader, ultimately contributes the hero’s downfall. For Scarlett it was arrogance. For me it was her.

The first time we met it was an accident. It has been at an end of year regional celebration, the kind of masturbatory, self-gratifying nonsense that I was normally all too happy to not be invited to. It was the kind of function at which bureaucrats patted themselves on the back for making a number smaller and smaller. That year, however, I had made it to the banquet with the top investigators and high ranking officers. A romantic man would’ve called it Fate that I should meet her that night. A suspicious man would’ve called it a curiosity, worthy of inspection. I, however, thought nothing of our meeting - largely because I was distracted by her appearance. Her hair was swept over her shoulder and her lips were the colour of blood. The dress housing her figure as black as a clear moonless night. The music faded to silence and crowd fell away. From the moment I laid eyes on her, she was only thing that was real.

I tried my best to regain my composure and to stop myself from undressing her with my eyes, to stop seeing myself kissing her neck - carefully avoiding the pearls hanging from it - while simultaneously pulling down the straps from her dress and exposing her body for my pleasure. To this day I have been as deeply in lust with a woman as I was with Scarlett in that moment. Eventually I snapped out of my reverie and went to talk to her.

To the best of my knowledge, she killed three people later that night. Her target and two bodyguards who got in the way. Officially it was called a heart attack. Unofficially my contacts at the morgue called it six .22 caliber bullets, two for each skull. There were no shell casings recovered at the scene, no gunshots heard by any of the guests and no surveillance footage showing anyone going in or out of his hotel room. She meant it as a message, I think. As far as I know now it was contract work. So I assume that the victim had managed to cross the wrong people. People who had expected his portfolio in government to be managed differently.

In the aftermath I remember coaming over the photos from the event and looking for a glimpse of her - not because I was building a case, mind you, but because at that time I was still picturing her jawline as she walked away from my table, casting a glance over her shoulder and smiling at me. Her ruby lips that had on managed to steal not only the voice and utterance from my tongue but the virtue from my being. Needless to say that even 12 hours removed from our meeting, I still wanted to fuck her just as badly as I had the night before and as much I would love to say that I simply let her go and got on with my life, I could not do that.

The second time that we met I meant it to last longer than it did. While the entire police department was searching for the killer – or at least still analyzing the guest lists, looking for anyone that was unaccounted for – I was the one investigator who had already met the mysterious blonde woman that hadn’t been on any guest list. Of course I didn’t have any evidence that she was the killer but I could still hazard a guess as to where she was. As I stepped into the restaurant of The Effulgence, I caught a glimpse of her sitting at the bar, nursing her drink and looking at a new plaything with a mixture of boredom and contentment. She caught a glimpse of me too, her sapphire eyes settling on me as I entered the room and walked towards them.

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| Interview 1  *Date: 04 February 2011*  *Suspect: Scarlett Reicer (aka Juliet Stone, Madeline Wreyham)*  *Interviewer: Det. Jacen Caan*  Caan: Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed Ms. Stone.  Stone: Anything to help. And please, call me Juliet.  Caan: Where were you between midnight and 03:30 am last night?  Stone: At midnight I was talking to you, detective. I left the party at around 1 am.  Caan: Can anyone confirm that?  Stone: Yes, my date for the night Mohammad Hassan. We left together. He took me straight home.  Caan: What time did Mr Hassan drop you off?  Stone: He stayed the night. But if you’re asking when we got in, that would be around 01:30 am.  Caan: Will you be available for any further questioning?  Stone: Sure. You have my number, detective.  Notes:  I meant this last longer but once she mentioned sleeping with Hassan I lost all sense of professionalism and ended the interview. She won this round.  Her alibi checked out after talking with Hassan, though again: this is Scarlett Reicer. Making people do and say what she wants is her specialty. I’m missing something here. I should check if her apartment has a security feed that can confirm her story. |

[Scarlett’s arrogance has to get the better of her here]

The third time we met I made my fatal mistake. It was under less than professional circumstances. I’ve come to understand that Scarlett is a master when to masquerading as something that she is not. With me she lured me in with beauty and wit, playing the damsel to hook me and seal my fate.

Yet as I said before, this is a tale of villainy not of justice. As I also before said she rose like the golden phoenix after our last encounter and her first real failure, managing escape back into the wind.

[The more I write, the more this story becomes about falling in love/ lust with the wrong person. On the other hand it’s about not falling in love with a person or who they are but for their looks. Jacen is one of Scarlett’s victims because he can’t see her as a woman instead of a goddess and therefore she can destroy him for it.]

The light in which I would not intrinsically have cast her in was one of terrorism. Political idealist, former-solder, spy-for-hire but not terrorist. It takes spending some time with the woman in question to understand just how filled with hatred this goddess actually is.

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| To: Icarus Caan  From: Jacen Caan  Subject: The Attacks in Xrite  The truth is that my obsession with this case, and this suspect, has become detrimental to my work. Since my attempts to distance myself from her have all failed, I can see no other option.  Therefore I hereby tender my resignation with immediate effect  Former Special agent,  Jacen Caan | | |

**Written by Paul Cupido**

In truth when it came to Jacen’s story he was fairly certain that the media narrative wouldn’t focus on the fact that he was able to identify and apprehend an assassin whose talents for murder and manipulation had been aimed at the very police force that protected them. No he was certain that they would call him out for the lines that he had crossed in doing so.

As I said before: this is tale of villainy, not justice. Scarlett could make it out of any situation with a few well-placed calls to the people she had leverage over. I, however, could not. While the audience wouldn’t be interested in Scarlett’s story, they would be interested in mine because the one thing people love more than seeing a villain brought to justice: is seeing a hero fall from grace.