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

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| To: Icarus Caan  From: Jacen Caan  Subject: The Attacks in Xrite  Following my failures in preventing any more of the attacks in Sherlo 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 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. At this moment, 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 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. Besides, in real life the villains often get away scot-free.

The degree to which the audience can appreciate, or even just understand, this type of narrative 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 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 Madeline Wreyham ever checking in or out.  Notes:  Frankly this was a smart play. Married men, especially ones with connections to the justice department, will always be afraid to come forward when something goes awry with one of their affairs.  The odd thing here 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, after the fact, 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. It was masturbatory, self-gratifying nonsense that I was normally not invited to. The kind of function at which bureaucrats patted themselves on the back at the sight of a number growing smaller and smaller year on year. It was also the kind of function where the attention was placed on growing connections. In this department with its intricate web of alliances and rampant corruption, it was important to be noticed and liked. So making it this kind of function and forging new alliances was key.

That year in particular I had played the game well and, through a combination of luck, hard work and a sprinkle of nepotism, I 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 Scarlett that night. A suspicious man would’ve called it a curiosity, worthy of inspection. Personally I thought nothing of the meaning behind our meeting - largely because I was too busy looking at her.

Her hair was swept over her shoulder and her lips were the colour of blood. Her dress was black as the moonless night under which we both had stood. The dress had a set of stars all its own that dazzled on the surface and accentuated her figure. Once I laid eyes on her, the crowd fell away for me and the music faded to silence. From that moment on, 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 I pulled down the straps of her dress and exposed 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. 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 the penthouse at The Effulgence. 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. She cast a glance over her shoulder and smiled at me. Her ruby lips that had 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 met, remembered and searched for the mysterious blonde woman in the black dress 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 that she had mentioned the night prior, I caught a glimpse of her. She was nursing her drink and looking at a new plaything with a mixture of boredom and contentment. Scarlett saw me too then, 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: ~~Juliet Stone~~ Scarlett Reicer (aka Juliet Stone, Madeline Wreyham)*  *Interviewer: Special Agent Jacen Caan*  [Page 2]  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 02:00 am last night?  Stone: At midnight I was talking to you, agent Caan. I left the party at around 1 am.  Caan: Can anyone confirm that?  Stone: You’re so thorough. Yes, my date for the night Mohammad Hassan. We left together and 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.  Stone: Are you alright Jacen? You look a bit flustered?  Caan: Quite fine, Ms. Stone.  Stone: Juliet to you.  Aan: I’m fine, Juliet.  Caan: What time did Mr Hassan leave?  Stone: Around 6am or a quarter passed. You’ll have to ask him yourself for a more exact time.  aan: Do you have his contact information?  Stone: Not on hand but I can get it for you.  Caan: Will you be available for any further questioning?  Stone: Sure. You have my number.  Notes:  ~~I should check in with Mr. Hassan and see if he confirms her story.~~  Her alibi checked out after talking with Hassan, though again: this is Scarlett Reicer and 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. Better still I should check the security tapes from the victim’s hotel and see whether there are any inconsistencies.  Still want to know:   * Nature of her relationship with Mr. Hassan ~~(I HAVE TO BE PROFESSIONAL ABOUT THIS!)~~ * Why did he go there with ~~Stone~~ Reicer and not his wife? * Any connection to his incident at The Effulgence? |

As I said before, I meant my first interrogation, and I use that term lightly here, with her to last longer than it did. I still had more questions for her but I lost all sense of professionalism at the implication of her taking the man to her bed. My imagination went wild and disappointment set in. I decided to try to play it cool but it hadn’t worked very well. She won that round.

If the first assassination was her sending a message then the second was her showing off. She pulled the trigger herself on this one, as she had on the one before, but this time it was not up close and personal. This time it was from the barrel of a sniper rifle 600 meters away from her target. Officially we pinned it on some disgruntled former marksman that had been recently released from prison after he had tried to take the law into his own hands. I wasn’t on that case but I know the agent who was. Thomas Avery understood the department’s mantra: do anything to placate the public and quell any outrage that the media would spearhead. He was a real golden boy after that.

Unofficially I knew there was something more to it. Of course, now that I know her history, I know that it was her. There was no one else who was active in the city at that time that had the background, skill, callousness and the arrogance to pull that shot off and believe that they would never get caught. At the time I kept on working. The victim’s enemies weren’t quite as obvious as the government official’s had been but the method was clear. She was taunting us. Daring us to catch her.

I dove straight back into the first case behind my superiors back. I wanted to be the golden boy who solved the mystery. Secretly I was hoping that my investigation would give me an excuse to cross paths with her again.

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| Notes  Effulgence killing  Hassan gave his initial statement but is now out of town and unreachable. I need him and I need the footage from the penthouse – which has gone missing apparently (why am I not surprised?).   * Should do another background check on ~~Stone~~ Reicer (use Dad’s old military contacts this time and see what they pull up)   Sniper killing  This isn’t my case but it doesn’t seem right. The modus operandi is different. This is not some gangbanger who escaped the law through bribery and corruption – the kind of victim that our ex-cop would target.  This victim is member of the public. But who would pay to assassinate a middle manager at a factory? |

The third time we met I made a fatal mistake. She called me in a panic after the second shooting and complained of not feeling safe. Apparently I had made an impression and she said that she trusted me. She wanted me to come over to calm her down and advise her on any action that she should take.

I jumped at the opportunity. The only reason I went was for her. To be close to her. And maybe, if I was lucky, to be with her. I’ve come to understand that Scarlett is a master when it comes to masquerading as something that she is not. With me she lured me in with beauty and played the damsel to seal my fate. And seal it she did.

It stands to reason that I should not have been happy myself for sleeping with the suspect of an ongoing investigation, let alone proud of myself, but it was pride that swelled in me following our tryst. I wish I could say that it ended there but it didn’t. For me Scarlett was like a drug. The more I had of her, the more I wanted.

I would get my wish but not quite in the way that I expected. I had asked for another background check on her name using my father’s old connections and once I got the report it, I headed straight over to her place to question her once more.

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| Interview 2  *Date: 04 February 2011*  *Suspect: Scarlett Reicer (aka Juliet Stone, Madeline Wreyham)*  *Interviewer: Special Agent Jacen Caan*  Caan:  Reicer, Scarlett Hope   * Former Cryan Military * Designation: Sniper * 20 kills   Do you want me to read on?  Reicer: Very impressive Jacen.  Caan: You’re not going to deny it?  Reicer: No point. Our little game is over.  Caan: Where is Hassan? Is he dead too?  Reicer: When I first saw you, I thought you Cryan  Caan: Why?  Reicer: Your suit. People are not flashy in this country.  Reicer: But you wore it beautifully. You had such pride in your appearance, though you did look a bit stiff.  You were so happy to be there weren’t you.  Caan: All that from my suit?  Reicer: It’s in the subtle details that people show you who they really are. Knowing how to read those details gives you power.  Caan: Is that what all of this is about: Power?  Reicer: That’s what we were about.  Caan: And the rest of it?  Reicer: The rest of it is a payday.  With some fun on the side.  Caan: One day soon I’m going to arrest you.  Notes:  I was surprised by just how candid she was here – makes me think she’s planning something. She was careful not to admit to anything but I’m onto her and she knows it now. I just need to tie her these crimes. |

I like to think that I scared her with that visit. I like to imagine her in a panic after I paid her this visit, pacing around the room and deciding what to do next. In reality I don’t think that happened. In reality, I think that she probably sat in the bath and laughed at me.

What followed was her making use of what she had over me. She came forward to the press about our affair. She knew, as I know, that while the entire police and special police service of Seiron may be a conglomerate of agendas, favours, cliques, alliances and corruption, but the one thing they do care about is public perception. And I was fairly certain that the public would eat me alive for sleeping with my own chief suspect.

It was only later, when I saw it in the newspaper that the bombshell dropped for me. I’ve come to realise that she had needed leverage over me and I, through my lust, had provided for her. In a way I was as much the architect of my destruction as she was. Regardless, she had our involvement as a backup plan to ruin my career and the credibility of my findings, just in case I got too close.

As I said before: this is a tale of villainy not of justice. Scarlett Reicer rose like the golden phoenix after our encounter, managing escape back into the wind.

In truth, when it comes to my story, I’m fairly certain that the media narrative won’t focus on the fact that he was able to identify an assassin whose talents for murder, manipulation and subterfuge had been aimed at the very population who bought the papers and watched the news. No, I’m certain that they’ll call me out for the lines that I crossed in my personal capacity.

While the general audience won’t be interested in Scarlett’s tale of violence and villainy, since she escaped all of this. I’m certain, though, that they will be interested in mine. I’ve come to realise that the one thing the people love seeing more than the defeat of a villain is the fall of a hero. Yes, they’re going to love me.

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| **🡨** | **🡪** | <https://secure.odc.cryandefence.gov/owa/#path=/mail> |
| To: Icarus Caan  From: Jacen Caan  Subject: Reicer  Hello Father,  By now I’m guessing that you have the Captain’s report sitting on your desk and you know what I’ve been up to or, failing that, I’m guessing that you’ve read the newspaper.    The truth here is that I couldn’t help myself. The Stone woman, or the Reicer woman I should say (I’ve attached all my research about her in this email - it’s actually quite a good read and it should help whoever picks this case up after me - just check the attachments section), is in my head and I can’t get her out.  The truth is that my obsession with this case, and her in particular, has become detrimental to my work and has compromised me morally and intellectually. Before any action is taken against me, I will take action against myself. I can see no other option.  I’ve already sent in my resignation to my direct superior. This e-mail was just to let you know that I’m sorry. I truly am Dad. I failed you. You trusted me with this job and I failed you.  I should have done a great many thing: I should have pulled myself from the case and I should have contacted you earlier. Most of all: I should not have given in to her. Once again, I’m sorry.  Your son,  Jacen | | |

**Written by Paul Cupido**