*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. 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 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 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. It was the kind of masturbatory, self-gratifying nonsense that I was normally all too happy to not be 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.

That year in particular, I had - through a combination of luck, hard work and a sprinkle of nepotism - 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. Officially it was called a heart attack in order to reduce the public outcry. 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 the penthouse at The Effulgence. 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. People who wanted to shock other potential dissenters into line either that or Scarlett was just theatrical with her kills.

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: 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 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.  Stone: Are you alright detective? You look a little bit flustered?  Caan: Quite fine, Ms. Stone.  Caan: What time did Mr Hassan leave?  Stone: 6 or a quarter passed. You’ll have to ask him yourself for a more exact time.  Caan: 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, agent Caan.  Notes:  I meant this last longer but once she mentioned sleeping with Hassan I lost all sense of professionalism. 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. Better still I should check the security tapes from the victim’s hotel and see whether there are any inconsistencies. |

[Create some distance between the interview/ interrogation and the second assassination]

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 500 meters away from her target. Officially we pinned it on some disgruntled former marksman that had been recently released from prison after he had previously tried to take the law into his own hands. Anything to placate the public and quell the outrage that the media would be spearheading.

Unofficially I knew it was her. Of course now – now that I know her history that is - I know that 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 wasn’t as obvious as the government official had been in terms of enemies – I’m not sure who would pay to have a middle manager at a soda firm killed- but the method was clear. She was taunting us.

[Jacen goes back on the first case and checks out the security cameras. His investigation has to call her into question to the point where he does a background check on her – he has to get to the stage where he is almost onto her]

I ended up being left on the first case while another special agent was assigned to the sniper shot case.

The third time we met I made a fatal mistake. She called me after the second shooting and complained of not feeling safe. Apparently I had made an impression and she said that she trusted me. Honestly I can’t remember the rouse, it was petty and stupid and I didn’t believe a word. The only reason I was there 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 have been 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.

[Investigation continues]

[Jacen needs to realize the depth of his mistakes]

It was only later that the bombshell dropped. I 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.

[Investigation goes on]

[Jacen must start suspecting Scarlett and maybe interview her again – only once Scarlett actually feels threatened, does she release the tape of her and Jacen having sex]

As I said before: this is a tale of villainy not of justice. Scarlett Reicer rose like the golden phoenix after our encounter and her first real scare, 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 and apprehend and 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 it anymore. 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 pulled myself from the case earlier and I should have contacted you earlier but most of all: I should have stayed away from her. I should have done a great many things I’m afraid. Once again, I’m sorry.  Your son,  Jacen | | |

**Written by Paul Cupido**