

THIRTEEN

Jonny Newell

# *Thirteen*

by

Jonny Newell

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# Thirteen

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## **Dedication**

I dedicate this series of short stories to all those who have supported me over the years ... in one way or another. Some are blessed with the gene 'creativity' more than others but to be believed in is what is more important, it is what makes your heart and soul strong and the desire to 'NEVER' give up.

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## **Acknowledgement**

I would like to acknowledge and credit friend and photographer - Shelley Ennis for her eerie shot of 'ME' at a gig, I was playing in Brisbane Australia. I would only guess right in the middle of Nirvana's 'Teen Spirit' as I know I used to lean over and roll my eyes at the crowd in a psycho way. As soon as I saw this pic and its strength I knew it was the cover and with her permission, it now is!

Thank you Shelley.

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# *Thirteen*

## **Foreword**

Welcome readers to my 2<sup>nd</sup> Anthology of short stories, poems and lyrics.

'Broken' my 1<sup>st</sup> Anthology was more of traditional horror themes more so than this new book 'Thirteen'. I have kept the 'Monsters' a lot more real this time (well most!).

The poems and lyrics usually inspire the story but sometimes the odd one (i.e. Second Chance) is completely the opposite.

There will be a third in this series which I plan to do a couple of sequel stories from both horror books included (they are there waiting to come out already and I miss certain characters).

I hope you enjoy these stories (as I do) and please feel free to review my words at where you purchased this book, as any others of mine you may have read.

'til next time

Jonny

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# ***Won't Fool Me***

*Words are blurring from a bunch of lies  
World's been slipping like a water ride  
Ain't no picture with a pretty side  
Mouth's been bleeding from this bitter wine*

***Try this 'n' try that ... but you can't fool me!  
Say this 'n' say that ... but you won't fool me!***

*Times a healing? Well that's not quite right  
Is chaos deciding time to exit the flight?  
Ain't no song with good ol' loving pride  
Your heart's just aching, accepting a bribe*

***Try this 'n' try that ... but you can't fool me!  
Say this 'n' say that ... but you won't fool me!***

*You can blame the Devil so blame the Devil  
It ain't gonna change a thing  
When you expect the best from the worst of sins  
You can pray to Jesus so pray to Jesus  
It ain't gonna fix this thing  
So accept the truth as your world caves in*

***Try this 'n' try that ... but you can't fool me!  
Say this 'n' say that ... but you won't fool me!***

*Eyes are burning, no sleep tonight  
With all this racing when you close your eyes  
No rest for the wicked? For you to decide  
Is your heart now aching? As we die inside*

***Try this 'n' try that ... but you can't fool me!  
Say this and say that ... but you won't fool me!  
Cry this 'n' cry that ... but you can't fool me!  
Stray this 'n' stray that ... but you won't fool me!***

***You won't fool me! No! You won't fool me!***

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# Stroke Me

## 1 – Awaken

*“Stop it! Stop it! Stop fucking licking me! Fucking Cat!”* I thought I screamed but it was only in my mind. Then it dawned on me why I was lying on my kitchen floor. While making a cup of tea, my head exploded and I had had a stroke. I opened my groggy eyes little by little to see only Wilbur - my son's bastard ginger cat sitting directly in front of me ... and was he smirking? Wilbur meowed in that horrible scraggly tone of his as his tail flicked slowly from one side to the other. I tried my best to move but I felt trapped as my body refused any normal brain instructions. Wilbur was just looking at me as if he knew I was paralyzed and making the most of it. I couldn't move, scream or even whisper for that matter and it was obvious, I desperately needed help. All I could do was nothing so I lay here looking at Wilbur the Cheshire cat, as he sat sneering at my misfortune.

Timing – it's all about timing and here I was fucked because of it. It was me who insisted What's-her-name to take the boys to the snow early. She didn't want to go without me but my usual persisting nature had left her no choice really and so now I pay the price for staying back just to work through and the joke (*on me*) was - I had no idea at all what I actually did? My head was foggy and most of what I could remember was all blurred. If only I could remember something, anything about strokes (*or my life for that matter*) but all I vaguely remembered about strokes was, that if I was one of the lucky ones (and since my heart rate felt relatively normal) I kept my spirit high by believing I was and that I should regain some movement and feeling one side first. I had no choice but to wait out this nightmare.

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## 2 - I hate you

The cat was still here and his head was now cocked as I blinked. Did Wilbur know something I didn't? They say animals sense things that humans don't, like - the howling of dogs when someone in the neighbourhood dies! But Wilbur had a definite grin and it looked evil to me. I always hated the bastard - dirty stinky fucking feline! When Toby – our twelve year old Rottie died, the wife (*why can't I remember her name yet I can the dog's?*) insisted we go to the Animal Rescue and adopt a new dog but as soon as we walked in Adam (*and all at the age of nine – yes it was definitely Adam*) took one look as we passed the cat cage and stopped dead in front this mongrel thing, "I want him Mom." I hated him instantly and he hated me. Wilbur could sense I wasn't a cat person at all but it was the wife who talked me into it, "C'mon Carl (*Fuck my name is Carl! Carl the cat hating Ingram*) you agreed you'd let Adam pick." Fuck! I was fucked and the stinky fucking flea-bag was coming home.

A couple of hours passed and still I was trapped but the outside rays of sun were diminishing quickly and Wilbur was still fucking here but now he was laying down on his side and he was cleaning his every bit of himself, including his privates! Dirty fucking cats cover themselves in cat-spit and they call that clean? At least a dog gets washed by their owners but cats – oh no! Unless you want your eyes scratched out in the process?

Now I knew it was 6:00pm for sure as Wilbur was doing his nightly routine moan to be fed his sardines and tuna fish scraps in a can. Twenty minutes must've passed and the prick was still meowing his freshly licked body off and now he was nudging me. '*Fuck off! No!*' but I could not get the words out as he started licking the inside and out of my left nostril. I felt my tears roll sideways across my face as the right one rolled downwards and over the top of my nose and straight into my open left eye as I did my best to blink and Wilbur started to lick them from my face. '*Fuck off Wilbur*' and I startled him when he heard my own low volume mumble which even to me sounded like,

"Ruuf o rillbb".

"RRRillb" I tried my best to call him but now Wilbur had retreated to his safe distance where I first had seen him. The more I mumbled the softer my voice became and then it was all gone again and I was tired; I needed to rest so I closed my eyes.

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### 3 - Real world

Wilbur's awful meow woke me around midnight and I recognised it, he needed to go outside as nature was calling. Then I smelt it and it was Wilbur's piss sprayed against the kitchen cabinet and I was now lying in it. I could just make Wilbur's silhouette from the filtering moonlight and he was restless and he finished his rank cabinet spray. I could admit that my sense of smell had returned so I grasped to the positive from the negative here – my brain was repairing. Still his smell made my nostrils burn like all Hell.

"Rirty Rucken Ranmall!" I screamed and this time my garbled voice elevated to a near normal level and Wilbur scampered off with fear. "Ro crum brack ... Rilbra ron't reave me ... rease." I felt my right hand twitch as Wilbur left me alone in the darkness of night and I admitted ... I was scared.

I lay there alone thinking and rationalizing my rescue and how long I would need to wait before someone would eventually find me. How long had I actually been down was the other one? If only I could get to the phone but where was the phone? I had no idea! Did we even have one? I was getting frustrated that all my memories of the fucking flea-bag were intact even down to my hatred of him yet I can't even remember simple things like my job, my wife, the phone position, time frames or if I would be missed by anyone.

I did my best as I lay there frozen to collate any memories I could grab and they were extremely sporadic. I was pretty sure the year was '13 as I remembered my 45<sup>th</sup> birthday cake but not the party (*if there was one?*) and it being this year and I was definitely sure it was December re the family off to snow possibly for Christmas – snow and Christmas rang alarm bells of something. My son Adam was clear but the younger son's name was either Daniel or Damien? My mother and father were both dead as I relived both their funerals or the coffin sinking parts at least. Memories were scattered but I did my best to reassure myself they would return.

Sleep did return for me and I awoke to the sun directly in my eyes, burning my retinas, so I kept them closed as best as I could for an hour or 2, until it raised enough to pass me completely. My fingers on my right hand were able to move freely and I practiced clenching a piss-weak version of a fist as my now only physical exercise.

"Meeeeooooow!" Wilbur was back and he was pacing back and forth quite rapidly – he wanted food!

"Rorreee Ruddy." It was good to smell his disgusting ginger striped fur as he snuggled against my face because of my voice. "Roo rungru reh?" Did he understand me? Not sure but he stopped dead and sat in front of my twisted face just as yesterday, cocking his head and undulating his tail. The fucker did his

Cheshire grin again! And as quick as he scampered in, he was gone! So once more,  
I was alone. Was the little fucker torturing me?

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#### 4 - Mobile

The phone rang about middayish so at least now I knew we had one! It rang again and again but unless Wilbur could perform some special type of magic, there would be no answering today. It finally went to message bank and I heard the incoming voice – it was Wendy. Yeh, my wife's name is Wendy!

"Hi Honey just letting you know we got here safe, the roads weren't too bad. The place is nice as always – kids still love it here! We're going snow-boarding today, then Santa's visiting the resort tonight and then drinkies at the night club." Tears welled up and flowed uncontrollably as I sobbed to her voice as I listened intently. "So anyway you're in BIG trouble buddy!" her voice sounded jokingly serious but she was 100% correct as I lay like dying fish on the floor. "I told you to ring me on your mobile and you didn't Mr. Workaholic! No surprise eh? Ha Ha! Anyway gotta go Honey so hurry up and get your butt up here – we miss you! Life's no fun without you! Love you - kiss kiss." And Wendy was gone but then in amongst my tears, I realised what she had just said ... **'my mobile'**. My mobile phone was still in my trouser pocket!

So I settled my sobbing as best I could to a low whimper. Then I tried my hardest to move my right arm and it actually moved from the floor upwards to find its landing position on my side. Returning the fucking thing to where it had just taken me (*how long?*) to remove it from there! *AAARGGHH!*

*'C'mon you bastard!'* I thought but no matter how hard I tried my engine was out of gas. I would now wait and wait and wait but it was pointless for now – nothing was happening in my arm department at the moment.

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## 5 - Nightfall

Nightfall did finally come around for the second time and so did the whinging hungry cat! I could see Wilbur's water bowl from here and my parched lips wanted water. The bastard cat licked his fill while I suffered watching. Thirst was all I was consumed with and I could see the water-bowl only an arm and a half's length from my body. God was so fucking cruel!

"Rilbur Rilbur ... Rum ova rear Russ Russ!" It worked! The miserable feline came that close to my face that I was able to lick the fresh drool from around his mouth and as I licked Wilbur's drool he decided to join in and started licking the fresh snot that ran from my nose. It was the grossest thing in my life to date and yet the most relieving! Just to quench the dry desert in my mouth, even with only a few drops of cat mixed water/saliva was so much better than nothing.

The cat was now starving (as I) and he was letting me know it as his too many dinner and breakfasts times had come and passed without a plateful of breakfast bickies or me opening a single solitary tin. And he looked pissed and very vocal about it. After an hour he finally stopped in the cat complaint department and snuggled next to my chest, where we both slept.

I dreamt of Wendy and the kids in the snow resort and that we all left together and arrived at Mount What's-its-name at the same time, having fun playing in the snow. Making a snowman together, where I did my yearly expected Dad joke of - placing the carrot in the penis area instead of his face. Wendy shaking her head as Adam and the other younger one were laughing re my crude humour. Yeh, they had inherited that from me! But that was where the normality of dream ended.

After returning from the fun in the snow to the resort and to my horror, all employees that were working there ... were cats! Cat-humans, all standing and fully dressed in the relevant suitable winter attire. All being polite and helpful in there disgusting cat-human ways. Cat bar-tenders, cat ski-instructors and even an overly fat cat chef in a white puffy chef hat were here. Why was it only me that seemed alarmed by this? Wendy and the boys were ahead of me as they opened the restaurant door and Wendy was waving her hand rapidly in a *come on hurry-up Dear motion* as I stood frozen looking at the cat waitress with her overly large womanly breasts, eyes heavily baked with black eye-liner ... shitloads! I felt myself walk in and sit down as the other three just had (as all the other guests here) just acting like all was normal. We started perusing the menus as the Cat waitress meowed and then asked,

"Would you like some drinks before you order? You must be thu-u-u-r-rsty?"

“Two cokes and a glass of red ... do you want a bourbon and dry Carl?” Wendy asked as she smiled. I did my best to shake it all off and read the menu but then I saw the restaurant logo and name - **Whiskers!**

I tried my best to answer Wendy’s question with the words ‘*Water, just water!*’ but I couldn’t. I had had a stroke right then and there in the middle of the dream.

“Are you okay Hon?” Wendy’s face started to look panicky as the kids’ and then I felt myself sink slowly, downwards (in slow motion) to the floor (or was it Hell?) as the cat waitress went into first aid CPR mode and shouted,

“Shit! He’s stopped breathing!” The disgusting cat creature was only inches away from placing her fish-breath lips over my mouth! I wanted so to scream, yet my words refused to leave my frozen body when I awoke to Wilbur licking my lips and as an instant reflex, my right arm flicked around and scared the little monster away. I just moved my fucking arm ... fully!

Now my right arm was pointing towards the kitchen sink at a ninety degree angle from my body. I tried to move it but the movement was so minimal and frustrating so yet again I lay there convincing myself time will heal all.

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## 6 - Family

Wilbur returned and he was circling frantically, meowing and complaining about something and then he did it! He had held it in long enough and pooped a steamer right in front of me in the corner of the kitchen. The smell was disgusting and was a cat poo for sure – I admitted dog-shit smelt like dogs and cat-shit smelt like cats, baby-shit smelt like babies and suddenly ... I smelt my own! Had I been oblivious to the fact that I had been lying in human feces for God knows how long or had I just regained my sense of smell? Wilbur the dirty beast snuggled into me again and started licking his arse clean as I nearly vomited. Not that I'd never seen him do that before but it was too fresh and it was like watching a 3D smello-vision version. Finally after he was clean, we both were able to sleep but only briefly as we both heard it!

I saw it and so did Wilbur. A mouse took his sneaky midnight chance and ran through the Russian Roulette field of Wilbur. He scampered at a frantic pace to reach the safety of the fridge frame. And like a predator ten times his size, I watched as intently as he reacted in an instinct and the mouse was with-in his jaws. The bastard cat was smirking as the mouse panted heavily frozen in his mouth. Usually Wilbur would torment the fuck out of the mouse but this time he brought him within an inch of my face and crunched down hard as I heard the death-squeal of his victim. Wilbur dropped the mouse so it sat between my mouth and his as he fucking smiled again.

"Rie craunt! No Rilbur!" I pleaded to my cat savior but I was too hungry and too thirsty to defy his bloodied offering so we chewed on the desecrated mouse together. I sucked as much as I could of the creature's blood and the warm liquid was absolutely repulsive yet quenching. Wilbur chewed and cracked the bones of the dead mouse and he seemed to be pushing bits of the kill into my mouth as a parent bird would do to feed its young. It dawned on me then – this miserable piece of shit animal, loved and cared for me. So we ate as 'family' and I was finally able to let my disgust temporally go and accept the situation as it was ... *survival*. It was unspoken words between a man and a cat and now we were truly connected – we had pissed, shit and eaten rodent together. We were blood brothers!

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## 7 - With all my heart

I felt my arm regain a little movement – twitches and my brain instructions were returning slowly but my chest hurt. I was able to raise my arm to my side yet again. I did my best to reach into my right pocket as my arm moved ever so shakily and worse, my fingers still had minimal amount of feeling so I was fingering the inside of my pocket blindly ... but finally it was there in my hand. Wilbur was asleep next to my chest and it was comforting so I was very careful as not to wake him. I struggled though and even that my grip was still weak as piss. I managed to pull the mobile from my trouser pocket and flip it straight to the floor. Which startled Wilbur awake, yet as my terrible grip had dropped the mobile in front of him, he looked at me as if he understood that we both needed this to survive. We were both trapped inside this God-forsaken house with only death awaiting us.

I rested as Wilbur settled. My heart was racing and I could feel the pounding in my chest. It was increasing in speed and its timing was erratic! I knew I was close to a heart attack (possibly my second) and the pain was increasing as the tightness of its belt strapped my ribcage in towards its torture. But I refused to give in! For me! For Wilbur! So I pushed my brain hard to scream commands down to my lifeless right hand!

I managed to flip the mobile over to view the screen light up. My hand was weak and shaking as my pulse rate hit the roof as the pain intensified but still I could make my pointer finger aim in the directional vicinity of the numbers. Wilbur was fully awake and sitting up looking at me then looking at the phone. His ginger tail swayed with anticipation as I lifted my hand above the mobile. I could see the mobile was on its last bar of charge and 1% was flashing on the screen, but it was okay ... we only needed to make one call.

“Rill bre ro-kay Ruddy!” as I reassured my new best mate, “Re are grettin’ routa ere reeel roon!” I went to dial emergency and it dawned on me, I had forgotten the fucking number! What the fuck was it? I racked my brain! *‘Fuck what was it?’* It was so fucking simple was it 666? 999? Something told me that they were both wrong, then it came back to me, thank fucking cunt of a God that it did! It was time to save myself and my fucking cat! Then my heart imploded in a world of pain and I was losing my battle of life but my trembling finger hit the keypad.

So as the mobile flashed its last dying charge, I dialed in the number. And it was ... lucky 13.

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# ***Smash the Violin***

*The gloves are off, the bruises show but not a word is spoken  
Lost love is such a bitch so cruel shows them your careless emotions*

*Innocent eyes that saw it all that will never see the same  
Only they know their truth inside pray they cannot carry blame*

***Why break the fiddle when you can smash the violin  
Mixed-up little head is cutting all the strings  
Why break the fiddle when you can smash the violin  
Once it's all over we'll never hear her sing***

*It was our fight that started out with not even such a scratch  
Bitterness and anger shape up, 'Round 2' in an ugly match*

*Do you cry when it's late at night and never really forget  
Damage can be devastating straight after the game is set*

***Why break the fiddle when you can smash the violin  
Mixed-up little head is cutting all the strings  
Why break the fiddle when you can smash the violin  
Once it's all over we'll never hear him sing***

*A child's mind is way too young to truly understand  
Darkness after separation, always comes hand in hand*

***Why break the fiddles when you can smash the violins  
Mixed-up little heads are cutting all the strings  
Why break the fiddles when you can smash the violins  
Once it's all over we'll never hear them sing***

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# Smash the Violin

## 1 - Games

"Violet Lynia Pettingrow ... in the car now!"

Yes! That's my father bellowing his usual overbearing grumpy voice and why? Not because it's my fault! Oh no! Because Mummy is such a BITCH and knows how to push his '*Angry*' button every time that it's my time to go to his house.

Being 13 years old can be a real BITCH too! Especially since Dad and Mum separated over two years ago but now I just shut my mouth and get yelled at ... what for? You tell me? But I do know the apology comes about now!

"Sorry Violet, I didn't mean to yell at you." Dad's eyes were looking pretty sincere as they always do but I just looked downwards and fastened my seatbelt as he started the engine. I could see Mum standing on the porch glaring at him as we drove off and it made me wonder how many times I have gone through this same routine.

"She drives me nuts! You know that - don't you?" I nodded but never answered as what was there to actually say? Surely as an adult you'd be able to work out when someone was doing things just to drive you crazy? Yet Dad subjected himself to being sucked in by Mummy's nasty words again and again. And as a child I can work it out. So sometimes I wonder if he actually wants to be yelled at for a being a naughty boy because he was having that affair with his secretary (that he thinks I know nothing of!).

"Wanna get some Pizza from Joe's on the way home?" he asked and his mood was now calm

"Yeh alright." I just kept looking at the trees flying by as we drove along Main Road.

"Ham and pineapple or meat-lovers?" He knew what I liked so the question was pointless.

"Whatever." I knew he was prying just to get me to look him eye to eye but I could play this game so much better than him.

“Garlic Bread?” but I just kept looking out the car window.

“Yeh Dad, that’ll be nice.”

I won.

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## 2 - Home

It has been a long year this year putting up with them both (Mum and Dad) fighting constantly (twice as bad as last year) over everything you could think of. The divorce proceedings have finally started and Mum wants it all and I believe she just wants it because it is Dad's, not because she needs it! She just loves to see Dad squirm like a worm in the sun using his nice voice, crawling to her until she sweeps him back over the line, he then runs the other way and calls her THAT name I'm not allowed to say.

Where do I live? Mainly at Mum's which is our old house in Brentridge and spend the weekends at Dad's which is a big poo because all my stuff is at Mum's so it is boring, boring, boring! Dad loves to watch sports all weekend and I hate it so. I usually read a book or listen to my music in my room and keep to myself. He used to take me to the movies but now he complains he's too broke because of all his lawyer bills.

Mum kicked Dad out from the old house from pre-divorce 'good ol' days' so Dad now rents a two-bedroom unit in Gatesfield which isn't bad but he doesn't have much furniture at all and Mum refuses to give him a single thing, which even I believe is a little harsh.

But this isn't about them anymore - this is about me! For two long years I've been putting up with their bickering and fighting and believe they have forgotten about the child – me! Dad always worrying about money and Mum seems obsessed with making Dad miserable about money. My grades have slipped because of them and I have become very unhappy. I don't talk to anyone at school and now I'm being bullied on top of putting up with all this crap at home.

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### 3 - School

Beth Rudders is what I call my enemy! If it wasn't for her and her bully mates at least here at Brentridge Public, my schooling days would be my release and escape from the bitterness of home but she, like a hyena on a dead carcass has claimed her position as head bully and elevated her status by belittling mine. It was only yesterday my bag in class was missing, passed from student to student until it was on the opposite side of the classroom – very original? *I don't think so!*

Brentridge Public has about 300 students grade 1 to 7 and I have been attending here for four years now since Mum and Dad bought the house Mum lives in. I didn't mind it at first but the years have dragged me down as has my love of this dump. Principal Underwood is a total BITCH and is more worried about the school's image more than the students that actually come here.

My form teacher is Mr. Johnson and he is a BIG DICK! (even I get that joke!) He always gives me detention for not doing my maths homework yet he hasn't worked out that (because of my parent's fighting) that I'm behind the rest of the class and not up to scratch with his stupid maths. If he asked me I would tell him but instead he treats me like a 'tard and keeps me in during lunch so I have to watch him eat like a BIG PIG he is, while I do even more sums. I just don't bother anymore and at least Nasty Beth isn't anywhere near me for a whole hour.

Do I like any of my teachers or the kids here at Brentridge? I don't mind Miss Davis she was my grade 5 teacher and I remember that as my favourite year at school and I even got an **A** for science. I did have a friend too, Naomi Smith and Mummy let her sleep over a few times but then she moved away as her Dad got a new job in another town selling insurance. We used to text each other for the first year then that was it.

I've never told Mum or Dad about the bullying at school just thought they really wouldn't care anyway and Nasty Beth and her followers were simply idiots so I let her believe she was smarter than me. I may not be in maths but she will find out exactly how smart I am soon.

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## 4 - Imagination

One thing that no one can ever take away from me is my imagination. It is the one thing that makes me laugh inside. I often picture Nasty Beth meeting Violent Violet in so many different scenarios of pain! My favourite one is her tied up on her bed, she's screaming for her mother and she's peed her pants. I'm dressed in a ballerina's outfit dancing around her, laughing and waving my knives and every now and then I slash her arms or legs to make her scream even more!

I'm always getting in trouble from Mr. Johnson for daydreaming in class when most of the time I'm imagining him in a pigsty with a heap of pigs eating his lunch with him ... and then I come in with a red hot branding iron and brand his back with  $8 \times 8 = 64$  as the skin bubbles and he screams. Yeh I get in trouble but I see him so clear - *Oink Oink!* I have another one of him as the student while I am the teacher yelling at him sums – “What is 144 divided by 12? ... Well come on!” and as he stammers numbers I whack him hard with a cat of nine tails (that I've seen used on some old religious movie on tele), then he gets the answer wrong so I whip him again and there is blood ... lots of blood!

Even at home, dinnertime with Mummy is the time I often drift off to Nastyland. She demands we eat in silence yet she doesn't hear the party that is going on inside my head. I love the dream I have of her sitting at the dinner table and there is a big feast on the table like those ones you see in the movies with the King and the Queen. But in the middle is a silver dome shaped platter and I offer to serve out her meal, lift up the lid and reveal Dad's head with an apple in his mouth, looking straight at her. I pop out Dad's eyeballs and cut a nice slice of cooked cheek for her as she screams and passes out! So in reality I'm sitting there quietly eating my lasagna and salad as I watch her take a mouthful of Dad's brains – it gets me through.

Now when I'm at Dad's place it's mainly in the privacy of my own room as there's not much else in there – no TV! No stereo (only my iPhone) but seeing him and Julia (his twenty five year old secretary) handcuffed naked (Yeh Dad naked yuck!) on the bed while Mummy walks in and catches them both being naughty as I hand her the chainsaw. Oh seeing Dad's pee-pee fly across the room is worth the disgust of imagining him with no clothes on!

I have never told anyone about my silly little thinkings but I keep them locked away in my mind like a favourite book of BLOOD so I can read over and over.

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## 5 - Grandma

Every month I get to spend a whole week-end with Grandma Joan (Dad's mum) at her house which is a big two story house and as a gran she is ok. I seem to be able to talk to her a little more than Mum or Dad.

Grandma liked to take me shopping which I didn't complain about at all and if it wasn't for her, my wardrobe would be Mum's shitty taste in clothes. Grandma lets me choose purple; anything purple so Mum's pretty pleated pink polka dots always goes to the bottom of my drawers.

Her place was the one place I did feel like I could turn off the Violent Violet Lynia Pettingrow in my head and just be Violet the granddaughter. It always amazed me that Grandma Joan could see the little things that both Mum and Dad missed, like I actually had a talent for drawing. Both my parents didn't even acknowledge that I could colour-in.

I believe going to Grandma Joan's house was the release that kept Violent Violet behind bars and not exploding like a shaken up fizzy drink.

I did love Grandma Joan and wished I could live with her forever.

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## 6 - Prank

It was Friday morning before school holidays and I could see out the corner of my eye Nasty Beth had been planning a farewell prank especially for me. Jimmy Tipping was in on it and he was clearly lining up Bobby and Phillip while Beth was giggling with Tracy and Vanessa. I couldn't tell what they were up to but they were all so predictable.

The big lunch bell rang and my school bag was actually near my desk (for a change – too obvious!) and I could hear them all snickering. They all scrambled out of the classroom before I was even ready to. Unfortunately for them I had pre-empted their little plan of lunch swap-over of my salami and pickle sandwiches for some nice dirt ones as my melting frozen chocolate milk in my drink bottle to be replaced with one of the boy's warm wee! Had they never heard of a thing called Facebook? Oh my God they can't help but brag about everything they do or will do – so my pretend friend (Trudie London from England) was Beth's facebook friend #127 and had liked her special plan for me!

Beth was a ring-leader and not a doer so she delegated the tasks out between her followers so this left me the ideal counter-attack of switching her lunch box with mine beforehand.

The switch-over went to plan (or so she thought) as she hadn't realised after the swap I had switched the lunch boxes back over before second period.

I exited the classroom last and made my way down the stairs to the bolted down seating under **B** block. They were all there gathering and giggling and waiting for me to sit down to my nice meal of dirt and wee.

I did sit down as I could see their eyes open wide with anticipation but I knew what their grubby little hands wanted so desperately but today I wasn't very hungry! I reached in my school bag pulled out my iPhone and plugged my earplugs in and listened to nothing as I wanted to hear their whispering words.

After 10 minutes Beth was glowing red like she knew I knew something but I just kept pretending I was listening to my music and I even teased them all as I reached into my bag again, pulled out an apple I had stashed in the side pocket and ate that!

My plan worked as the boys' empty stomachs were now over the game and wanted their lunch so started eating theirs, soon followed by the girls except Beth; but I knew it wouldn't be long.

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Oh it was all worth it as Beth opened her lunchbox and took a swig from her drink bottle first – exactly as Jimmy recognised the Bratz picture on the bottle he had peed in. I was laughing so hard inside as I watched Beth dry-reach vomit as she had swallowed a good mouthful. She threw the bottle down and pushed Jimmy hard in the chest with both of her fat little hands. The other bitches T & V were pointing at me as I took my cue – so I cocked my head and waved. I followed it up by pulling out my Salami and pickles sandwich, bit, chewed and swallowed it, pulling my best yummiest face I could.

“You’re fucking dead Mole!” screamed Nasty Beth as I blew her a kiss. And I found page 21 of my mind’s BLOOD book and reread the page where Beth is hanging like a piñata from the monkey bars as all the kids of the school (including bitches T & V) take turns to whack the shit out of her – literally! There is poo everywhere – it is so gross but funny as the boys whack her and she farts and cries at the same time – over and over!

End period was amazingly quiet with death stares coming left right and centre but I could handle that and for the first time I knew I had beaten Nasty Beth at her own game – and I felt quite proud!

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## 7 - Julia

I knew Dad was about to make an announcement as he was clearly looking uncomfortable.

"Violet ... I have something to tell you." He looked quite nervous about and his body language of scratching his head always told me so. He continued, "It has been a while since your mother and I separated ..." *God he was doing his worm squirm thing!* "Well! ... I have a lady friend." Of course I knew that! Boy he really thinks I'm that unobservant! They are not my G-strings I see in the laundry basket, as the ladies deodorant in the bathroom cupboard and I'm pretty sure Dad isn't wearing mascara! But I was quite interested where this was going.

"Now Violet ... no one's taking your mother away." *'Please do!'* I thought! "You know Julia from my work don't you?" and at last it was out there BRAVE BRAVE Dad! So I spoke up,

"You mean the one you've been sleeping with?" I looked him dead straight in the eyes and he had nowhere to go! He was such a pussy sometimes!

"What ... what do you mean?" he pleaded but answering a question with a question was a piss-weak way of turning the tables so I did too!

"Why are you telling me this Dad?" I felt my thick red eyebrows frown.

"Err – I want Julia to come to dinner tonight and ..." *spit it out Dad!* "- and sleep over ... in my room!" and the words screamed in my head - *I don't think so!*

"This is total bullshit!" there I said it as I felt his hand hit hard on my bottom ... what the f...?

"Never say that word again Violet!"

"What!" I was furious, "You never touch me again you can't ... you are not allowed too!" I stormed off crying he had NEVER hit me before - Mum had as she was the punisher with that iron hand of hers! But not Dad so he chooses now of all times when he announces he's bringing his trollop home so I have to accept and listen to them screw each other all night long! Gross out!

Julia did come for dinner but I never came out of my room – I hated her as her big boobs had been the one thing Mum could never compete with, with her flat floppy ones. I still remember the three of us being happy before all this crap that has gone down because of Julia and her big tits! So they ate their dinner laughing and giggling as I starved in my room replaying page 35!

**Page 35:** I am driving Dad's car as I glance in the rear vision mirror and both Dad and Julia are bound, gagged and sweating! I am wearing a chauffeur's outfit hat'n'all. I press the play button on the car stereo and the music blares out all four speakers and it is Dad's favourite - a real oldie he always plays – *Bad Moon Rising* and as I glance out into the night sky and the moon is full - it makes me grin. I arrive at the drive-in movies and we are the only car in the whole drive-in and I leave them in the backseat as I go get some popcorn. I return to the car and the smell of their sweat nearly puts me off my popcorn. I offer them some then I realise the gaffa tape across their mouths makes my offer pointless! The movie starts and we all watch the movies I've seen too many times and lived every day – the sad ones from long ago where Mum cries at night because she has caught Dad sneakily ringing Julia thinking both of us had never heard! Then the scene changes to Mummy being so angry she is on the phone to the lawyer drunk as a skunk or the day of death – the day Dad moved out ... and where am I? Not in this movie I am here looking him in the eye from the front seat and as he realises the pain he has caused. I pull my sawn-off shotgun from under the front seat and shoot Julia between the eyes point blank, right in front of him. And as her brains are splattered all over the shattered back windscreen he worm squirms and tries his best to escape! *I don't think so!*

"Violet you need to eat." And Dad interrupted my rereading by handing me a plate of his bland spaghetti bog and a can of lemonade as I sat on my bed. He never said anything else just ruffled my ginger locks and closed the door behind him as he left my room.

Saved by the Boll!

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## 8 - Mum

"You are a bastard! How dare you bring your slut over to stay when you have Violet!" Mum was pissed at Dad again.

"It's none of your Goddam Business Joan!" Now Dad's volcano was rising.

"Yeh well if you want to see your daughter then you'd better start acting like a father and not a teenager ... you idiot!" and Mummy slipped in her personal insult.

"Shut the fuck up Marie! I'm sick to death of your bitchiness and all your demands ... I'm not putting up with it anymore. Go fuck yourself!" and Dad turned away from her waving his hand above his head as he stormed off to the car while I stood there with my backpack in my hand. Mum gets the last word as always,

"See you in court Idiot!"

I suppose I was the one that brought this one on but I didn't want Julia Big Tits at Dad's house while I was there.

Mum did go overboard and ring her lawyer and it cost her (and Dad) a packet to relay letters back and forth for something that could've been settled by speaking nicely to each other but it was way too late for that.

I found Mum crying again and it had been quite a while and it didn't make any sense to me at all – she hated him! Why does her pain always place me amongst her suffering and she still hasn't got it – it wasn't my fault!

Life was even more miserable now as I wasn't allowed to go over to Dad's at all – and that was that! Mum wouldn't let me call him by confiscating my iPhone which I complained about profusely as it was my music too!

I disbelieved that I could ever want to go back to school early but these holidays were total shit!

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## 9 - Truth

“You’re dead meat!” and Nasty Beth pushed me to the oval’s ground as all her followers surrounded me. I stood up as I dusted off my checkered pleated school shirt as she lunged at me again.

I went down as Beth kicked me before T & V added their own foot punishment. This time they actually hurt me as I scrunched up into a protective ball. I cried and was more upset that they could see me cry like a baby,

“Leave me!” I got the words out but it was too late - I was already got.

As I walked home I noticed the blood on the front of my dress reliving the embarrassment of having to picking up all my scattered books one by one while Beth’s army all laughed and yelled abuse.

It made me realise how sad I really was. I had no friends and no fun at all and finally not even a pathetic Dad. Mum was either drunk or abusive, yelling at me for nothing. It made me come to the conclusion that I had not wanted to admit – I truly hated them all and their shitty wasted lives and how I was treated!

Maybe I’m going crazy or maybe I’m just angry but I’m only 13 and it’s not fair so I’ve decided to fix all this ... and by myself!

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## 10 - Timing

I knew what had to be done but it was all about the timing otherwise the plan would fizzle. I set about writing up my steps one at a time in the back of my science pad. I remember Mr. Johnson teaching us something about a flow chart where you start with one box and it leads to two then to four etc. It was imperative that my starting point was the most correct as I would write up the different paths and roads I could take to get to the finish line – Grandmas.

Starting the plan with Mum won the contest as that would lead me straight to Dad's (flow-box Daddy) possibly by the police or someone official but I guessed the police. Of course my first action plan was how to kill Mummy and I had to make this look like an accident! I could not afford to draw attention to me or I would be wasting my time (and Mummy's life).

My imagination was in overdrive and of course it was ridiculous as always e.g. how about throwing the plugged-in hairdryer into the bathtub while she was sleeping in it and soaking in a full scented bath? Or how about - rat-sack in her bacon and eggs as she drops dead in her breakfast? Or ask her to go hiking and when she wasn't looking, push her off the edge to fall to her bruised and bloodied death, hitting the rocks on her way down to Hell? They did give me a chuckle but would not pass in reality maybe the cliff one but too many variables (is that what you call it? Sure I've seen that on TV) so it had to be way more normal. And then I got it!

I was able to move through the steps now and document them meticulously with *variables* as well. I must be prepared for all twists and turns. I've seen enough crappy TV shows and DVD's to know what a plot diversion is - as well as a surprise ending. But there would be NO surprise ending for Violent Violet's story!

The plan of events was finished with my dates and – timing. So now I would go over and over and even practice in the mirror some of my *variable* script lines I'd prepared earlier.

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## 11 - Act 1

By 5:00pm Mum was drunk as usual staggering and slurring her speech.

“Violet ... be a love and pour me a drink please?” and as always I did but they were getting a little stronger - drink by drink. Mum passes out around ninish most Saturday nights but I needed her out a little earlier than this.

Mummy's lights were out at 8:15pm which was my first *variable* but wasn't that big a one! It still gave me one hour and fifty five minutes.

I made sure I got the first three steps of the act correct and the first one was administering just a little of her Eszopiclone sleeping pills broken down plus few of her cracked open Zoloft capsules. And as Mum got even more drunk her taste buds would become more and more nulled so I could increase the dosage, mixed in with the vodka, tomato juice, worchester and the pepper. Then before she was too out of it I would carry her (under her stagger) to her bedroom and set her up comfortable, so I could finish her off in there.

Her body was awkward but still had enough power left in her legs to take the weight off my shoulders as I guided her as best I could. She did bang the walls a few times and I thanked God that her bedroom was downstairs.

The TV was turned on as I propped her in a sitting position and I pressed play on the DVD remote to start her favourite show Glee. It was the Grease episode and her favourite so she was singing along in an out-of-tune unison with it! I kept the drinks coming and I expected her to be out but she was still going strong and it was 7:36pm on her digital clock-radio.

*Variable* number three was the twelve capsules – forensics would pick-up no capsules in her stomach (or vomit) so she would have to eat them! Mum ate like a bird at the best of times but to get her to eat my chicken and plastic cap sandwich was not going to be easy but it was a must! I quickly prepared her dinner and did my best to cover them with mustard and mayo. I knew it would taste disgusting but she was so out of it now and all I had to do was get it down her throat.

I was correct at presuming Mum wouldn't be hungry but I called her bluff by pausing her rendition of 'Greased Lightning' and demanded she eat something for me as I was worried she might be sick and needed something in her stomach (hmmm along with the full bottle of sleeping pills, a strip of anti-depressants and a bottle of vodka!).

The vomit came as she was passed out and I had turned her several times from her natural sleeping side position to the lying on her back position. I must make her choke on her vomit and fill her airway; she must not survive!

Mummy was dead at 9:46pm and her vomit smelt worse than I thought but now I must move on to the next act – part Dad!

I had taken steps for my alibi by hitting my own face with Mum's bedside lamp and strategically thrown it on the floor after placing it in Mum's hand for fingerprints. I had to make it look like she had got angry at me and hit me with it not just hand-smack but an over-the-top hit. Then I had placed the empty pill bottle and packet on her bedside table with her fingerprints again.

I went to my room and waited as I went over the night's events just in case I had left a loose end – but I hadn't as yet.

It was 10:10 exactly – time to ring Dad – let the games begin!

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## 12 - Cops

"Oh Dad ... I'm sorry ... " I ran to him as he got out the car, exactly the same time the police did in theirs and the ambulance pulled up seconds later so I kept my motor mouth act going so they could all hear. " – we had a fight, a big fight ... Mummy hit me," and I pointed to my bruised face and continued, "I went to my room ... and I heard the DVD playing back at the menu over and over and I went to turn it off and she was dead ... spew everywhere. I tried to wake her ... I tried Dad – I tried!" Dad cuddled me as one of the police (a man) rushed inside with the paramedic. The policewoman shook Dad's hand and leaned over and placed her hand on my shoulder as she spoke,

"Hey Sweetie, are you ok? It's all over now ... Dad's here with us." Her voice was sincere and I could see a tear in her eye – she was softer than her hardened police face showed and she stood back up straight and introduced herself to both of us.

"Hi I'm Detective Sgt. Kerrs ... please call me Sandy." She pointed to her police badge and number as Dad answered for him and me,

"Peter Pettingrow ... and this is my daughter Violet ... and my ex-wife Marie is ... is her mother ... who's inside." They shook hands as I held onto Dad as tight as I could. My body was shaking and they would all believe it was fear but in truth it was adrenalin – pure cold-blooded adrenalin!

"Sweetie ... I need to ask you some questions ... don't worry - Dad will be with you."

Sgt. Sandy was leaning again and her hand had re-found my shoulder as I stared straight into her blue eyes – she was still pretty even with her blonde hair tied in a bun poking out from under her police hat. I nodded. At that moment the other policeman came out the front door shaking his head, which I knew meant that Mum was dead - but I already knew THAT!

The questioning was what I had predicted so my answers were pre-written and acted out as planned. The argument, Mum's drinking, the pills and of course me finding her - *Shock! Horror!*

The night was long but I was a child so I was taken away from the death scene to Grandma Joan's to spend the night there while Dad cleaned up the mess – so to speak.

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### 13 - Ruby

I hadn't predicted or even thought about counseling or that it would follow soon after the trauma of a 13 year old finding her mother dead - covered in vomit! So the next day I had a visit from a fat negro lady called 'Ruby Rose'. I didn't like her – instantly! And she didn't like me – I could tell. So here was my first unpredicted *variable*.

"Violet, tell Ruby how choo are feeling?" her big brown eyes bulged out further than her fat cheeks and her voice was direct with her southern accent.

"I dunno?" I wasn't saying much at all

"Do choo feel sad or angry 'cause what cha Mumma's gone'n'done?" I just raised my shoulders and pulled my 'I dunno' face again. "Now girl, what choo'd been through ain't no ordinary thing choo know! Now 'tis ok to be feelin' sad'n'scared or lonely Honey!" her eyes scared me it was like they were x-ray or something – I didn't trust her so I thought it was best to act sad.

"I suppose I'm sad." My voice was quiet and I looked at the ground to break Ruby's eye hold on me.

"Go on girl ... tell me what choo feel ... as I said - choo'd allowed to be sad now."

"Well ..." I turned on the waterworks as I thought of my very last happy day – the day before Mum caught Dad in bed with Julia Big Tits in her own bed and we were all laughing playing cards together (and now I couldn't even remember the rules of Chasey Ace). I kept talking as my words were sad and gurgled, "Mum was angry at me for not doing the dishes ... and we had a fight and she hurt me," I pointed to my alibi bruise. "- and I stormed out of her room but I wasn't ... I wasn't angry for long ... I promise. Then I found her ... it was horrible!"

"Ok Violet ... that's good." She handed me a tissue and I blew my dribbling nose and wiped my tears. "So I hear choo'd been pretty sad since Mumma and cha Pappa broke up?" her head was cocked and her bottom lip was protruding.

"Who told you that?" How did she know? – I trusted her less,

"Ya pappa did ... says choo'd all been fighting lots."

I wanted out of here now as I'd had other things more important to be attending to. Ruby wrote notes in her diary as I looked around the room doing my best not to show her any body language – I'd had enough!

“Violet – Honey ... I will be seeing choo’d in a week and we’ll talk some more ok?” *What!* I didn’t want to see her again – never! I slipped up as my reaction was obvious on my face – as it screwed up – and Ruby wrote more in her diary. “Ok Honey that’s it for today so choo’d call me if choo ever need to talk ... chust talk!” Ruby handed me her business card and I put it my purple blouse pocket.

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## 14 - Funeral

Mum's was my first funeral I ever had to attend as I usually ended up at someone's place for the day being too young so it was an experience – a good experience actually. Mum was in an open coffin and I haven't seen her look that pretty in a long time as my final memories of her were always miserable, drunk or angry but here she looked peaceful.

Dad and I were sitting at the front with Nanna Lynia (Mum's mother) who had flown all the way from France to be here. I hadn't seen her in a year and she was a nasty old bitch! I think she liked it when my parent's broke up as I heard her whinging about Dad to Mum heaps! I hated the old crow and the way she treated me like I was her servant – *'Oh Violet please get me a cuppa tea - you know Nanna's old!'* and so I would then I'd get, *'Violet where's the chocolate biscuits? Just like you're mother – only do half the job!'* I used to feel my head explode so I had a special page in my book for her - Page 19 and here it is!

"Would you like a cuppa Nanna Lynia ... with Tim Tams?"

"Oh child that would be nice." And I'd ask her this while she sat on the recliner in the backward position with her smelly feet dangling over the footrest, while I removed her stinky shoes. After taking her stinky shoes outside I'd make and bring her, her tea and biscuits.

"How about a nice foot massage Nanna?" I'd ask with a cheesy grin.

"Just maybe you are better than that stupid daughter of mine after all! Yes love that would be nice." So I would get the foot cream and commence rubbing and massaging the old bitch's feet. But what she wouldn't know is that I would drop in a few of Mum's crushed up sleeping pills in her tea and when she'd fall asleep from the pills and the massage, then the fun would begin! I'd put on Mum's toilet cleaning gloves (the big rubber green ones) and Dad's gas mask from his tool shed (that is still in the garage) and pour hydrochloric acid into a rubber bucket. Then go to the laundry and grab Mum's wooden bristled scrubbing brush and now I would be ready for Nanna's special foot massage!

I forgot I was at the funeral when I burst out laughing imagining Nanna waking up with just skeleton feet, screaming and carrying on like she always does.

"Violet! Violet! Ring the ambulance!" and I walk in grinning holding up the big bottle of industrial strength pool acid in one hand the scrubbing brush in the other and still wearing the gloves as I say, *"I don't think so!"*

Nearly everyone was crying at the funeral, even Grandma Joan which was the only person I cared about. Dad was crying which I didn't understand at all as I thought he was over Mum but I was still glad he didn't bring Big Tits here, at least he showed Mum some respect.

I nearly did laugh again when the priest spoke as his voice was very funny like he was trying to do a ventriloquist voice – surely that wasn't real!

I hated the singing though; I refused! Besides I didn't know those stupid church songs expect the Saints marching home one.

Nanna Lynia's eulogy speech was total bullshit! It was the first time I'd ever heard her say anything nice about Mum. The perfect daughter my arse! Why can't people speak the truth? Why not tell it as it was Nanna – *'My daughter was a drunken miserable, no-good mother who never lived up to my expectations! She lost her husband as she was so anal about everything that never mattered!'* what got me was Nanna would've had no problem at all telling Mum all this to her face but now she was dead she would lie! They would all lie! Surely God or the Devil sees through this - and as bullshitty as I do!

Watching the coffin descend into the ground was awesome – *Wow!* It was way better than the movies simply because you knew who was inside and would be food for worms very soon. Her headstone was nice but again total bullshit! 'Here lies Marie EveLynia Pettingrow' with bullshit thrown in 'loving wife and devoted mother' and the two things she wasn't - was etched for all eternity – this and all the lies, (I'm gonna say it) FUCKING annoyed me!

I couldn't believe that as soon as the funeral is over they throw a party (at Grandma Joan's house) and get drunk! That's absurd – totally crazy! Let's all remember Marie Pettingrow formerly Marie Wilson – wife, mother, daughter, friend, co-worker and while we do - let's get drunk, call it a WAKE and party-on! Just FUCKING crazy! Who made up these rules?

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## 15 - Visitor

Two days passed and Dad told me I was getting a visit from Fat Ruby again. She irritated me with her mispronunciation of the J's and Y's as C's – truly how hard is it? Asians I except with language pronunciation difficulties but Ruby sounded like she just got off the cotton farm! (yeh I've seen a slave movie on TV and I know how they speak).

"So how choo'd been Honey?" her bulgy eyes were cutting me up like last time while all I could think about was that terrible dress she was wearing and I wondered if maybe she did live on the cotton farm – it was hideous! All saggy and beige coloured with a horrible burgundy neck ribbon she looked like a giant sack of potatoes! I answered her question

"Shitty actually!" I decided to tell Ruby the truth!

"Now child ... you can tells Ruby why." And the sack of potatoes leaned forward and looked me eye to eye while she listened intently.

"Lies! I hated the lies they told at the funeral."

"Go on Violet."

"Mummy wasn't a good mother ... she was a shitty one!" I felt the tears well inside me.

"T'is okay to cry Honey ... cha Pappa said that choo'd never cried at the funeral. Let it out Sugar and you'll feel better ... and Ruby's telling cha the truth!" I couldn't help myself as the tears flowed so did my mouth.

"Nanna Lynia lied about how much she loved Mummy ... so did Dad in his speech ... and the headstone at her grave ... it's all bullshit! Mum and Dad hated each other and I believe they wished each other was dead! Nanna was always putting Mum and Dad down, she is total bitch ... I hate her! I'm glad she had gone back to France already."

Ruby was listening quietly as she scribbled notes into her diary then she put down the pad and hugged me. It was weird and freakish so I pushed her away which startled the fat cow. Her face changed as my tears cut their flow instantly and I stood up announcing.

"Leave me alone you weirdo ... I'm going!" and I left the kitchen in Dad's unit where we were and ran upstairs to my room slamming the door behind me. I put my

iPhone on play and listened to some Christina to make me feel happy. I'd had enough of feeling angry and sad for now.

At dinner Dad told me Ruby had left and was worried about me but I laughed and out loud and then I got in trouble for calling her a stupid fat sack of brown potatoes!

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## 16 - Truce

I never went to school for two weeks and on the last week-end before returning to school Julia did come over to stay again except this time I would eat with them both. It was a very important part of my plan that Dad and Julia Big Tits would believe I was accepting of their perverted relationship.

"So Violet, your Dad tells me you listen to a lot of music. Who's your favourite singer?" Julia B.T. did her best to pry some info from me so I complied.

"I love Christina ... Pink and my favourite is Rihanna." I smiled as I twirled a forkful of Dad's routinely Saturday night spag bog.

"What about Justin Bieber ... do you like him?" she was trying.

"No way ... I hate boys!" I put my finger in my mouth with my tongue protruding.

Dad was smiling and laughing lots as I think he had been waiting for this night for a very long time. I played along as best as I could even though looking at her perfect breasts reminded me of what Dad would be doing with them later – disgusting!

I went to bed at 10:30pm and heard them making their revolting sex noises by midnight; I nearly vomited!

My iPhone alarm vibration went off at 2:30 am and all was quiet so it was time for act 3 and my adrenalin kicked in. I reached under my bed and lifted the shoebox up to sit between my legs on the bedspread/doona. I opened the shoebox I had covered with cut-up pictures of popstars and lifted it out and it was beautiful – Dad's forgotten revolver from Mum's house!

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## 17 - Act 3

I quietly tip-toed to Dad's room holding the revolver with both hands; it was heavy. I knew I would have to be accurate and quick I would only get four shots maximum, or one of them would take me down. I was buzzing as this act was the most exciting to date and the feel of the gun was so powerful.

Julia B.T. never stood a chance when she saw Dad's brains splattered over the bed and then her from a point blank shot (I only need one for him). She was crying in disbelief as she sat there frozen with the barrel pointed at her third eye from my kneeling position on the opposite side of the bed. I pulled the trigger around Dad's finger grip on the gun and her head exploded over the curtains as her body slumped backwards and fell out of the bed.

I had to move quickly if this act was to continue, so quickly let go of the gun in Dad's right hand and watched his arm drop to its natural position – gun in hand. A position to make it appear he had shot himself through the mouth (which I had done as I knew he always slept on his back snoring, catching flies) my only variable here was his body was in lying position when he shot himself but hey I could live with that as they would believe he still did it! His grip held the murder weapon and most of the gun residue.

I sprinted back to my room and took off my latex disposable gloves and the towel around my right arm. I quickly changed my nightie. I would have not worried about the blood on it but the brain matter did! I knew an instinct on finding your father with his brains blown out would be to run to him to save him - if you could? Blood would be everywhere then! So I would - and I would get it on my new nightie then. I hid the gloves and the brown splattered nightie in a clip seal bag under the floor of my schoolbag and I would get rid of them at the first possible convenience.

Now it was time to play out the surprised daughter routine so I ran to the Dad's room and swung open the door! I ran to Dad's bloody body and grabbed it by the shoulders and shook it. I had enough blood on my nightie to look like the one I had worn all night. I ran out and downstairs to ring emergency services ASAP (I had to assume that they had already been contacted re the gunshots by neighbours and would be on their merry way) - so I did within only a few minutes after my kill.

What would a girl do after finding her father and his girlfriend's head blown out? A perfect place would be in the corner of the lounge room near the front door, huddled in a ball with my head and legs tightly tucked between my arms, waiting for the Ambulance and Police. I needed to be crying a lot so before I sat down I mixed some salt and luke-warm water and rubbed my dipped fingers into my eyes. It stung like all hell! But I could feel my eyes burn instantly; they were red! I tipped out the saltwater and rinsed the glass and left it in the sink with the rest of the dirty dishes.



They found me like this approximately seven minutes later (as I was counting the seconds). It was Detective Sgt. Sandy who found me in the ball of acted fear. She grabbed me and ran me outside as her partner got the lucky job (again) of viewing the murder/suicide scene.

I told Sandy my made up story with the cover-up tears to help with believability, especially about the fight between Dad and Julia during dinner and me overhearing Dad (in his room) accusing her of having an affair with someone. I said I heard the name Ben Butler. Yeh Ben Butler I had found Julia B.T.'s facebook page (went to her school with her) and she had befriended Trudie London (me remember) and her friend Ben Butler had accepted Trudie's friendship – it was all too easy and even if it wasn't true. So I knew he fancied her and that they had conversed – a lot!

Sandy looked like a tough cop, but maybe because I was just a child, her eyes welled up when I replayed my running in vision (which was partly true) and finding them both dead with heads blown apart.

Forensics arrived as I was driven away to the station in the squad car (with my backpack of clothes and hidden evidence beneath) with Sandy holding on to me for dear life. I was expecting Grandma Joan to be there waiting for me but it wasn't – it was fat Ruby!

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## 18 - Questions

"Tell me child. Are choo okay?" her brown eyes were there in my face again.

"I think so." I kept looking down and then across to Sandy.

"Can you tell us what happened again Violet?" Now Sandy spoke as she touched my left shoulder.

"I've told you ... I was asleep and I woke when I heard a shot then another one ... about 10 seconds later." I started the waterworks and continued, "Then I ran to Dad's room and I could see Julia on the floor and all her blood was on the curtains ... and Dad was lying there ... his head was all open and horrible and ..." I started crying hard as Sandy comforted me.

"It's all right Violet - Sweetie ... we understand."

I looked at Ruby and she was stern and unemotional.

"Go on child." She demanded

"Well Dad's blood was all over the bed and up the bedhead and I ran to him to see if he was alive but ... the back of his head was open and empty ... it was horrible!"

"It's all right Sweetie." Sgt. Sandy touched my left shoulder again.

Rubes' fat chocolate face was still in stern mode and hadn't even battered an eyelid when she shocked Sandy – but not me.

"Did choo kill them Violet?"

"Hey! Hey! Hey!" and Sandy came straight to my rescue.

"This is over! That's it!" She stood up grabbed my hand and virtually dragged me out of the interview room as I glared back at Ruby who's eyes were watching mine – she knew, of course she knew!

"Sweetie do you want a Coke ... or something. Grandma's on the way." Sandy's eyes were honest and kind and she did her best to change the subject so I played along.

"A Coke please ... can I have an Oreo bar too? I'm a little hungry." I pointed to c23 of the dispenser machine next to the drink one Sandy was already dropping the quarters in.

I ate my biscuit bar and sipped on my Coke as Sandy went back into the interview room and I could hear Sandy screaming at Ruby. It was then I heard Ruby's voice loud and clear.

"She ain't no innocent little girl, I'm tellin' cha. She's a cold blooded killer! And now I believe she probably killed her poor mother too ... there's something wrong with her! Mark my goddam words! Be-Jesus! Open your eyes Detective Sergeant!"

"You're outta her NOW!" Sandy opened the door and Ruby grabbed her suitcase, stood up and walked past me, eyeballing my eyes as best she could and whispered to me under her breath,

"Choo's ain't no little girl ... choo's the Devil himself!"

Grandma Joan picked me up around an hour later and I was glad to get out of the Cop Shop and at long last I was with her.

The one oversight I hadn't thought of was - Grandma's misery. Of course I could contend with Dad's death but I forgot all about her son – her only son.

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## 19 - Hibernation

Three months had passed and I had returned to school and even Nasty Beth left me alone re my parent's death (for the first few weeks anyway). Dad's and Julia's death was finally closed off as murder/suicide as I had hoped. Forensics in T.V. – NCIS or CSI or even Cold Case seemed to be able to solve the most ridiculous of crimes yet I was amazed that Dad and Julia's death was wound up so quickly. How could they not tell that Dad was shot before Julia? Just goes to show – DON'T believe everything you see on television! And being the only 13 year old daughter of the victim was the best alibi anyone could ever get!

Dad and Julia made the news this time and I was the talk of the town – *'poor little girl with no parents!'*

Grandma Joan was still quiet but doing her best to get over Dad's death. I was happy for the first time in such a long while. I knew it was best to lay low and put my final act on hold otherwise it would draw attention straight back to me. Ruby was taken off my case and new lady was assigned to me on Sandy's recommendation – Georgina Edwards. She was easy peasy to fool with a tear or two so counseling days were just part of game. Sandy had taken a shine to me (maybe because she was there at both my parent's death scenes) and visited me every now and then, with a packet of Oreos and a can of Coke (it was our special thing). She was really nice – I liked her.

I felt like a snake in hibernation, hiding and awaiting for the warmer weather to return to hunt and before I could finish my story – and the ending had already been written.

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## 20 - Trip

*Huntingwood* was Brentridge's camp of choice and as we were the 7<sup>th</sup> graders now; it was our turn to go. Grandma Joan tried to talk me out of it but I convinced her I just wanted to spend time with my friends – and did I have any? *'I don't think so!'*

Four days away from here was just what I needed – but not to rest – but to kill! Nasty Beth and the bitches were going down ... for good! I knew I would have to take a bit of punishing from them before the outcome but it would all be worth it!

"Now Violet ... remember to ring me every night," Grandma looked worried, "- and if you have any problems you tell Mr. Johnson ... understand?" I nodded and hugged her tightly as I did my best to comfort her with my words,

"Grandma ... it's gonna be fun ... stop worrying!" She hugged me back and kissed my forehead as I grabbed my bags and crossed the car-park to the waiting bus.

I could see Nasty Beth, Tracy & Vanessa were already on the bus up the back and Beth was already learing death-stares at me through the window when Mr. Johnson grabbed my bags and told me to get on the bus. As I entered the aisle the bitches were all giggling as Beth run her finger from the left side to the right side of her fat neck and mouthed her cut throat silent threat, 'You're Dead!'

I found two empty seats by themselves and one became mine and was pretty sure no one would want to sit next me but I was wrong ... as Mr. Johnson did. The attempt at small talk was quite annoying!

"So Violet, have you ever been on camp before?" Oh my God! Is he that dumb? He knows only grade sevens go on camp! Have I been in grade 7 before? And he was the teacher so I wanted to scream, *'No you stupid dumb arse idiot!'* but instead I smiled and answered,

"No." and then he asked more questions!

"Do you like swimming?" I gave in and just answered him.

"I can't swim." I looked downwards as this answer made me feel weak or like I'd done something wrong - like I'd peed my knickers. So I twiddled my thumbs as my feet touched the bus floor with my tippy toes.

"Didn't you do swimming lessons at school?" His ugly face had an eyebrow raised as he tried to get me to give him eye contact.

"No!" I looked at him now and eyeballed him as Ruby Sack of Potatoes used to do to me! It worked as he patted my leg as he broke my stare and sat back in his seat. Now this was a total lie as I was a great swimmer but here was a *variable* in my favour - as it may be needed as an alibi!

The trip took about six hours with two toilet breaks and a half hour stop for lunch at a truck stop which unfortunately for me was a perfect opportunity for Beth's bitch fest to inflict some pain! I got cornered in the toilet.

"Let me out of here ... please." I asked nicely but the three bitches had the doorway blocked as I finished washing my hands.

"Be warned Red ... you won't be having any fun at camp, mark my words mole ... you're going down!" then Beth's two bitches grabbed one of my arms each restraining me as HEAD BITCH took a free shot straight to my stomach. Then Beth pulled my hair as I fell to the ground gasping for air, as they exited the ladies, laughing with the final words I heard from Beth, "See ya Bitch!"

It was obvious I had been crying when I got back on the bus but I refused to let them know they actually got to me. So I sat back in my seat put on my headphones and with a zealous enthusiasm went through the act of Beth's drowning.

I found my inner smile as I pictured Beth gasping for air as my hand held her face under the water, splashing fruitlessly as her body was about to give in. I knew for a fact she couldn't swim very well as I had heard the boys joking about it in lunch break months ago and that they were planning to play a joke of their own on her at camp. It was too perfect an opportunist window for me to pass up. I knew I had to kill three birds with one stone so framing T & V for Beth (their best friend's) accidental death was as good as killing them. It would haunt them for the rest of their bitchy lives! And the bonus would be for the boys as well - as they would always remember their part as the original instigators of the dunking prank.

Overhearing the boys planning this on Beth in the schoolyard was where my original plan had stemmed from. Since the peeing in the bottle prank gone wrong day the boys and the bitches hadn't got along at all! The boys were the slightly sympathetic ones to my family loss and actually shared a few passing words to me every now and then.

I knew I had what they would want and an exchange would be made. I had swiped a bottle of Grandma's scotch so I would offer Jimmy and his boys the deal of a lifetime – and use it for my revenge when required!

Mr. Johnson sat down next to me as the bus resumed its course on the highway. I kept my eyes closed so he couldn't see the redness from my tears until he

tapped me on the knee which startled me and I opened my eyes as he offered me some M&Ms.

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## 21 - Camp

We arrived at Huntingwood about 4.00pm and it was just as it looked as in all the school photos in the office hall. I could see the cabins and the lake with the pedal boats and canoes on the water's edge.

Miss Davis was first off the bus followed by Mrs. Green (a volunteer mum) and then Mr. Johnson who was bellowing instructions to us all,

"Now I don't want any stupidity ... or else they'll be no campfire tonight!" It somehow worked as the bus was dead silent. He went on, "Now from the back to the front we will exit ... WALKING!!! NO RUNNING!"

Of course Beth was first to stand up from the backseat, the other bitches were too scared to – it was the BITCH order of things. As Beth walked by and I had moved across to the aisle seat, I never saw it coming – gum in the hair! Fucking Bitch!

Lucky for me in her haste to gum me, she'd not got a good hold of my hair so I had it out before it was my turn to stand. Mr. Johnson had us all assembled for our group photo before we dissipated to our two respective groups (one boy group and one girl group).

Huntingwood had a couple of guides here a man and a woman – Jesse and Toulia. They both seemed overly excited about us being there.

The first bit of luck was that the girls group was under Miss Davis which unluckily included the Bitches of course. But Miss Davis wasn't stupid, she knew we never got on so I would be protected while she was there.

The cabin held twenty bunk beds and I waited to see where Beth chose so I could be as far away from her as possible and she chose the end so I believed she was thinking the same. I was smart and picked the lower bunk close to Miss Davis'. Judy and Bobbi Emmers (the twins) were next to me on the other side and no one took my top bunk which suited me fine.

The afternoon was spent exploring the grounds but for me it was just a little more than that – I needed to find a kill zone.

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## 22 - Campfire

Sitting around the campfire that night was actually fun and all the teachers told a scary story each as the screams and shrills of all the girls (and a few boys) there sent shivers up my back and causing all to laugh. Sleepy hollow was told in brief by Mr. Johnson and he did quite a good job. Then it was our turn and we were asked to put up our hand if someone had a scary story – so I did ... and there was silence!

I could see Beth and her two loyal subjects snickering as I stood up. Miss Davis' face was beaming as I knew she knew I had it in me – she was the only one! I cleared my throat, death-stared straight at Nasty Beth and started.

"Once upon a time there was a fat girl with dark hair," and the boys pointed at Beth as she glared and they screamed out laughing with a *ssshhhh* from Mr. Johnson, I continued, "- she had NO friends at all in her father's land but she believed she did have two – a slimy toad and a crow!" And the boys erupted again as they pointed to T & V. "The fat girl with dark hair called herself *Princess* ... as she believed she was, yet she was far from it for she was SO ugly! Princess lived with her evil father the Wizard of DEATH!" and as soon as I said the emphasized the word death - all screamed and wriggled and laughed which made me smile, I bit the toasted marshmallow that was left on my stick, that I was using as my story-telling conductor's baton. I resumed where I left off, "Her father was the only person that truly loved her in her fat miserable life! Princess was sick to DEATH (they all screamed and laughed again) of being lonely so she asked her evil father to make her two friends – the slimy toad and the crow into girls so she would have someone to play with." I hesitated and bit my marshmallow again as the boys were egging me to go on. "So the evil wizard did just that. And right before her very eyes, were two little and very ugly girls – even uglier than her! One had warts all over her face while the other was hairy – black hairy or feathery looking with blackest crow-like eyes!" Jimmy screamed out pointing at the bitches,

"Toad Tracy and Vanessa the crow!"

"Shut up Dork-head!" retaliated Tracy without Beth's permission.

"That's quite enough!" ordered Mr. Johnson and it worked as they were quiet again. "Please carry-on Violet," and he frowned a warning to the boys including all of them - even the ones that weren't in Jimmy's clan.

"Princess named her friends Toady and Crowessa." Now I could see Miss Davis smirking looking downwards as Mr. Johnson surrendered to the boys' defeat. The BITCHES weren't happy! So I directed my attention from them to the boys. "The three girls walked their father's land as if they were royalty but they were so ugly, no one could even look at them and the town was talking about the 3 ugliest girls of the

land! The evil wizard of DEATH was embarrassed by this and demanded Princess keeps her two new friends locked in her room.” I could see the boys were waiting patiently so I chucked in a bit of gore to keep them enthused. “One day Princess woke up and could not see – she was blind so she felt her eyes ... and her fingers went deep into her empty bloody eye sockets ... they were gone!” this got a little scream from the girls and chuckle from the boys. “Princess went to scream but only a croak came out and as she felt her face, she could feel warts all over it! She could not see or talk but she could listen as she heard her two friends tell her,

‘I was a beautiful toad and she was a happy crow so now you are the ugly hairy toad with warts!’ and then Crowessa spoke,

‘Your eyes tasted wonderful ... so juicy!’ then Princess mouthed out silently the words that they both could lip read easily,

‘Why have you done this to me? You are my friends.’ Toady answered her.

‘Because you changed us from what we were just to become you’re ugly sad friends and just because you were lonely. You never were our friend!’ and the Princess tried to cry but she had no eyes or voice so her tears were deep and silent inside. Toady and Crowessa tore her apart limb by limb ... and ate her piece by piece!” The boys cheered! I took a quick glance around the campfire and all were smiling as the Emmers twins hugged each other. I finished off my story,

“And finally her evil wizard father found her butchered body or what little remained scattered throughout her bedroom and he found the two friends sitting there with blood stained lips and their clothes soaked in Princess’ blood but they were just sitting there smiling. The Toad’s warts were gone and Crowessa’s black crow eyes were now blue and bright as she had exchanged them with Princess’ and not eaten them at all – it was a lie! And they were both beautiful! They had stolen only the beautiful parts from her and left the ugly bits for eating! No more would he the evil wizard of ... DEATH (I got my last jump) have to be embarrassed by his UGLY daughter’s looks, so he adopted Toady and Crowessa as his new pretty daughters and paraded them proudly through-out the land. The town’s people loved the two prettiest in the land daughters. Did the wizard miss his only true Princess? No – she was ugly inside as much as the outside ... so he didn’t - THE END!” I was cheered and applauded by all except you know who!

The boys were giving me the thumbs up as I sat back down on the log and I was blessed with a bonus that I hadn’t seen coming as from that moment on, Nasty Beth had a new nickname from the boys – *Princess* and the two bitches were now stuck with *Toady* and *Crowessa*!

After the campfire stories a game of hide and seek was played and Princess, Toady and Crowessa would be making a special point of finding me but I had a surprise for them too – it was silver, shiny and stabs like a ... BITCH!

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## 23 - Confession

"Wanna try me?" and I had the knife at Beth's throat as she stood perfectly still against the tree in the dark. "Now *Princess* here's a nice present ... especially from me - to you."

My imagination was working overtime as I waited in the dark for Beth to come my way and find me and I wanted so desperately to have the upper foot (or threat) in our relationship. I knew she would be the one for sure and I was ready! But I was wrong. It wasn't Beth but Vanessa who came around the corner, crying ... which put my knifing game on hold.

It was clear by Vanessa's crying that something was more than normally wrong sitting right here. I hid the knife quickly behind my back and slipped it into the elastic of my pants and covered my shirt over it. Vanessa saw me and she fell on her knees and was still crying, then she looked up at me and moaned in emotional pain,

"It was Mr. Johnson ... he ... he," and Vanessa was a mess, her nose was dripping and she looked terrible, "hurt me ... he used his finger!" It was clear that she wasn't making this up, yet it had only been an hour since the campfire stories. I sat down beside her and put my arm around her.

"What do you mean he used his finger?" I was pretty sure I knew what she meant but I couldn't believe my ears and as she cried she pointed down there so I had to ask, "How ... where?"

"He saw me hiding behind the canoes and called me over ... and," Vanessa was sobbing hard again so I held her tighter and she continued, "- he told me he had the best hiding spot where no one would find me." I was listening intently now. "Mr. Johnson asked me to follow him to his cabin ... then he told me to hide under the covers on his bed ... I didn't know!" I couldn't help but to feel sickened by what I knew had happened - by that filthy old man!

I felt sorry for her as she continued her sobbing and told me how scared she was when he hopped into bed with her. I asked her why she didn't get out? But she explained how petrified she was, so had laid there while he lay next to her with his dirty thing exposed in his hand - and then he put his finger down there! And as I had predicted Beth found me but there would be no knife in the throat, well not tonight.

"What's wrong Ness?" and I looked at Beth straight in the eyes as I widened mine as she knelt down to talk to Vanessa. "What's wrong ... tell me!" and I should have guessed it would've been her turn to glare at me - as if I did it! Yeh if it was her here first she would've had something to glare about.

"It was Johnson." I spoke for Vanessa as she was even a bigger mess now she had seen Beth. So as I, Beth needed confirmation of her suspicion. I replayed Vanessa's story as simple and as straight as I could. "The dirty bastard tricked her into hiding in his cabin ... and then he used his filthy finger on her. And then I demonstrated with my hand and one finger my disgusting image that was stuck in my mind.

"This is shit! Did this really happen Ness?" And now Vanessa was able to look at her and she nodded with a sad clown's frown confirming my brief explanation. Beth was about to ask more when Tracy and the boys found us.

After re-explaining the events we all sat around comforting Vanessa who was still suffering shock. Tracy suggested we go and tell Miss Davis but both Beth and I thought this wasn't such a good idea. Everyone knew that they had dated and we all knew it was a little more truth than just oval gossip. Yeh, and who would believe us over them? It wasn't me but Beth who suggested what we all wanted to do.

"I wish we could cut his balls off!" I was amazed at the reaction and the flared-up anger from the boys as the girls so I couldn't help myself ... but I could help this situation.

"I have the knife!" and I drew out the stashed flick knife and clicked the blade out into stabbing mode! "We can do it ... but only if you want to?" There was dead silence as I had flabbergasted them all - then Beth spoke up.

"We can fix this ourselves ... Ness?" She leaned over and pulled Vanessa into her cuddle zone and added, "What do you want to do Ness? What do you think we should do? Should we tell Miss or fix this ourselves?" Vanessa broke down again,

"I don't want anyone knowing. Not Miss, Mum or the kids at school, I wouldn't be able to look at them. This is not fair ... I hate him ... I hate him!"

"So what do we do know?" asked Jimmy.

We all sat around in a circle of silence for what we knew was the calm before our storm, brainstorming our plan of revenge from beginning to end. We knew we had to go back to the cabins and all agreed we needed to sleep on this and we would meet back here tomorrow before breakfast and for us all to bring our anger for Mr. Johnson's downfall to Hell.

It was imperative tonight's priority was about taking care of Vanessa.

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## 24 - Planning

We all arrived at the canteen for breakfast one by one with Beth and Tracy holding Vanessa's hand. They sat her down and fluttered around as dirty Mr. PERVERT walked in like nothing had happened. The other kids that were oblivious to the previous night's events helped us to hide our faces of disgust and disapproval just by blending in amongst theirs. I took the opportunity to eyeball the monster and send him the message - he was going down. He caught my glance and just stared at me then couldn't help but glance over at Vanessa and then he caught Beth's and Tracy's as well. Now he wasn't quite sure if we knew or not and that is exactly what I wanted. I wanted the sicko to worm squirm and let the panic and paranoia set in ... what was coming next – nothing or the authorities? But he would never guess it would be us!

We all agreed to meet at the big tree before breakfast for our final meeting and run through before our first planned outing of the week – the trek race.

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## 25 - Game on

I had packed my back-pack for the trek race and placed the half drunken stolen bottle of scotch in there as well. I looked across the end of the cabin and Beth and the bitches were nodding as they were packed as well. We all knew our part now and we all had swigged a mouthful of straight scotch to seal the deal ... we were a team - a revenge team.

I think Mr. Johnson showed his concern when we all joined his line before anyone else could, except Vanessa who joined Miss Davis' but what could he do? Remove us and for what reason ... oh yeh paedophilia! I knew his suspicions would keep us close by, he wouldn't want word getting out ... yet did he realise that this is exactly what we wanted too?

Miss Davis was my only worry as she was obviously curious why not one of the other two Bitches were in her line and in his but I smiled and grabbed Beth's arm to her horror showed her we were best buds now. NOT! Beth played along while Vanessa was under the care of the Emmer's twins.

The Trek was a game between the five teams of ten (including leader) to reach Pilson's Point grab the first position RED flag and return and place it at the campfire and yet the prize for coming last was a beauty – Mr. Johnson. We all had or maps and compasses and it was a canoe start up stream for a mile around the bending river, then disembark through the forest (carrying the canoes for five minutes, to cut through and back to the river upstream for another leg, then leave the canoes for the uphill climb to Pilson's point and then reverse it all! Easy-Peasy! It was Jimmy whose big brothers Luke and Taylor had done this camp over the last three years before (and nothing ever changed on these camps) so he had heard from them what to expect – this helped our plan heaps.

All five teams were waiting for the starter gun and there it was. We were off and running to the row of two man canoes at the riverbank. Tommy Redmunds and David Wellings were in our team with skinny Judy Granger. They were just a little more enthusiastic about the race then us and made it to the canoes as the rest of the teams but we were in NO rush! We needed to be at the back of the pack and we never needed any unannounced witnesses turning up.

Mr. Johnson was doing his best to hurry us up and we got there but we fumbled our way into the canoes. Jimmy's boys could've won an academy award with their stumbling performance as Beth and I climbed into our canoe together – and I reflected back as only yesterday I would've had her in this same canoe, but with a knife in HER back. It made me chuckle the funny way life's little roads divert you in completely different path (as Beth's). Twenty four hours ago she was going to make

my life misery and I planned to take hers away and now here we were - a team – *quick twitter that one* LOL!

The rest of the teams were way ahead of us upstream and disappearing around the corner. Mr. Pervert was yelling from his and skinny Judy's canoe at us (the revenge teams), as we were lagging behind to catch up to their two leading canoes. Tracy was in with Jimmy while Bobby and Phillip were in the other one and Beth and I were last in the water. I had used my clumsy no-hoper last pick of the bunch image to paddle totally out of sync with Beth and we were both cackling – *Yikes!* We were having fun!

"Hurry up you lot or we'll lose 'em!" Johnson's face was getting redder by the second and he was getting pissed off. "Stop bloody stuffing around ... I've never lost one of these races in the past four years ... and you lazy lot aren't going to break that!" I couldn't help but think - *Oh winning! I don't think so!*

We all caught up to them at the first bend and the water was still with no current at all, the water was still and glass-like except for the paddlers breaking its perfect form for only a few ripples before it returned to its flat level. Both sides of the river were now just masses of green trees and the only sounds were our paddles plus an odd bird call or a dragonfly buzzing by. No one spoke as we paddled and it was kind of eerie. The six of us were communicating only by eye contact and yet it was loud and clear – IT was coming.

We reached the destination point for the next leg and no one else was here and we knew this was our moment; this was our lee-way. Tracy had been designated to take care of Tommy, David and skinny Judy and we knew this was an important detail of our exercise, to get them out of the picture. We pulled our canoes out of the water and we were supposed to carry them above our heads with Mr. Johnson first out of the water with Judy bellowing instructions and that was when Jimmy fell on the rocks.

"Mr. Johnson, Mr Johnson ... I think Jimmy is having a fit!" yelled Beth and he was rolling on the ground convulsing and foaming at the mouth. Tracy was hysterical as the other three were frozen as we surrounded Jimmy.

"Get help Sir ... we need to get help!" I eyeballed the pervert and his face was white and I don't think my words registered as he watched Jimmy convulse so I pushed him, "Sir we need help!"

He nodded as I could sense him going through his mind's first aid training of what to do and then he started to react



“Shit-shit ... oh shit! Jimmy?” His face was white as Jimmy kept his convulsing act up so I spoke up.

“Sir I think we need help! They (pointing to Tracy, Tom, David & Judy) can catch up the rest! Miss Davis was a nurse Sir!”

Now I knew he wouldn't be thinking that rationally of my suggestion as what would that do – but simply buy us some private time with him! Johnson was holding his head with both hands as we placed Jimmy on his side in the recovery position and to make sure he wasn't choking on his tongue (as if) as he continued his convulsions in spectacular form. I must admit it was an award-winning piece of acting but Jimmy's older brother Luke was an epileptic so Jimmy had first-hand experience of this and everyone knew Luke had them at school so it was plausible that this would run in the family – well Johnson was convinced. He spoke,

“Okay ... run as fast as you can and find Miss Davis – quick!” And Tracy had her bit totally under control as the four were off and running together.

“Jimmy ... can you hear me? We need to clear his tongue. Violet can you ...” Johnson's voice pulled up immediately when he realised I had the knife at his throat as Soldier Bobby quickly grabbed his left arm and Soldier Phillip his right.

Beth yelled ‘NOW!’ - as Jimmy quit his acting skills by pulling the empty scotch bottle out of his back pack and smashed it on the rocks. He had it in his face as Johnson was on his knees in shock and disbelief.

“What the heck ... what is going on?” Johnson was eyeing us one by one but our gazes were strong and steady – we had the upper hand here and he knew it. Nasty Beth as usual took the lead,

“Listen here pervert ... we know what you did to Vanessa!” Beth's voice was strong and sounded repulsed as she hand gestured the boys to bring his hands together behind his back so she could bound his hands and feet with the zip ties which had I conveniently brought for Beth of all people (not that she knew). He was starting to get angry so I pushed the blade just a little deeper into his jugular and he submitted.

“You kids are fucking crazy ... you wait ‘til we get back to camp!” Sir's bluff didn't worry me so I turned the table.

“Who said you're going back to camp ... you fucking sicko!” I saw a trickle of blood from the blade's tip and he felt it too as he took a swallow of his own saliva. The boys were silent but strong like Beth's and my soldiers. Beth had the zip ties tight while he was still on his knees as she rounded to face him. She leaned over

and grabbed his chin with her right hand and her teeth were gritted as she spoke straight through them,

“Your filthy finger and your filthy thing is the reason you are here, why we are here and why ... you are in BIG trouble!” Her voice was so authoritative and I had to admit to myself she was very good at this and it was weird to actually think I liked her like this (well a bit anyway). Johnson’s eyes welled up as his face whitened again. Beth continued, “How many other girls have you touched?” and she slugged a big one right in his face. It was my turn now and time for the real show to begin so I bellowed my orders to my soldiers,

“Lay him on his back!” Bobby and Phillip responded as Jimmy kept up his guard with the broken bottle close to his face. “Now take down his shorts!”

“Shit ... look kids I promise I won’t say anything ... just let me go!” Johnson the pervert tried his best but I took off one of my ponytail scrunchies and shoved it in his mouth - to shut the bastard up. He tried to turn away but Jimmy came in close with the scotch bottle again to his eye so he obeyed my order. The tears were flowing from his eyes as the boys pulled his pants to his knees and exposed his disgusting tally-whacker. I looked around at our gang and their faces nearly made me laugh out loud as they were scrunched up as much as mine as his doodle flopped around like it was trying to make a hop for it. But it was back to the plan so I asked, “So who’s gonna lift it up?”

“I ain’t touching it!” One of silent soldiers suddenly became vocal and it was Phillip.

“I’m not touching it either!” and here was a little problem as Jimmy piped up then Bobby.

“Don’t look at me ... forget it! That’s Gay!” So I turned to Beth, who was shaking her head before she spoke,

“Pussies! You fuckin’ pussies - GAWD!” Beth lent down and with her head as far away from it as possible (and looking the other way) as if Johnson’s penis eye was looking at her. “Quick! Cut it off!” Johnson was thrashing and groaning now on the rocks and managed to pull his willie out of Beth’s grip! Beth complained, “Oh shit!” And she grabbed it tighter, by the head with all four fingers not just two this time. I pulled my knife from his throat position as Jimmy replaced it with his broken bottle.

“Go on ... DO IT VIOLET!” Beth was pleading with her blood-crazed demand. I placed the switchblade at the base of his dick and drew a breath ... it was now or never.

“Stop that ... Violet don’t! ... STOPPP!!!” It was Miss Davis with Tracy and the others sprinting down the rocky path.

“Do it Violet! Do it now!” Beth was whispering under her breath. But I didn’t – I couldn’t in front of Miss Davis but I managed to get a little cut in and a little blood flowed as I threw the blade on the ground. I stood up quickly with my back towards Miss Davis as I set out my instructions to all of the revenge gang.

“We never intended to actually cut it off guys ... we were only going to scare him because we all hate him okay ... we gotta stick together ... okay! We’re kids and they can’t force us to talk ... so say as little as possible!” The boys were nodding and Beth was pissed but she nodded as well. “We’ve scarred him ... for life!” - And I pointed to the blood that was now covering his hairy balls. And then I directed my attention to Johnson and I spoke softly but clearly and he understood perfectly, “If you press charges against us ... we’ll tell EVERYONE what you did to Vanessa ... and I bet you there were more eh! Do you really want the cops involved?” I saw Beth’s JUSTICE smile as I felt Miss Davis take me down.

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## 26 - Aftermath

"So why did you do it Violet?" Miss Davis' eyes were red and she had been crying and all I could think was – *why cry over that piece of scum-trash's filthy cock!* I just looked downwards as I sat on the camp bench then looked straight past her face and could see the ambulance putting Johnson in to take him away on a stretcher and I chuckled ... Miss heard me so she turned to see what I was looking at. "Violet ... do you think that's funny?" she looked repulsed.

"What does he need a stretcher for ... one little cut!" I couldn't help my smirk.

"Shock Violet ... shock. He's in shock!" She was crying again and she went on, "Phillip said it was your idea ... is that true?" – *Of course he did the WUSS!* I just went back to my golden silence and started looking around again as Miss did all the talking.

"He said that you wanted to frighten Mr. Johnson ... because you all hate him ... Violet is this true? - *Aha maybe Phillip wasn't such a WUSS after all!*

"Yep!" Now that was enough explanation I thought.

"Why Violet? What did he do?" I so wanted to scream out what he did but I just kept my mouth shut and it was clamped tight. Miss then announced, "Vanessa told me the truth Violet. I know he touched her." *Holy Sit!* There was the variable I never saw coming! Miss' tears were flowing free.

"Why didn't you come to me first?" She grabbed me and hugged me – man that was surreal. "The police are on their way Sweetie ... tell them the truth!" And Miss Davis let go of her embrace and had me at shoulder distance with one hand on each. "If he did this Violet ... he will go to jail!" Then it was like all the pressure of my cooker welled up to the surface and it overflowed out like a relief. I couldn't speak but just cry and my nose ran like a tap as Miss held me again.

I was last to be interviewed by the local police and the revenge gang were not allowed to see each other so we had no way of communicating or covering out tracks. I wondered how Beth went in her interview but had a feeling nothing much was said from her. Now Vanessa herself was a problem as she was the innocent victim and it was all for her but she was the one who broke first.

Two cop cars came and I got to see Beth for the first time in the back of the car as we were being driven straight back to Ridgetown Precinct for individual questioning (with Child Agency Authorities). Beth and I never spoke but our smiles confirmed nothing was said but I could see she had also heard Vanessa had

cracked. After hearing Phillip stuck to our plan I knew we had a very good chance of getting away with this ... hey what damage was really done? Nothing!

The drive was long and we stopped for toilet breaks and something to eat but the trip was silent (bar the low volume of the police radio) with the officer just on driving duties.

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## 27 - Inquisition

We walked into Ridgetown station at 9:26pm as per the wall clock and it was quiet as a mouse except for some smelly drunk slouching in one of the reception chairs. Then I saw waiting for me - Grandma, Sandy (in her uniform) and to my horror – Georgina Edwards and Fat Ruby who was shooting her death arrows at me already. Beth glared at me and I spun to her and stated,

“Don’t say a word ... they know nothing! If we say nothing ... this’ll all go away!” Beth and I were now a team and she was fearless like me and she answered,

“Lips sealed!” And she motioned her zip closed between her top and bottom lips. We reached out and our finger-tips connected as sisters being torn apart just as we were dragged off to separate rooms. Yeh and I bet you can guess who Ruby followed?

“Violet Honey ... tell us what happened and ALL of it!” the room with just us three (Sandy, Ruby and myself) was dead quiet until it was broken by Sandy’s voice and it wasn’t so sympathetic sounding as usual but I just looked around the room twiddling my thumbs. Sandy tried again as Ruby shoved a notepad under her nose.

“We just wanna know why this happened? VIOLET!” Sandy yelled my name as I my attention was drifting around the room and I could sense her frustrations. “Violet we know what he did to Vanessa but we need to know why you and the others did what you did? You must tell us.” And then I knew it was coming. The old sack of potatoes was itching to say something!

“Choo going down child! We all know choo started it!” And there it was as Sandy glared at Ruby (it was obvious Sandy didn’t like her too!) so I just smiled and blew her a kiss as I stated,

“Shame you don’t have a cock you fat bitch! I could cut it off for you too!”

“The Lord knows what choo are and choo are going to pay not just for this but for cha Mumma and cha Pappa’s death ... swear to God! I will take you down.”

“Ruby ... stop it!” and Sandy lost it! “Swear I will drag you out by the fucking hair if you don’t contain yourself! YOU are here as under CHILD PROTECTION laws YOU are required for her (as she stood up and pointed to me) ... NOW do your fucking Job!” But then Sandy diverted her anger towards me. “And you ya little shit! Stop fucking us all around, has she (now pointing to Potato lady) got some of this right? – ‘cause I’m sensing trouble follows you here, there and everywhere!” Sandy sat back down and took a deep breath. “Violet honey, Johnson is a pervert ... we know that. He will be charged but you kids are in trouble too! Unless you can

convince us otherwise ... did he touch you?" I gagged at the actual thought of his man-size gropers going anywhere near my pants,

"No! yuck! He's a pig ... someone should brand him! Brand his back better still his forehead with what he is ... DEVIATE!" I was angry and I had been angry for the last fucking 2 years and I couldn't hold it in anymore. It was like the monster inside was finally unleashed! "FUCK HIM! FUCK HER! FUCK YOU!" I stood up and ran to the door ... it was locked. Ruby the fat bitch laughed as I smashed my fists on the door.

"Choo ain't going nowhere child ... chust to Hell!" Ruby was smiling as I pulled down as hard as I could on the door handle repeatedly screaming,

"Let me out! I want Grandma! Let me out! Fucking let me out! I wanna go home!"

I don't know what happened but I snapped and flew at Ruby and her fat neck and I bit her face hard before she even realised. Sandy acted swiftly and tried her best to pull me off! I could taste the blood of her fat potato cheek on my tongue. I swung and got my last connections in on the fat bitch as Sandy pulled me to the ground and sat on me with my arms pinned to the floor above my head. I thrashed as best I could as I had wanted to KILL! KILL RUBY!

"I'll fucking take you down BITCH!" I was screaming when Sandy slapped my face ... and it hurt! Then the door flew open and two other cops grabbed me, threw me over on my stomach as Sandy cuffed me. I sideways looked at Ruby who was holding her cheek as the blood poured through her fingers and I smiled ... I had scarred her too! So I screamed out, "Fuck you ... see you in Hell!" And then I felt someone lift my shorts and panties to expose my right butt cheek for the needle to go straight into it. And within in seconds I felt sleepy and I felt cal...

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## 28 - Rain

It must've been raining for a week when I got a visit and a special surprise from Grandma and it was better than any sunshine.

I had been ordered to go under psychiatric assessment due to my anger issues (from Ruby's attack as well) as all the other shit that I had to deal with in my life. I'd had these tests before but this time I was committed for further scrutiny. Here at Burroughs they were way more frequent and intense. I have spent the last three weeks here being interrogated and yet I had not shown one actual negative emotion, so was due out for good behaviour and going home to Grandma's within the next two weeks.

"Now Violet ... I did bring someone one to cheer you up today." Grandma stood up from her chair at my table near the window and went to the door and opened it and then I saw them – Beth and Vanessa. They both ran at me and hugged me as I'd never been hugged before in my first three-way girl hug. I cried tears of happiness to see them both. We had been texting like mad-women but this was the first time I had actually been face to face with them since that day at camp.

"Hey you CrAzY girl! How have you been?" And suddenly like a Harry Houdini trick, Nasty Beth had disappeared from my life completely and my sister Beth had replaced her as she spoke. "The boys said to give you this." And as she let one arm go to reach in her pocket, Grandma smiled and watched my face as she handed me a photo – a photo of all of us at camp and it was the campfire night just before story-telling, we were in group and Beth was sneering at me – I cracked up! It only made me cry harder as it made me realise after all this time I had finally found friends – true, trustworthy, cut-the-dick-off-together friends!

"Johnson was arrested ... I have to go to court with Mum." Vanessa had a tear in her eye as she held me. "We want you back at school Violet." And then she turned her mouth to my ear and whispered so Grandma couldn't hear her, "Thank you."

We all sat on the lounge with the television on as we gas-bagged about school and the shit that went down after Johnson's demise and that ALL of the revenge gang had kept their traps shut! So there was nothing more to say about it besides my outburst at Fat Rubes. The school had hush-hushed it as I expected the BITCH Principal Underwood would.

It was great day and I cried again. When they left, I went back to my room and placed the camp picture on my bedside table, leaning against the base of the lamp. I laid there for hours staring at their faces one by one and I realised for the first time in so long ... I had friends.



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## 29 - News

It was a Wednesday just after lunch when I got a visit from Sandy and her face was solemn.

“Violet ... we have some sad news. Your Grandma has had a heart attack ... Sweetie ...” My body felt heavy as my heart raced before Sandy continued, “I’m sorry, she died before the Ambulances got there ... this morning.”

All I could think of was, if only I was there and not here ... not here in this shithole but with Grandma, I could have saved her. Johnson had had the last laugh or was it Ruby? My world felt like it sunk below the ground level, even beneath the dirt where Mum and Dad were buried. A place where nothing moved, only blackness; it was a frozen place of loneliness. Sandy grabbed me as she was the bearer of my bad news and held me as I gazed through the Burroughs’ Rehab Clinic’s barred-up window and watched the cars drive by in the distance as the silence engulfed me. My life had finally seen a bright light of hope in the distance but in one sentence ... it all changed and came back to the beginning.

No tears ... only misery returned.

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### 30 - Grieve

Grandma's funeral was so different to Mum and Dad's as this one was so sad. I felt the loss inside and my heart ached and ached to see her even just one more time – to say goodbye. Beth, Tracy and Vanessa came to support me with Beth's mother which I really appreciated. It felt weird having to sit up the front and with no one but Sandy and the grandparent from HELL - Nanna Lynia. And that was the part I hated the most all too well, knowing there was no one left in my family but her.

"Please Sandy ... can't I come and live with you? I don't want to leave Ridgetown ... I have friends here." I was hugging her and sobbing at the front of the graveyard before I was leaving for the wake and Sandy back to police duties and her own life.

"Look Sweetie ... you know that can't happen. I'm a cop and I'm hardly ever home." Her beautiful blue eyes welled up as she was admitting the truth as much as I – she had been my first friend or like an Auntie, something I never had being a single child from two single parents. Sandy continued, "I will write Violet ... I promise. Paris will be exciting all the places and things you can see ... it'll be an adventure of a lifetime, I promise ... and I want pictures!"

"I don't speak French!" I thought it was a relevant point! And then she kissed my forehead.

"You're a smart girl Violet ... you're a smart girl."

And as she drove off in the distance I knew that it would be the last time I would see my Auntie Sandy – forever. I just knew it in my heart. It was my penance for my actions just as losing my new found friends that I could see in the distance, at Beth's mum's car wanting desperately for me to ride home with them. Nanna Lynia refused their request of course and forced me to ride in the hired black limo with her. At least they were coming to the wake at Mum's house (where Nanna and I were now temporary living).

The three of us sat out back, beside the pool and away from the adults.

"So when do you leave?" Beth asked as we ate the catered chicken and lettuce triangular sandwiches.

"In ten days ... Nanna says she has to tidy up the mess left here first and that I've still got to go back to the shithole for more therapy because of this crap." I couldn't help but screw up my face and let it out, "I don't wanna go!"

"We don't want you to go too!" stated Tracy as Vanessa and Beth both came in sounding like chirping birds in agreement – "Yes! Yes!" Just then Grandma's neighbour - Mr. Deumont walked out back near us to light a cigarette before he waved, we waved back to be polite. Beth questioned in a lower voice,

"I wish there was something we could do?"

"Yeh, can't we change this?" stepped in Vanessa, "You helped me when I needed help ... now you do!" And as I sat silent with eyes focused on the leaves floating aimlessly around the blue pool water Tracy also stated,

"She doesn't even like you!" Was it that obvious my life was to be fully shit yet again, even to my friends? Then Beth spoke up,

"We have 10 days to fix this – like Johnson! Together!"

Oh my God! Did this mean that I actually hadn't gone back to the beginning? I never had friends like this there.

"You would do this for me?" Emotions were surfacing now and they comforted me as old Mr. Deumont just thought the tears were to do with my grandmother – well it was ... but the wrong one! Just then Nanna Lynia and Beth's Mum came out back towards us, Nanna lit a smoke as Mr. Deumont finished his – like a tag cig team. Beth's mum came over to us and stroked my hair,

"Violet Honey, we gotta go now, say goodbye girls ... I'll be inside." She left us and it was Beth who came up with the whole new chapter in my mind's death book – *'Sisters of the Death Party!'*

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## 31 - Party

Nanna Lynia finally agreed to letting Beth's mum host my going away party at Beth's house, but *boy!* - did I have to work hard on the old crow to let me even have one!

"But the girls are my friends!" I was pleading but the OLD CROW wasn't bending.

"You don't need it V," and suddenly I was shortened to V like it was wasting her airtime saying the rest of the letters ... but at least it would now be Beth, T and the two V's! "... you'll make new friends in France." Her face was emotionless as always. "I think it's for the best." So I turned on the girly crocodile tears,

"I've lost my Mum, my Dad, Grandma and now ... I can't even say goodbye to my new friends." I sobbed my hardest as I slumped back into the golden velvet lounge. Suddenly I saw it - a hint of being a real human being – and she broke.

"Okay but I want you home by 11:00!" After the shock settled, I jumped up wiped my tears and hugged the O.C. (yeh I can do it too!).

"Thank you Nanna." I ran to my room and text Beth straight away.

I spent a lot of time in my room going over and over scenarios to take Nanna down and what was the objective here – but to stay in Ridgetown. So murdering her wasn't the answer to this one. I had no other family left so unfortunately she was it! What must we do? It was simple just like Johnson – the UPPER hand! Once I knew this, my mind stepped up a notch to come up with three different scenarios. I would need to set up a meeting with the girls and the soldiers (that Beth assured me was in!) so I scammed the O.C. to letting me go over Beth's for an hour after school.

Beth, Tracy, Jimmy and Vanessa were here after we all walked home after school to help plan the party. Beth's mum left us alone in my room thinking we were simply planning music, decorations. All the party shit had already been completed prior in lunch and it WASN'T on this meeting's agenda. So I started,

"For me to stay here we need to let her know - who's the boss!" they were all nodding as I spoke. "We have to do this quickly during the party between 8:00 and 9:00 ... we need to keep some of the others occupied for the hour ... a diversion."

"I'll take care of that!" stated Tracy

"Jimmy!" I looked at him "... can anyone of your boys drive?"

“I’ve driven go-karts and Dad’s let me drive his Nissan in and out of the driveway ... it’s an auto.” I smiled and it would have to do I knew we only had a few miles to travel but no public transport was going to help we need a car –Beth’s mum’s car.

“Jimmy needs to drive your mum’s car!” as I looked across at Beth. I knew it was pushing the boundaries but the timeframe was essential.

“Oh Shit! Are you trying to get us all killed?” complained Beth as she looked deep into my eyes, “Okay! Okay!”

We went through the rest of the plan step by step and the finer details would be reworked or changed to suit. I knew this would be the last time I would see them all as I was due back to the clinic and then to school. Beth was now in charge to organise the rest of the revenge gang and to delegate the relevant duties to the right soldier. I trusted her with my life – and she knew that too!

And the countdown began five days and counting.

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## 32 - Party-time

"Hi Grace, nice to see you again ... can you make sure she's in the cab at 10:50. She's got to be home by 11:00!" Beth's mum glanced across at us and I could read her eyes – *'How do you put up with this shit!'* then she spoke,

"I'll make sure she is Lynia."

"Behave yourself!" And the O.C. just about slammed the door in Beth's mum's face after she waved her arthritic witch finger at me.

The rumpus room (that opened up to include the backyard pool) had been drastically changed and I couldn't believe the transformation the girls had done for me. Streamers of all colours were twisted in the cheezel like shapes draping from all corners meeting in the centre, into a hanging battery-operated mirror ball that was chained to a ceiling fan throwing off its multi coloured reflections all around the open area. Outback, purple and white plastic flowers were floating in the pool. A huge sign had been made that was sticky-taped to one of the sliding doors and in felt markers had 'BON VOYAGE VIOLET' written on it (by a girl/girls ... it was too neat and perfect for one of the boys!) with lots of various French references e.g. cut-outs of the Eifel Tower and a croissant glued underneath. Beth, Tracy and Vanessa were the only ones here and the music from Tracy's iPod dock was already loud as Pink sang about U using her UR hand and I thought that was a bit weird, but maybe it was only my sick mind that took me straight back to Johnson's finger. Beth's mum complained about it being too loud so we turned it down while she was there, but as soon as she was gone we'd nudge it back up to ten! Grace had gone back to the kitchen and just as I was re-volumising the stereo, the girls ran at me with gifts.

"Quick open it!" demanded Tracy as I did – it was make-up. They all bought me make-up!

"Now sit still!" demanded Vanessa as Beth was chuckling to my fidgeting.

"Shit! That friggin' hurt!" All three of them were on the bedroom floor now as one of my eyebrows was half its bushy size and I still had one to go! Beth laughed,

"You're lucky we're not allowed to do legs!" *Christ!* I never even thought about this beauty crap before! For me anyway! I was the plump redhead dork, dressed in purple – it seemed pointless.

They finished my make-up and hair and I looked into the mirror at whom I didn't recognize. I smiled in my heart, I wasn't as ugly as I thought I was. Even my curls were straightened to a now much longer length. All my freckles were gone and replaced with a mono-toned skin base. My eyes looked happy and sparkly and *oh*

*my God!* I had eye-lashes that went forever and they were mine - black not red. And as I gazed into the mirror, I was reminded of a famous actress – I could've been Nicole at this very age. I turned and hugged the three of them.

It was 6:30 when all the guests started arriving and I hadn't seen the boys in ages. Jimmy and William were dropped off first with William's mum getting Nanna's unreasonable demand passed on from Grace of her no later than 11:00pm finish!

All kids were there by 7:00 and the girls had rounded everyone up, it was buzzing. There must've been thirty kids (to my Nanna's horror), partying around the swimming pool.

It was fun dancing and laughing – I felt so different to the old dark Beth, like the light had turned on in my darkness and I could see all without swinging my blade of death. I wanted to be *Light Violet* not *Dark Violet* – but I had one more little thing to take care of before this could ever happen – Nanna Lynia. But for this moment and for the next hour I would turn off *Dark Violet* and enjoy my party – my going away party.

I looked around the party at all the faces slowly, one by one, from Beth's girls to Jimmy's boys and the rest who had actually came for me – they were my friends now and I knew what I had to do to preserve this forever.

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### 33 - Cancelled

"The plan's off! I'm going to France with the Old Crow." My tears confirmed my truth as Beth hugged me before the rest joined in for a group hug.

"Are you sure?" Beth was whispering, "We can take her down ... together."

"NO! NO more ... no more." I didn't want any of these guys involved of what I wanted so bad to do. So I continued, "I just want to enjoy the party ... and my friends."

"We ARE your friends Violet!" And they dragged me back to the make-do dance floor where my smile replaced my tears.

Time was flying by and it was 8:00 when Tracy pulled up the party for games time on the pool deck, where it was all set-up! It was a special surprise for me. First off she dragged me and Beth's mum (Grace) to the centre of our make-shift dance floor and blindfolded us. I could hear the laughter and could hear Beth's laughter above the rest. Tracy had us feeling things and guessing them out loud. It was a stupid game but we were laughing hysterically when they'd put creepy stuff in our hands like rubber spiders and touch us on the back of the neck with feathers. Grace squealed twice as loud than I ever did!

A re-worked Pin the Tail game of 'Pin the heart on the Teacher' (and a little too close a resemblance of Johnson) was fun and of course, Beth won ... the BITCH! I gave her the finger and she gave me two in return. Tracy brought out a piñata and Grace tied it up under her back verandah as we took turns at smashing it. I don't know if it was rigged but they let me get the final smash in as the sweets hit the deck in every direction. Beth gave me the finger this time so obviously I gave her two!

I squeezed them all one by one as the cab's blinkers flashed – it was over.

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## 34 - Over

"You okay Violet?" asked Sandy,

"My Dress is ruined," I looked down and my brand new dress wasn't just purple now, it was mostly red – blood red.

"Tell me what happened Violet." Sandy was sitting on the floor next to me leaning against the lounge room wall as her partner and the paramedic exited Nanna's room shaking their heads – nope!

How could I tell Sandy what happened - when I could only guess. Beth was my last hug when I left and as she did, she grabbed me and whispered,

"Your real present is in the room!" I thought nothing more of it as she kissed my cheek goodbye thinking she had bought me more make-up. I paid the cab and noticed the front door was slightly ajar. The Old Crow was even too lazy to get up and open the door for me!

"I went into Nanna's room and there was blood." I told Sandy. I hesitated then as I reflected over the events before saying anymore. I remembered walking into Nanna's room to tell her about my wonderful night, only to find Nanna was no more. No more than a sliced-up torso of carnage lying on the floor. My first instinct was to run to her and as I did, I slipped in a blood puddle and landed face first on her dead bloodied body. Her cadaver eyes were level with mine and wide open – lifeless and yet hauntingly they knew what I had instigated. Her mouth was wide open and her death-breath invaded my sense of smell. I vomited as soon as I pulled myself off the dead body. I wasn't ready for this at all! I would've taken her down in France, alone – away from here but instead, I was sinking in this blood filled nightmare. I went to say something to Sandy and suddenly my body started shaking uncontrollably. My mind was exploding ... I couldn't think ... I couldn't speak! Sandy's eyes saw mine as I felt them roll back.

"Shit! Shit!"

And that was all I remembered before waking up in hospital with Sandy sitting in the chair next to the bed.

"Welcome back Kiddo." She smiled and continued, "It was shock Violet." Sandy handed me the water cup with the plastic straw and I sipped.

"What went down? We know you didn't do it Violet! We've spoken to Beth's Mum."

"I don't know ... I don't know." I had my suspicions but in all honesty I didn't know!

All I did know was that Beth's, Tracy's and Vanessa's dresses were spotless when I left and then it flashed like an alarm in my mind! I realised I never saw her soldiers – the boys, during the games – Tracy's diversion! But Grace's car was locked in the garage!

"Someone sliced her to pieces Violet ... while you were at the party ... why?" Her face wasn't as friendly as she always was, no auntie here – this was her COP face. "Death and Violence surrounds you Violet! I'm starting to wonder if Ruby is on to something?" I just shrugged as I raised my new thin eyebrows and poked my bottom lip out. "We will catch the killer ... and if you know anything about this ... you'll go down too! Be sure of it!" Suddenly I saw only cop in her ... no longer the friend. Was she just pissed off as she was my main line of defence in my previous incidences?

"I don't know what happened ... I just found her ... like that."

"Well who did it Violet? Who do you think?" She had leaned forward and was eyeballing me as if the truth would light up in my retinas.

"I don't know?" What else could I say? No way was I EVER going to rat on my best friends. I will take my punishment but they will NOT! If they all did this for me – just to ensure I didn't go to France. Admittedly it was close to my plan but with one minor detail – we never killed Nanna in my plan only just threaten her. By diverting the kid's attention and Grace's, while the boys snuck me out in Beth's mum's car so we could break-in like thieves in balaclavas blindfolding her, tie her up, gaffa tape her to a kitchen chair! Cut her a bit! Return to the party ASAP as if nothing happened – an alibi for us. So I could find her like this when I got home from my party, ring Sandy and that'd be it. Of course we would need to have a plausible motif – her diamond jewelry in her bedside table would make it robbery! Would she know who we were? It was gamble we would take. But this was the gamble I was NOT prepared to take in the end (my friend's not mine) well-beings.

I could not believe I had missed both Jimmy and Phillip were wearing different baseball caps at the beginning of the party to the end! I was worried now as if I realised their missing time-frame and the baseball cap change, now they may be in BIG trouble ... somebody else may have noticed too.

"Violet ... Ruby is on the way. This time I will listen!" *Oh Shit!* That was all I needed, that fat troll chucking her two cents worth in. "She will send you back to Burroughs! I hope you know that?" Sandy stood up and poured herself a glass of water from my jug. She leaned back over me and whispered, "Once ... always!" What

did she mean by that? I imagined it was her hooker saying ... and now she used it on me to psych me out! Murderer – not hooker! ‘Once a killer, always a killer!’

Sandy left shortly after she received a call on her mobile. I had to think quick and think straight if I was to get out of this one. Not knowing what was happening outside in the real world was the problem. I scrambled through my bedside drawer and to my luck my mobile was in there with my purse so I rang Beth on my mobile immediately.

“Violet ... I don’t know what you’re talking about? We were all at the party with you! Mum’s already given a statement to the police ... she’s verified it ... for ALL of us!” It was all I needed to know – her voice told me. We were okay!

I quickly stashed my mobile back into my drawer beside the bed as heard two voices growing louder by the second – it was Sandy and Fat rubes.

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### 35 - Aftershock

Ruby did send me straight back to Burrough's – DO NOT PASS GO! Beth came and visited me. She took me to the open window to watch the passing cars in private as she explained what the aftershock had left behind.

All the kids at the party were interviewed by the police and lucky for us they had directed all questions about me and no one else – the fools! Ruby had convinced Sandy it was me - I knew that! I knew my back was being watched not protected by her now. Yet thanks to Tracy's diversion that even I missed, I was centre of attention and NEVER left the party. It couldn't have been me - that was obvious. Jimmy and the boys were the ones that had actually saved my neck by breaking-in the front door when they did it – it was put down to break and enter gone wrong as ALL Nanna Lynia's expensive jewelry was missing; her bedroom had been ransacked!

The boys never took the car ... they had their bikes hidden and rode to my house via the bush shortcut. Beth told me they hadn't planned to kill her until she gave them the order to do so after my cancelling THE PLAN – it was Beth's idea all along. A gift to me from them – I wasn't going to France! She apologised for causing my little return visit here at Burroughs but told me she had a make-up surprise for me, but not today. I asked her how the boys were and if they were traumatised by their actions. Beth fell silent and looked around the room to see who was looking – no one. Her mum was talking to one of the nurses here as Mr. Grant was watching Deal or No Deal on the tele. Old Mrs Tippy was playing Solitaire on the table – it was safe. Beth slid her iPhone out of her pocket and hit the picture folder icon. There it was – it was a picture of a balaclav'd Jimmy holding the knives into my dead grandmother's body as she was bleeding on the floor then another of Phillip holding up Nanna's diamond earrings at his ears as he was still wearing his balaclava as Nanna's bloodied diamond tiara sat upon his head. They were both grinning, I could tell even with their balaclavas on, yet I recognised who was who. Why I smiled I don't really know – but I felt more for them than the dying old crow on the floor. I hugged Beth as she deleted the two photos and she stated,

“Now there's NO evidence!”

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## 36 - Home

“Well child ... looks like you get away with it again!” Her bulgy eyes were in mine again, searching for the guilt button she could never find. “Mark my words choo Lil’ Devil ... old Rubes here will be there the day you finally fall! That very day I thank the lord Chesus for catching choo and cha anger.” And she pointed to the scar on her cheek placed there by Lil’ Devil - me!

“Good luck with that!” as I thought, *I don’t think so!* I smiled, stood up and left her packing up her shit as I saw Beth and her Mum waiting for me on the other side of the clinic’s interview room’s window.

I was going home and my soul sister had come through with her surprise make-up after all – I was going to stay with them ... indefinitely.

Beth held my hand all the way home in the back of the car, she was more excited than me about this.

I entered my NEW home and I was met with a chorus of ‘SURPRIZE!’ All the Revenge Gang were here - Tracy, Vanessa, Jimmy, Phillip and Bobby as Grace hugged me and said,

“Welcome home Violet.” And they all ran to me. The boys picked me up as I screamed and Beth’s laughter drowned me out. They took me straight outside and threw me into Beth’s pool. Then they all jumped in as Grace laughed until the boys jumped out and grabbed her too – to join the wet club! She did!

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## 37 - Darkness

My life was finally normal, or whatever that was supposed to be? I had three soul sisters and three soul brothers now, a new step mum who never chastised me for being good as I used to always be. Beth and I were so close – we were the same just from opposite sides of the fence.

I found out where her dark side stemmed from – her Dad had beat her repeatedly and I cried when she told me he had done worse than Mr. Johnson to her as he was an alcoholic as well as an abuser. She loved her Mum and her Mum was also beaten by her Dad, so one day when the two of them were home alone, (Beth and her dad) Beth got him so drunk on his drugged induced rum and suggested a swim together. So she virtually dragged him to the pool and held his drunken head under the water. He drunkenly tried his best to stop her - but it was useless (my actual plan for HER death at camp LOL). Her mum was at work so she told the police she found the body as it was still floating on top of the pool water when they arrived. I never knew this and she had never told anyone – not even Tracy or Vanessa.

Beth had saved her mum and her from their own world of darkness.

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## 38 - Finale

“Good morning class, my name is Mr. Harris.” And I could see he could spell too as it was correct on the blackboard. I looked across at Beth and Vanessa who were the only two that were in this English class with me and they were snickering as Beth pointed to the length of his pants – were they long shorts? Or short longs? All the high school teachers seemed acceptable so far but this one had something wrong about him just as he caught Beth pointing at him.

“Stand up please Miss?” he cracked his ruler on the table which made us all jump. He made his way to her and checked out her sticky first day name tag on her uniform blouse.

“Hmmm Beth Rudders ... you seem to have a problem with my trousers ... please tell ALL the class what that is!”

I lost it and couldn't help it, my belly hurt as he turned to me and read my name tag, “Violet Pettingrow ... stand up also!” I made Beth start now, we were both laughing as he was screaming,

“Ladies you can explain this funny situation to the headmaster!” As he went back to his desk and wrote on some slip he pulled from the drawer.

We were still laughing together as we strolled arm in arm on this very first high school day to the principal's office. It was Beth who spoke first.

“Wanna kill him after school?”

I smiled and thought about it - but not for long.

“You betcha!”

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# ***The Prince is Dead!***

*Town's bells ring, sad news is here tonight  
King and Queen cry, the son is losing the fight  
If only the potion could make it all right  
But life is hard, darkness eats up light*

*For the young Prince it's his destiny  
Broken hearts, the hardest way  
No fight left on this dying day  
The reaper came to take him far, far away*

***Put on your best and shed a tear  
Pray for his soul and pour a beer  
Let's all toast for when his life was great  
The Prince is dead! It's all too late!***

*All the King's horses and all the King's men  
Failed to put the Prince together again  
The Queen gave motherly love but to no avail  
Who could've saved him, rewrote a brand new tale?*

***Put on your best and shed a tear  
Pray for his soul and pour a beer  
Let's all toast for when his life was great  
The Prince is dead! It's all too late!***

*I will miss him but I won't forget  
that life without love is truly death*

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# Sleeping Dogs Lie!

## 1 - D-day

There was nothing unusual about the day. The humidity seemed bearable enough for July and the smell of the freshly laid dolomite on Joe Scott's prize winning roses assured him he had just advised the neighbourhood he had done so. Ethyl summoned Joe to the front porch where she had just laid out a tray of scones with her special homemade blueberry and apple jam, fresh whipped cream and pot of earl grey.

Retirement always had been Joe's big fear of the nothingness left in life yet as he sat, ate and looked into his wife of 52 year's lovingly eyes, he admitted life had been good and was still good.

"I heard Eddie Swartz finally passed away." Ethyl stated and then took a sip from the Royal Doulton teacup.

"Really? Poor ol' bugger never was gonna last long after the last stroke ... that was a biggie!" Joe smiled at Ethyl as he pondered on how many of his mates he had lost in the very short space of the last few years.

They both believed in being good people ... good Christians ... good parents ... good town citizens and were well liked and respected in the township of Tallis - a small country town (even though it had tripled in the last twenty years) that kept to itself and most people knew everyone else's business, but overall there was no better place for them both to live out their lives. They had met here, they had courted, got engaged, married and also be blessed with the one miracle from God - their only son William John was born 26 years ago, kicking and screaming into their childless life and just when they both had finally accepted they would never be parents ... yes it was a miracle!

They both sat on the porch silent together as the scones disappeared and the teapot emptied. The sun shone brightly on what would seem just another day of their peaceful retirement before it was their turn. The slow shut-down before God pulls your number out of the church bingo barrel.

But today was no ordinary day at all. Today *Death* was to enter them both and eat them slowly ... from inside their hearts.

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## 2 - Dream

Joe awoke abruptly from that dream – the déjà vu dream he had many times before but not for years! It was always similar yet it wasn't but very vague. He checked the time and it was 11:45pm. Ethyl was still fast asleep but something had unsettled him this time – it was so more convincing? How come that this time he could remember more pieces of the puzzle than ever before and why did it feel so real, like he was there, watching, listening and what did it all mean?

It always started with children playing in the park, just watching the kids be kids and the feeling the joy of their youth (as his had been) was always warm and comforting and this was no black and white dream but full vivid colours of the brightest reds and greens. He could see young Jackie Thompson crossing the monkey bars with the greatest of ease. Whatever did happen to young Jackie Thompson? But his mind moved on. Not wanting to disturb Ethyl's slumber, Joe's body lay as still as he possibly could just looking across at the white netted curtains as they gently swayed amongst the ever so slight breeze that fluttered through their bedroom window. The curtains seemed to dance for him as he tried to piece more of his puzzle together, yet as the dream, nothing was coherent enough to resemble any sensible story. For just as the children playing in the park would come then the bright greens and reds would fade and change to a darkness ... lots of darkness and dust and it was like Joe could taste it. It was dry and eye-burning yet it was empty ... and there was nothing here, nothing in this part of his dream but silence and emptiness or a void ... but what did this mean? Joe had been here many times before but this was the first time he remembered.

The digital clock blinked 11:52 only a mere seven minutes after the last time he looked and yet Joe felt like he had been thinking about his dream for an hour. The curtains still danced as he watched and they seemed to take form of ballerinas in white, swaying to the silent song that he could not hear, yet they danced so beautiful. Ethyl mumbled in her sleep as she shifted her body from cutting the circulation to her right arm which startled Joe as he was fixated on the curtains, but then the third part of his dream flashed in his mind that he remembered as the 'blue' part, all shades of blue like looking through a bright pair of blue binoculars.

Joe did recognise this place though, it was his old workshop and it was like it was when he was a young man in the sixties fresh out of his apprenticeship. He could see Vic Rathbone's old M.G. on the hoist and wasn't she a beauty with her white wall tyres and she was gleaming her brightest of blue ... yet she was red? Joe looked all around the workshop. He started with his tool cabinet with his precious 'Made in USA' spanners that NO ONE was ever allowed to touch, polished and gleaming ready for the next day's work. His view was very panoramic as he panned slowly to his right seeing all the things he had forgotten over time such as the gleam of the old Castrol sign made of tin (and not cor-flute like these days) or the empty

coke bottle that had its era stamped all over it and retro shaped. What about the hula girl ashtray that overflowed with dead-ends and that he himself smoked like a chimney back then, and then there was the mirror, the rectangular cracked mirror that hung next to the poster of Barbara Eden as Jeanie. And as Joe looked into the mirror he did not see his own reflection as he expected, with the wrinkles of a lived life or even his younger face, the one Ethyl fell in love with at the tender age of 16. The face wasn't that one or any one like it, it was the face of his only son William's teenaged face, braces'n'all and this was where the dream ended.

This time the dream never drifted between the dancing ballerinas and out the window but had stayed within Joe's mind – it made no sense but it stayed and it would stay now – forever!

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### 3 - Father Gormen

Father Gormen accompanied Sheriff Tony Demmins in the squad car to Joe and Ethyl's house on Tony's request. Demmins knew Father Gormen would support them as best as he could and remind them of God's faith in them both and theirs in him. Tony had received the call and email from 'Uncle Sam' and as Sheriff, he was indebted to his community to take the good with the bad ... and this was the bad. He had delivered bad news before and nothing could be as hard as that little Cathy Roundtree. Cathy was only eight when he delivered that Hell to her parents. Yet still William was Joe and Ethyl's only child and everyone in Tallis knew how special William was and not just to them but to the town itself – he was a hero, the only Soldier from this tiny province on a tour of duty in Afghanistan.

Demmins drove silently as he reflected back to the day William left and the party that was thrown by his Tallis friends for not just William but Joe and Ethyl too. William had made Corporal before his call of duty but it might as well have been General to his Tallis township friends and he would leave and return as their only hero ... but this was not to be.

Corporal William John Scott had not seen the land mine trip until it was all too late.

His body was awaiting to be flown back and it was imperative for Demmins to reach Joe and Ethyl before the immediacy of social media spilled the beans and all respect leaves the building (or the town in this instance).

Father Gormen sat quietly clutching his bible as he turned to the Sheriff and reached out to squeeze his arm to pass on his outward strength as they turned into Belview Boulevard as they both could see Joe tending to this year's most promising prize roses. Joe recognised Tony as he waved but then he also recognised Father Gormen sitting next to him and the question was answered by instinct and the waved dropped almost instantly just as Ethyl and her morning tea opened the screen to see the police car pull up at their front gate. At first she was smiling as they didn't get many visitors these days, she would need to get the Oreos, but just as the penny dropped so did the earl grey while Joe stood frozen with the shears still in his right hand.

Sheriff Demmins did not have to break the news but just confirm and relay all relevant details to Joe as Father Gormen recited 'The Lord's Prayer' with Ethyl doing her best to accompany in-between her tears.

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#### 4 - Drink to me

Ethyl was sedated and sleeping by dusk as Joe sat in front of the television where he watched the news and the repeated reports he could not escape from. Georgina and Nino Listi had left only an hour before on Joe's insistence, he knew how their good friends both meant well but he already had faced the truth ... this was not going away. The bottle of Chivas Regal had been sitting unopened on the sideboard next to William's picture (in uniform) awaiting his return where the two men would crack it and sit on the porch sipping on the fine scotch served only with ice until it would be empty. Joe had bought the bottle on the day William was deployed and they both had shook hands on the deal to be drunk as skunks on William's return together. But it would never be now so Joe grabbed the bottle and two glasses and made his way to the porch. He sat in his chair and placed the two glasses on the white wicker coffee table; he cracked the scotch and poured two glasses (minus the ice). Joe toasted to his William and the reality that the Scott bloodline now ended with him and Ethyl. There was no one to toast him back but he refused to cry but only to raise his glass to the memory of his only son Corporal William John Scott's life for the tears would hold for another day. Tonight would be a celebration of life – not *death*.

Joe sat there sipping scotch until daylight but only a third of the bottle was gone. Joe did want to be drunk but it was not the case, he did drink for William – right up to the time until he drifted under the rays of the full moon.

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## 5 - Penny Drops

“Good morning Mr Scott. My name is Penny Stapleton for Channel 13 ... would you mind answering a few questions ... about your son Corporal Scott’s death in Afghanistan? Oh yeh ... we would all like to pass on our condolences to you and your wife. When was the last time you spoke to your son?”

Joe awoke in the wicker chair to the bombardment of Penny Stapleton’s forthcoming interrogation. His neck hurt from sleeping awkwardly so he rubbed it deeply as Penny followed by her cameraman mounted the front porch stairs to be in swinging distance of a startled Joe. Anger swelled in the old man like a volcano as Ethyl came screaming through the screen door like the tornado crazed Tassie devil.

“Get out of here ... Get out of here!” she screamed at them.

“Mrs Scott ... please calm down ... we only want to ask a few questions,” pleaded Penny Stapleton as her and her cameraman Randy were both now in reverse gear backing down the stairs. And then Joe was fully conscious and stood up.

“You heard her ... this is a private issue! Get the fuck off my property!” The old man stood beside his wife as the two reporter team exited quickly with Penny Stapleton getting the last word in as they drove off yelling at them from the van’s passenger seat.

“We can do this the easy way or the hard way Mr Scott ... it’s all up to you? Have you heard the rumours? Are you sure your son was a hero?”

Ethyl was now crying as Joe held her in his still ever-so strong arms.

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## 6 - Life must go on

Life has to go on no matter if you like it or not. Bills just don't pay for themselves just as prize winning roses can't water themselves to bloom into winners. Ethyl wasn't doing so well and the full military funeral was the icing on her *death* cake. Joe could sense in his wife of so many years that she had lost something deep inside. Of course he would support her until it returned just as his own emptiness had now spoken to him and reminded him – time heals all wounds.

"You and Ethyl are coming for a bbq ... you gotta get her out Joe! It's been a month." Georgina Listi had tears in her eyes as she hugged Joe at the front gate. She was good friend and her and Nino had been over every day taking care of the routine chores – cleaning, shopping and making sure they both ate. It was killing her to see her best friend of thirty years – Ethyl, like this, sedated and lifeless.

"Yeh you're bloody well right Georgie ... 5:30 alright?" Joe smiled and hugged his wife's best friend whom he admitted was half of the couple that formed two of their best friends not just Ethyl's. "Tell Nino the ol' bugger to dust off the dartboard ... I'll give him a chance to regain the title." Joe did his best to convince Georgina that he was himself – or at least doing a lot better than Ethyl.

Joe persisted with Ethyl and they did go to the Listi's house for a bbq. To Joe it helped to ease the pain by remembering what their life was before and he wanted so much to regain that feeling. But poor Ethyl struggled through the night, she was not yet ready to accept the letting go and moving on and broke down in Georgie's arms at least three times and ate like a sparrow on a diet. Joe's eyes teared to see his wife like this and yet it was a feeling of being cruel to be kind as he turned back towards the game of darts with Nino,

"Triple twenty." And he got it!

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## 7 - Dainty

Eleven months passed and even Ethyl had finally accepted William's passing and was able to refind her smile but Joe was concerned the anniversary of their son's death would be soon and his wife had come leaps and bounds in the past few months and no longer needed those wretched pills. God had replaced them and Father Gormen had been her true saviour.

"I'm just popping into town Eth ... do we need milk or bread?" asked Joe and he used the question to cover up that he was really going in to grab a beer for lunch at 'Luckys' with George Dainty or as he was dubbed back in secondary school - Dainty George. They had both known each other since being boys, but weren't that close until they bumped into each other at church bingo eight months ago and lunchtime beers on a Wednesday was now routine as the stories that expanded from the past. Joe and George were now close beer-drinking mates.

"Two Buds Love!" Dainty ordered from Joy the barmaid at Lucky's as Joe shut the bar door behind him on his entry.

"Hello Joy has this old dog been giving you any grief?" Joe smiled as Joy just waved her left hand at him suggesting 'No!' as she placed the two opened bottles on the bar then she answered,

"You know I'd clip both of you behind the ears if I had to!" They all laughed as the two old dogs toasted to Joy's comment.

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## 8 - Nightmare

Joe had a few too many beers with Dainty today and Ethyl had made him lay down on their bed while she commenced taking off his boots.

"You're getting too old for this you know!" Ethyl shook her head as she undid the left shoelace.

"I'm sorry Eth ... but I – I ..." and the old man was asleep yet still grumbling.

11:45pm and Joe awoke with his head banging like a bass drum. Ethyl was fast asleep in the bed under the covers while he was still wearing his flannelette shirt but no pants only his undies and he could see his trousers folded neatly over the end of the wooden bed end. He needed a drink of water and a couple of pain killers to take the edge off of his impending hang-over.

The water straight from the jug was cold but refreshing as he ruffled through the second drawer of the kitchen bench in search of the paracetamol he knew he'd seen in there ... then he heard something. A noise like scratching was coming from the bathroom. It was unsettling as it was repeating itself. Joe grabbed blade #1 from Ethyl's knife block and made his way to the bathroom quietly. The noise grew louder as he came closer. The bathroom was dark as Joe eased the door open as the scratching continued. Joe raised the knife to head height as he burst in flicking the light switch on ... the room was empty and the scratching had stopped. He checked all around the bathroom but found nothing and then he heard the scratching ... but now it was in the William's room. Joe's hairs were now raised as he again refound his attack position and made his way silently towards the kitchen. As Joe passed the mirror hanging in the hallway Joe glanced to see the fear on his own face and it was obvious - he was an old man. Out of nowhere the mirrored image exploded and there was a new face staring back at him ... and it was a monster ... the Devil! Joe screamed and sat up instantly awaking Ethyl.

"What's wrong Joe ... what's wrong?" Ethyl hugged her husband as his mind swirled with the reality it was all a dream or should he admit - a nightmare! He rubbed his pounding head as he glanced at the clock and it was exactly 11:52pm again.

After the two tablets and a couple of glasses of water Joe returned to bed where Ethyl had already returned to her slumber but Joe never slept that night as the dream was just way too unsettling and the image of the Devil face was burnt deep within. Of course he could never tell Ethyl what he had seen, not the face ... not the Devil, so the scratching is all he did mention. How could he tell his wife that the Devil's face resembled to him of their only son - William.

A week passed and normal sleep patterns returned for Joe and his son's Devil face left his memory night by night until the only face he could picture was the face of William with his Forces hat on just as that picture that sat on the duchess next to the opened bottle of scotch reminded him.

The one thing that did remain was the question - why? Why did he see William's face as the Devil? William was the perfect son – smart and polite ... wasn't he?

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## 9 - Questions

"Penny ... can I call you Penny?"

"Yeh sure Mr Scott ... can I call you ..."

"Joe, of course Penny." Joe's voice was calm and friendly on the phone to the reporter which was so much the opposite to their initial meeting.

"So Joe, how are you both doing?" Penny remembered that day clearly how could she forget as it was one of those rare days she lost her usual cool - and that frazzled her immensely. "It will be one year soon."

"Yeh we're both good thanks." Joe knew this was going to be hard on himself. "Penny ... I remember you mentioning ... a-a rumour." There he said it and hoped she knew exactly what he was asking so he wouldn't have to elaborate.

"Joe ... are you sure you know what you're asking?"

Penny was a great reporter yet the upset she saw on two elderly faces/good citizens contending with loss of an only child was soul burning and that night she lay awake for hours just staring at the ceiling only to come to the decision – let it slide ... she would simply let it go ... it wasn't worth it! Not this time.

"Penny ... I have a feeling you know something ... the truth ... I need to know the truth." Joe's voice was shaky and Penny could hear it.

"Joe, I think you should sleep on this ... think of Ethyl ... think of William's memory ... I think you should think about this." Joe heard the depth in Penny's tone and it was honest, nothing but honest concern. "I will tell you all Joe but only if you call me this time next week ... and I pray you don't." Penny never gave Joe a chance to say a word by hanging up immediately. She dwelled upon the forthcoming meeting and had a reporter's gut instinct that Joe would never let sleeping dogs lie.

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## 10 - Answers

Tears welled in Joe's eyes as he opened the manila folder that Penny handed him from across the table at Harry's Diner. Penny had hit the nail on the head with the old man, he had insisted on this meeting (without Ethyl knowing of course).

"Remember Joe, it is only speculation." Penny's eyes were watery.

Joe pulled the first photo out of the folder and it was photo of a crime scene but not a police photo but a long distance photo of the whole scene, yet Joe could see what it was to his breaking heart. Sheriff Demmins was younger in this photo and it was taken about 10 years previous but it was the whole photo that made Joe feel sick as it was little Cathy Roundtree's body lying there in the bushes with minimal clothing, while the poor Sheriff's face was etched in time ... and his expression was of pure horror, like he had just witnessed the work of the beast itself. Joe swallowed what spit he could find in his mouth as he turned the photo face down as he reached to pick up the next page in the folder and it was copy of the police report. Joe read only a few lines before he stopped ... he already knew enough details of little Cathy's murder.

The next item was a missing person's report of ten year old Jackie Thompson's disappearance and how he just vanished into thin air after playing in the park. Penny reached out and stopped Joe's hand as his hand touched the final photo. She shook her head slowly without saying a word as Joe closed then opened his eyes and smiled to her then nodded, for he was ready ... for the truth. He turned the final photo and it was a black and white shot taken from a telephoto lens yet it clearly showed the truth! It was a photo of William at the age of twentyish yet it did not look like William but more like *Evil* itself ... and he was carrying something bloodied possibly clothing. Penny reached and took the photo from Joe's hand as she piled the rest back into the folder.

"I warned you Joe." Penny placed the folder back into her briefcase as Joe held his hand to his face and cried like a baby as Penny asked.

"So Joe do you really want people to know any of this? Ethyl? This proves nothing!" Joe knew Penny was right he must protect his wife from this, it would kill her ... and that was the truth! Was his son a cold blooded killer? And somehow deep inside he just knew it.

The walk home was a slow one for this shattered old man. He had never ever felt this lost.

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## 11 - Sorrow

"Are you feeling alright Joe?" asked Ethyl as she poured the tea as Joe just stared ahead to nowhere while he sat silently in his weathered porch chair as the once fresh warm scones were getting colder by the minute. "Joe! Joe ... Honey what's wrong?" Ethyl rubbed his right shoulder and he could feel her warmth come through his checked flannelette shirt.

"Sorry Eth ... no-no I'm fine." And he shot his wife a very unconvincing smile and he knew so, so added more words to ease her worry, "I've just got a cracking headache ... didn't sleep well." Now that was the truth as after returning home from his meeting with Penny Stapleton, his mind was swirling with all sorts of crazy misguided random thoughts. His whole life had changed from the knowing of his son's dark secret. But he would protect Ethyl ... he must protect her.

"I'll get you some pills." Ethyl made her way inside as Joe resumed his staring into no place, just as a solitary tear snuck its way out from its hiding place and ran down his right cheek.

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## 12 - Evidence

“Hi Mum, Hi Dad, miss you both so much. As you can see I’m alive and well but missing your cooking Mum.” William held up a chocolate bar and a half emptied bottle of water from his tent somewhere in Home Base - Afghanistan. “How’s Dad’s roses going? Silly question eh? It’s not too bad over here, we’ve got a show tonight some singer from Australia ... never heard of her but should be good.” Joe watched the DVD letter he’d watched so many times before but this time he felt sick for he knew he was watching the facade of a monster. Ethyl had gone shopping with Georgina and so he had taken advantage of the few hours alone to search for anything ... anything to sway his jumbled mind one way or the other. He turned off the DVD – there was nothing there so he made his way to William’s room. Joe opened the door slowly to the untouched room, both him and Ethyl had not entered it since his death – this was their room full of pain.

The room looked as he last remembered it except for a year’s worth of minimal dust and a spider-web above the window. Joe felt uneasy in this room and felt like he was the one that was doing something wrong - was he? William’s desk sat close to the doorway and was neat as he always was. The drawer was locked as Joe tugged on it so he searched for the key around the table and found it, underneath the front left leg and sitting on top of it, concealed from view. He opened the drawer holding his breath expecting to find the secrets he had been dreading to find but all he found was a photograph of William and his Ground Force Army buddies laughing and hugging in their desert uniform before their deployment.

Joe moved from the desk to peruse the rest of William’s room. The shelves on the wall housed trophies and a lot of trophies! And Joe remembered William accepting ALL of them as any good father would. There was nothing here so he stepped to William’s still made queen size bed and a now bitter emotion welled as he had imagined of his son’s future many times of walking in to bring breakfast to Joe and hopefully a wife – and even better, mother of his grandchildren ... but this image would vanish forever and now not just disappear but be replaced by a tainted black and disgusting void. He knelt beside the bed and lifted the hand-made patchwork quilt to see what was, if anything, under the bed. Gym shoes, football boots, William’s old toy box and ... then Joe went back the toy box. How could he not have seen the padlock and hinge that had been installed to it?

Joe dragged the heavy box from its dust-marked spot to let the sunlight hit it for the first time in a year at least. Looking around the room Joe spied the letter opener on William’s desk he stood up and reached for it. He jammed the opener behind the hinge and pried the hinge off of the aged tin toy-box easily. Suddenly he heard a noise which made him scuffle. Voices from the front garden, Ethyl was home early. Joe quickly pushed the toy-box back under the bed and exited the room quickly but quietly, he was nearly at the front door when he realised he still had the letter opener



in his right hand. “Shit!” whispered Joe under his breath as Ethyl was on the top step and about to enter. He was in view now and if Ethyl saw what he was holding, she would know for sure he had been inside the still off-limits bedroom. Questions would be asked and then he would have to lie – lie to Ethyl something he just was no good at! Joe quickly shoved the opener into his jean pocket as Ethyl opened the screen door.

“You’re back early!” Joe’s voice was shaky and Ethyl lowered her eyebrows at him.

“What have you been up to Joe Scott?” She smiled at him as he leaned and kissed her cheek and reached inside himself to his LIE folder!

“Surprise ... it’s a surprise ... so never you mind!” Yeh even Joe thought that was pretty dismal but it was the only words that left his vocal box ... and incredibly she bought them.

“A surprise hey ... better be good Joe Scott!” Ethyl handed Joe the 2 bags of groceries and slapped his buttocks as he turned to walk towards the kitchen. Joe chuckled and for a split second in time, he was just a husband and not the father of a small town psychopath.

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### 13 - Dream on

11:45pm and Joe was awake – or was he? The curtain ballerinas were back dancing in the wind. Joe slid out of bed not to awaken Ethyl – she shuffled a bit but lucky for him she had always been a relatively deep sleeper. Joe made his way to William's bedroom passing the hallway mirror. He glanced into it only to see his own scared reflection so he continued sneakily. Joe was in the room and beside the bed in his resumed spot from this afternoon's previous interruption. The toy-box was in front of him now but instead of sunlight upon it, it was moonbeams. Opening the lid slowly Joe swallowed his fear and opened his eyes to see neatness inside as everything was folded or wrapped; it was neat.

Joe lifted out the first item which was a folded and clip-sealed bagged school dress. There was a sticker on the outside with the initials C.R. only but Joe felt sick – it was obviously Cathy Roundtree's missing school dress. After taking another deep breath Joe placed the dress on the ground and continued to the next item in the toy-box. It was a pair of boy's shoes and they too were sealed but these shoes were covered in dried blood. The initials T.W. were on this sticker but Joe did not know who this was. Joe emptied the items which were all clothing and all sealed with initials stickered upon them. There were 7 items in total and Joe only recognised 1 more set of initials, of course it was little Jackie Thompson and his school back-pack. Joe was about to place William's sickening collection back under the bed when he heard the scratching sound again but this time it was coming from under William's bed. Joe jumped to attention from kneeling as fear pushed him aback against the closed bedroom door. The scratching was continuing and Joe was petrified as the sound felt like it was scratching into him. Joe flicked on the bedroom light and the scratching stopped immediately. He quickly replaced the evidence back into the toy-box and pushed the box with his foot back under the bed. Joe was exiting the room hastily after turning the light off just as the scratching restarted. He returned to his bed in a cold sweat lying awake as he stared at the dancing curtains who both decided to dance crazily. The scratching stopped at 11:52 but that could not be right ... he had been in there for at least half an hour surely?

Joe drifted sometime after 3am and this time he knew he was dreaming for sure as all was red – blood red. Joe's nightmare this time was viewing all from killing eyes – his son's eyes and he was trapped and bound deep inside. Joe could even taste the disgusting thrill that churned inside William.

It started outside a school. Joe tried hard to read the school sign within this dream but all he could read was a few letters M something, something S E something the next word was definitely Elementary. It was dusk and no other kids were around as a single child – a boy sat in the bus shelter alone.

“Hi!” and Joe felt sick as William had pulled up in his Land Rover in front of the bus, stopped and spoke to the boy through his open passenger window, “What’s your name?”

“Billy ... why?” The boy had answered with innocence. Joe tried his hardest to scream to Billy but it was pointless – it was just a dream.

“Oh I thought it was you Billy. Billy your mum’s held up at work. I work with your mother, has she told you about me - John?” William the lying monster was here and his voice was different and darker.

“I-I think so?” Billy was not sure but if he gave the stranger the benefit of doubt as most eight year olds do. The monster spoke again,

“So Billy your Mum’s asked me to take you to her work ... hop in.” And Joe tried even harder to scream and scream out to little Billy as the car door opened and Billy stepped up into the cab but his dream was now cold icy slow-motion silence. Joe finally screamed as loud as he could sitting straight up in bed awaking himself and Ethyl.

“Joe! What’s wrong? What in the Devil’s Hell is wrong?” Ethyl rubbed her dazed eyes as Joe held his hands to his face and cried like a baby and in-between the sobbing Joe admitted,

“Ethyl ... I need to tell you something, something about William. I need to tell you ... all!” Joe continued crying as Ethyl hugged her distraught husband.

“Tomorrow Joe ... tomorrow.”

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## 14 - Accusations

Joe awoke and he felt a little blurry, he glanced over to the clock as it read 10:27am – Joe never slept that late ever! He got out of bed and pulled his Japanese Komono over his striped p.j.'s and staggered to the kitchen; it wasn't the greatest of looks!

"Good Morning Sleepy Head!" Ethyl smiled as she was finishing off the second batch of pancakes. "Hungry?" and Ethyl summoned him with the wafting smell and a plate of freshly whipped cream and some of her homemade jam. Joe went straight to the tea-pot and poured himself a cup of luke-warm earl grey. "I was just about to make a fresh one!" Ethyl stated as she reefed the cup from Joe's now empty hand. "Now go outside, the paper's on the porch table awaiting you ... give me 2 minutes!" and before Joe could even function, a jam'n'cream pancake was placed in his open hand.

"But..." he tried but Ethyl turned him and faced him towards the front door announcing her final instruction.

"GO!"

"Ethyl," Joe was more awake now after 4 pancakes and 2 cups of HOT tea, "Ethyl ... I need to tell you something ... it's serious." She just looked at him in the eyes and reached out and grabbed his hand before closed mouthed smiled. Joe continued, "I have found something out about ... oh boy ..." Joe hesitated and took a deep breath, "I believe William wasn't our perfect son Ethyl." Her attention was on listening to her husband and now he had her at least intrigued. "I think William did nasty things ... to children!" And Joe burst into tears as Ethyl stood and hugged her husband from the front with his head in her breasts. But why was Joe the only one crying and why hadn't Ethyl asked any questions and then it dawned upon him – Ethyl most probably already knew! Joe pushed her back so he could see his wife's facial expressions and emotions. "You knew! You fucking well knew!" Ethyl just shrugged her eyebrows and smirked that embarrassing smirk as she stood silent – she was guilty Joe knew and he vomited.

"Joe you are wrong!" Ethyl helped Joe off with his spewn covered komono. "William is a hero Joe. William was our good son Joe ... the perfect son so please don't taint his memory on the anniversary of his passing to the Lord." Ethyl seemed unaffected by his accusations and his mind was swirling as his head throbbed!

"I have proof Ethyl!" Joe did his best to clear his head as he went inside, "Follow me Ethyl, follow me!" He was pissed now and he would show her - he had proof!

They both stood in William's room at the side of the bed. Joe knelt down and lifted the quilt to unveil the toy-box to Ethyl – and there it was. Ethyl was silent as Joe reached under the bed and retrieved the dusty box.

"I think you should sit down for this!" he summoned Ethyl to sit next to him on the bed; she did. Joe opened the box slowly but his eyes widened as he looked inside only to find William's old toys, his old Ninja Turtles and his entire Star Wars collection and that was it! "What the heck? I'm telling you there was stuff in here!"

"Joe, I think all these dreams you've been having are stressing you... I'll ring Dr Lake, you might need a check-up again." Ethyl stood up shaking her head and left the room, "This is William's room Joe ... get out!" Ethyl's voice was now stern as Joe sat there on the bed holding Raphael in one hand and Chewbacca in the other. Joe was confused for he was so sure of this box's contents ... had this been a dream, just a dream after all? Then his bare foot stood on the broken latch ... and it was real. Did Ethyl move the evidence?

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## 15 - Favour for a friend

Joe met Dainty for lunch as he needed to get out of the house. A week had passed since his accusation of William's evil to Ethyl. Ethyl had made him go for a check-up with Dr Lake and beside his gammy gardener's knee, was as fit as an old fiddle could be and bluffed his way out of any mind problems. Conversation had been strained between Ethyl and Joe since that day – polite but minimal as Joe's accusation of William's character had strained their water-tight relationship.

"Why the long face ... Horse?" laughed Dainty George as Joe walked in. "God! Did someone find a dime and lose a dollar?" It was obvious Joe was not his usual smiley self but that was no excuse for Dainty to take it easy on him.

"Dainty ... can we speak in private?" Joe's solemn voice was enough now for his best friend to take him seriously. Dainty picked up the 2 already poured beers and followed his friend to sit outside on the greying sun-dried benches in private.

"What's up Joe?" there were no smiles passing across the weather-beaten table now.

"I don't really know how to say this Bud but here it is!" Joe spilled his beans and laid all of his terrifying thoughts to Dainty's aghast mouth. As Joe finished, he wept openly and his best mate held his shoulder tight as he sipped his beer to wet his ever-so dry mouth.

"So what are you gonna do? If you go to Demmins with this then you could ignite a volcano. Your life will never be the same! You'll be known as the father of a ...," Dainty was exactly spot on but Joe was shaking his head, "and what about Ethyl? If you're right ... she's an accomplice!"

"I don't care! Think of those poor parents ... but I need proof mate ... will you help me? Ethyl's been watching me like a hawk! Can you give this to Penny Stapleton at this address." He gave Dainty a crumpled envelope that was stuffed in his jean's back pocket with Penny's work address and a mobile phone number on the front. Joe looked at his watch and skulled the remains of his beer, "Ethyl will be wondering ... I've gotta go Daints."

Dainty just sat there as his friend seemed to vanish before his very eyes, he was gone that quick. He looked at the envelope and wondered what was inside but accepted that it was not for him to really know (and he already knew too much) otherwise he would've been told ... he accepted his role was just the courier.

Five times that day he did his best to contact Penny by phone but on the last effort he gave in to break his usual 'Fuck all Answering Service Rules' and left a message,

"Hi Penny ... my name is George Dainty and I'm ringing on behalf of Joe Scott. He said you would understand as I have an envelope to give you from him about his son. Please contact me on this number so we can arrange a meeting. " Dainty hung up and placed the envelope on his wooden table as he turned on his old TV and sat in his old vinyl recliner lifting the footrest as he ripped open a cold can of Bud.

Dainty awoke around midnight needing a piss bad after the six pack he had finished before falling asleep watching a 'Cheers' repeat. He was making his way to the toilet when he noticed the letter on the table was not how he left it, so he prolonged his bursting bladder to inspect it. The letter was torn to a hundred pieces.

"What the heck?" as he picked up the torn letter. Dainty didn't have time to respond to his own question when he felt the sharp pain in his back and chest. He looked down and the ornamental Japanese sword that had hung above the table for the last 15 years was now protruding from his chest. Dainty froze and then he tasted blood – lots of blood, for his throat had been slashed as well. You would think pain would be your last memory but for George Dainty it was simply the embarrassment of knowing he had just peed himself.

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## 16 - Done to Death

Sheriff Demmins was the one who found Dainty's rotting body a week later after Joe raised concerns his friend never contacted him after their last meeting. And the smell from outside Dainty's house was enough of a signal to ring the police. The odour was definitely *death*. Demmins walked outside and shook his head to Joe, no words needed to be said again.

"I'm sorry Joe." And that was it. Dainty was gone.

Forensics took over as Demmins and Joe were faced with Penny's in your face camera and questioning, while Demmins removed his latex gloves.

"So Sheriff Demmins, can you clearly confirm that this is now a murder scene?"

"Penny you know how this works! I will release an official statement as soon ..."  
Tony turned away from the camera grabbing Joe by the arm to follow, "as we know more."

Demmins ignored Penny's persisting questions as her cameraman did the quickstep shuffle behind her doing his best to keep it rolling.

"Sheriff, did you find the letter? And has this got anything to do with the missing children murders from years ago?" Penny now had Demmin's full attention as he stopped dead in the tracks and turned to her. He put his hand over the camera and signal the cut-throat signal to stop filming – NOW!

"Penny ... what letter and why would you bring that up? What do you know? Are you saying Mr Dainty was involved?" Demmins was now in her face and she was the one leaning back. Joe stepped in for the rescue,

"Tony, it's me you need to speak to ... we have a hunch, I wrote the letter to Penny," he nodded in Penny's direction and continued, "We think my William might have something to do the unsolved cases!" There he had said it and said it out aloud and the blanket of weight seemed to lift a fraction from his ever-so tired shoulders ... it was now Tony's problem. Demmins looked at Joe and looked at Penny, then turned to Randy the cameraman,

"You ... take a hike!" His order was direct and Randy nodded and exited towards the camera-van. "You two know something ... start talking but first what has Dainty's murder got to do with this?"

"Dainty was supposed to give that letter to Penny for me" stated Joe. Demmins lit a previous home-made rollie and offered one to Joe and Penny who both declined



as Penny took the reins and started from the top but Demmins asked the last question,

“What was in that letter?”

Penny's report on Dainty's murder had the town talking and Demmin's statement was the usual cop shit that you always hear with nothing of any substance except they were expecting to make an arrest soon so until then stay at home and don't walk the streets alone at night, which made no sense at all Joe thought as his best friend was murdered in his own house but keeping your doors locked did!

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## 17 - Hunch

Dainty's cremation was a small one and only a dozen or so of his bingo friends turned up to pay their respects. Joe and Ethyl had organised it all as George had no family of such. Sheriff Demmins and Penny Stapleton had been the only two from outside of Dainty's tiny circle. The wake was held at Joe and Ethyl's house where Ethyl's scones were demolished way before the sandwiches were. With all the official pleasantries out of the way and Ethyl consumed with placing even more food on the tables, Joe, Penny and Demmins were able to talk while the Sheriff was having a cigarette outside on the porch.

"So Sheriff, did you find anything?" Penny's reporting impatience was as big as her eyes as they bugged at Demmins.

"I have a hunch but I can't tell you yet ... sorry. I need to check something first." Demmins smiled and shrugged his shoulders but the unspoken words between them, is where it would stay for now. The three joined the others and it wasn't long before Demmins and Penny made their farewells and left.

Georgina and Nino were last to leave after Georgina and Ethyl cleaned up. Ethyl and her best friend had worked their butts off today and George could see his wife struggling through the pain of death once more as this was too close to William's anniversary. But the sickening feeling that Dainty's murderer was still out there and the burning question if William had a partner in crime ate away at Joe. Ethyl went straight to bed while Joe sat on the porch in the gentle breeze with a glass from William's bottle of Chivas on ice. It hadn't been touched since the last time yet Joe had a feeling – he needed to finish it ... and finish it all!

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## 18 - Demmins

There were seven case files laid out on Demmin's kitchen table next to the freshly made coffee and the cigarette burning slowly in the ashtray. He re-opened the first case file and it was like yesterday to see little Cathy Roundtree was still a schoolgirl in these photos – a dead schoolgirl! He touched his own face and he could feel time had touched him for he hardly ever needed to shave when he was a young man (and during her investigation) but the stubble reminded him that he was no longer the same person. Years of police work and their walls of protection had been built over time to protect his own sanity and they were now rock solid. But little Cathy was his first painful brick laid and for fuck's sake, she was only a child! Nothing is worse and he still admitted - nothing ever could be.

All he needed was one piece of evidence and surely he had missed something in his youth – something that was right there under his nose? And there it was! And it was little Cathy Roundtree who gave it to him. It was so obvious and how could he miss it?

Demmins stood up pulled his uniform jacket from the back of his chair and put it on. He downed the rest of his luke-warm coffee and stubbed his dying rollie. He must get to Joe now! The truth was here!

The axe was sharp and split the Sheriff's skull like a blade through an apple. Blood spurted all over the case files on the table as his body fell forward then downwards. It was all too quick and Demmin's wall of protection had come crashing down to reality.

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## 19 - Black

"Joe ... Demmin's is dead! Murdered! His head was split in two with an axe!" Penny's voice was very shaky on the end of the line as Joe was silent as a mouse. "I think we might be next Joe?" and there was more silence between them. "Someone knows about us Joe ... what we're doing, what we're looking for ... it's not William!" Penny sounded terrified as Joe's brain felt like exploding with inner questions of how, who and why.

"Penny, calm down ... we need to stay calm." And as he was still holding the faded green wall phone in the kitchen Ethyl walked by smiling,

"Who's that dear? Everything alright? He didn't want to alarm her." Then it dawned on him like a road-train crashing into him – someone had done this to stop the truth and protect William's good name. Unfortunately, Ethyl's name topped the suspect list. And where was she yesterday when this happened – church bingo?

"I've gotta go ... ring you later." Joe hung up immediately for there was something he needed to check.

"Do you want bacon and eggs or French toast?" Ethyl smiled again at him like she didn't know a thing. "So who was on the phone, this early?"

"Tell ya later; French toast." Joe left her standing in the kitchen with a fry pan in her hand as he slammed the screen door behind him.

The shed door had been jimmied opened and that was for sure. Joe had locked it daily ever since a drunk sixteen year old Andy Peters had decided on his midnight walk home that Joe's prize-winning roses needed his own special pruning and had gone to Joe's unlocked shed, found some secateurs and began his creative touch. It was Joe who found him asleep on the porch next morning with an empty bottle of jack at his feet and the weapon of destruction next to it. Joe looked out to his front lawn only to see young Andy had cut off all the buds to all his near blooming roses and they were scattered all around the now bare stems. Joe was about to re-live the arse-kicking of Andy Peters when he brought himself back to the moment. The lock was still intact but the hinge had been pried from the shed. He opened the door and his worst suspicion was confirmed ... his axe was gone!

Joe fell to his knees and cried as his head throbbed with the reluctant admission that his wife was the killer. How could she? His thoughts swirled as he was sickened with the thoughts that she had murdered two very good friends and worse ... the Sheriff of Tallis! The murder weapon came from here! He must tell Penny ... and then his world went black.

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## 20 - Run rabbit run

Joe awoke in his bed and in his blue striped pyjamas and it was dark, he went to sit up but his head hurt and he swirled so lay back down again as the fear rose from inside. He looked around the room and he was alone! The curtain dancers were back as the 1/8 moon was sneering through the open window, down at him. His head hurt and he felt the back of his skull and it was bleeding, he had been hit with something. Joe's fear escalated as Ethyl had done this and she was going to kill him – he knew she would! He must escape ... get to Penny and get to the police!

The window escape made the most commonsense even if the fall was a little too high. His head still swirled but he fought the dizziness to stand and he was weak, he knew that. Joe pushed through the mosquito screen and it made a big enough hole for him to squeeze through. But he could hear something – someone was coming! Panic was taking over his disorientated body as he hurried to pull himself through the hole with the incentive that it would be Ethyl and another garden tool to finish him. Joe hit the ground landing on his side and it winded him.

The noises were rising and it was the scratching sound - a sound of *death* coming for him! Was this the reaper sound he thought as he gasped for air? It cut through his soul as he lay frozen and waited for the pain to happen. But it never did! Joe's lungs refilled with oxygen and he was able stand or at least hunch and he shuffled as fast as he could in his blood and now dirt stained pyjamas towards town and away from this nightmare.

He had banged like a madman on their only neighbour's - the Johnson's front door but no one was home, so Joe couldn't chance staying here – she would find him. It was inevitable to just keep moving away from here.

Joe was weak and he knew it! Ethyl would catch him easily so he must hide 'til morning and then get to Penny ... she would know what to do ... he prayed. He was far enough from the scratching and Ethyl.

Sleep did come finally as he lay in a fetal position underneath the Post Office front steps, he knew he was safe ... for at least now.

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## 21 - Run rabbits run

“Come on Joe answer!” Penny’s third attempt at ringing him had her worried. Joe hadn’t called her back as he said and now it was after 11:00pm she had tried at 7:00 then 9:00 and now she was worried why had not either Joe or Ethyl answered? Her mind played cruel games and she imagined the worst and then it went deeper ... had the killer finished Joe and Ethyl and what if she was next? Penny grabbed her car keys and her leather shoulder bag as she ruffled through it confirming her pepper spray was in there. She descended the three flights of stairs in a near jog and ran to her parked red 1990 beat-up Toyota hatchback. The car refused to start on first click and even the second as Penny checked the mirrors as fear of the impending flooded in, whispering, “C’mon, c’mon.” The Corolla started and she reversed and sped out of the fluorescent lit car park into the dead of night, along the moonlit street and headed for the Tallis police station. It was time to end this insanity.

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## 22 - Fate

Joe awoke to the sound of an owl hooting in the tree out front of Tallis Post Office. It was still pitch black beside the filtered rays from Mr Moon and his devilish grin. The moon was high so it was still the middle of the night. His head was throbbing and weeping. Joe had rested and calmed enough to know he needed medical attention and before morning.

After checking to see if all was still clear he exited his resting hide-away and recommenced his zombie shuffle towards Tallis Hospital and then it happened and just like a horror movie always plays out, a car stops dead in front of him with the headlights trapping its victim within (him). Joe accepted Ethyl had found him and now he would accept his fate for he was too tired and weak to fight.

“Joe ... is that you?” Penny’s voice filled his ears and the tears of thankfulness flowed freely. “Are you alright? What the fuck happened?” She jumped out and grabbed the old man who was close to collapse.

“Eth ... Ethyl.” It was all Joe could get out. Penny helped manoeuvre Joe to her passenger seat where he slumped against the door after Penny closed it.

“I’ll get you to the hospital Joe ... it’ll be okay Joe!” She was lying but mostly to herself. But for now Joe’s health was her foremost priority. Again the lights went dim for Joe – he was safe for now just as his last vision was the car clock flashing 11:45pm.

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## **23 - Wake up**

Joe awoke and it was daylight and the sun was blinding as the pain! This was not a hospital bed under his back but dirt and rocks. Joe managed enough to turn his head and view the sight of Penny's car crash with the old oak on Jefferson Drive. Penny, he must get to Penny! He turned himself sideways and then was able to sit up. Joe crawled to the car wreck and the passenger door was wide open. With all his might Joe pulled himself up and dry-called her name for a response,

"Penny ... Penny are you ..." but she was not as he saw her body slumped over the steering wheel, facing his position with one of the wipers protruding from her left eye socket, "Oh no ... no no no!"

Joe slumped as his world of hope caved in ... then a car – a stranger's pulled up as he closed his eyes.

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## 24 - Relevant chaos

Sometimes the unpredictability of life is all relevant chaos. We all believe that things are meant to happen for a reason, it is a part of human nature to do so, just as the denial is! It won't happen to me! But, poor little Johnny did you hear about him? Yet as Joe awoke it was the irrelevant chaos that had somehow taken place for he did not awake in a hospital but back in his own bed and at night with the broken screen flapping, next to the dancing curtains. Ethyl had found him – it was Ethyl and she was torturing him!

Joe's instinct was now to survive; death would not claim him yet! He was weak but could feel no broken bones from the accident and he must defend himself and quickly. He managed to stand holding the bed and now he felt the pain in his left ankle and the memory of spraining it from the previous jump and now it was worse. Joe needed a weapon to defend himself and from his murdering wife's forthcoming attack, a kitchen knife will do.

It was quiet and only Joe's heartbeat could be heard as the fluttering screen. One step at a time Joe did his best to ignore the pain and slithered his way from the bedroom to the kitchen. He could not hear her and the house was dark so he prayed to his God that she wasn't here at all. The Kitchen was dark but the moon shone enough for Joe to find his way to the knife block. Now he was rushing and he had made it and he reached for the knife but it was gone – all the knives were gone! Then he saw her!

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## 25 - Cold Ethyl

Her body had bled out as she lay on the kitchen floor face down with all the knives protruding from her back except the bread knife as it accepted its role as solely the bread cutter. Joe cried as he held his wife's greyed rigamortis hand that was still clutching the bloodied meat tenderiser. Ethyl had been dead for a while and now he wondered if she was dead yesterday when he judged and crucified her for the current killings. But to make this worse Joe reminded himself that this meant the killer was still alive and he would be next! But who was left and how did he get back here? No one unless ... Georgina or Nino? Randy the cameraman? What about Father Gormon? That shithead kid Andy the rose killer? What about the parents ... of course it was one of the murdered kid's parents! Then he heard the scratching sound and it was coming from William's room.

Joe removed a knife from Ethyl's torso and stood up ... it was now time to face the Devil whoever he/she was! He made his way as he cried revenge for Ethyl, Tony, Penny, Dainty and all the children that had been innocently taken and he accepted his world would most probably end tonight and he would join them all except for one thing ... his fear. Now Joe had killed his fear!

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## 26 - The prodigal son

He swung the bedroom door open and there he stood, the Devil himself and it was William, looking out the window in his full dress military uniform. William was slightly see-through as he turned and Joe raised his knife and screamed to him.

“You can kill me son just like the others but I am NOT scared of you! You monster!” and Joe spat on William’s bedroom floor. William’s ghost turned to his father and shook his head in a no-no movement as Joe rushed him and thrust the knife into his chest, but he fell straight through William’s vision and hit the wall making his already beaten body fall to the ground in a slumped position. The ghost was now standing and facing Joe from the doorway and still shaking his head. Joe regained his stance and screamed, “Well kill me then son or go to Hell!” William’s ghost raised his hands in a magician’s sort of hand gesture and Joe’s feet left the ground, he was dangling mid-air and frozen against the wall. Then Joe’s body floated towards his son’s ghost and he again fought the rising fear that was returning as the scratching started and it grew louder and louder and etched scars deep within Joe’s soul! William’s ghost placed his hand on Joe’s forehead – it would be over soon. The scratching and the fear disappeared to a distant place.

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## 27 - Show me

It all made sense to Joe now and it was William who had shown him from the other side. His son was no monster as his wife was either ... they were both there for him always. The only crime William had committed was cleaning up and protecting what he believed was his father's one misguided indiscretion – the murder of little Jackie Thompson! Yes William did know and the pictures filled Joe's repressed memory spaces as William lowered his hands and Joe to the ground where he slumped as he remembered even more of this forgotten nightmare.

The scratching sound of death had originally started when he was locked in his father's old trunk for hours on end as his punishment for nearly anything, he had spent too many hours locked in there scratching his nails to bleeding point and screaming to father's deaf ears. William had shown him the scratching had now become the reason for his way of punishing the world and all the naughty children it owned.

Little Cathy Roundtree's murder was first to return as her sexual attack and Joe vomited. One by one the children returned as did the ghosts appear in William's bedroom standing behind William as if for security or protection from Joe the Monster. He could see their faces just looking at him, little Cathy, Jackie and it was him who picked up Billy in the family Land-Rover not William and it was his voice not William's he had heard change.

Joe was howling out loud when he relived the murders of his friends and Ethyl. He had stabbed Dainty, slashed his throat and watched him die, just as Demmins and poor, poor Penny Stapleton whom had tried her best to help Joe only to end up with her own pepper-spray in her eyes as Joe turned the wheel towards the tree before jumping. Penny was crushed but still very alive when he finished her with the windscreen wiper into the brain. Ethyl, his beautiful trusting Ethyl, knowing her husband had weird short blackouts every now, never really concerned her as there so very random. Years could pass between episodes. It was that day she found him passed out in the garden shed she started to worry as when he awoke quite angry, he had scared her. She helped him to bed and to put on his pyjamas but not for long as his 'Scratcher' was here and followed her unsuspectingly to the kitchen, where he stabbed her to death. She did her best to fight him off with the meat tenderiser only getting one good hit in to Joe's skull, before he stabbed every kitchen knife in her, then returned to his bed to rest and bleed.

Joe cried as their ghosts appeared one by one as he remembered as well and it hurt more when they all smiled at him as if to say,

"It's okay Joe, we understand you were very sick, very sick and we forgive you."

Father Gormon's ghost was here now and then Joe saw it all. Father Gormon was the mystery car at Penny's accident before his black-out released 'The Scratcher' who accepted the father's help. Joe glanced out the bedroom window and he could see Father's Gormon's car parked in the front yard and his deceased body decaying in the front seat where Joe had strangled him from behind with his very own rosary beads, until no oxygen left or entered the priest's body.

The sickness had returned to him fully now and he could feel the anger and emptiness inside but this time it was mixed and not separated from his good emotions. 'The Scratcher' and Joe were now one.

It was remorse he could feel and he had never felt that in his darkness before and the truth was in his face – he belonged to the Devil!

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## 28 - Acceptance

William's ghost changed. His uniform faded and his face thinned as his hair lengthened and his facial hair grew. The uniform was now robes as his ghost was clearly not William anymore but the Son of God or the vision we all know as our lord Jesus. Joe cried for forgiveness and he felt it as the children huddled to their saviour. Ethyl reached out to touch Joe's outstretched hand but he could not feel her. Then they all seemed to fade off one by one to a whitish distance and Joe screamed.

"No please don't leave me, please don't leave me!" Joe cried as they disappeared and he knew they were all going to Heaven.

The last to go was William's Jesus ghost and now Joe was alone.

The room was dark and dead quiet as he sat against the wall wondering. Then the scratching started up again but it was louder, much louder than he had ever heard before and he saw it and it wasn't William this time ... it was the Reaper himself and yet fear didn't come with him it was *death* alone. The Reaper floated towards Joe and picked up the knife and placed it at Joe's feet. Joe accepted the knife and nodded, he understood it was his time. So Joe thrust the knife as hard as he could into his own heart as the pain confirmed his action.

Joe slumped to the floor as the faceless reaper seemed to now have eyes – red eyes looking at him but it was not eyes, it was numbers 11:45. Joe felt his body weaken, as the scratching quieted, as the pain lifted from his dying body. The Reaper reached out with his skeleton pointer finger and touched Joe's heart for his final breath as his eye's flashed - 11:52.

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# ***Crying Eyes***

*Climb your way to the ceiling  
Christ! This'll take some healing  
No lights work - still you wanna cross anyway*

*Power of mind, power of will  
Simply believing the score is nil  
Swing like a man - send burden back to where it came*

***I never said that this'd be easy  
I never said that this would be fun  
Cry, cry and cry with your crying eyes***

***I never said pain would be leaving  
I never said that this would be fun  
Cry, cry and cry with your crying eyes***

*Never forget what's within your soul  
The blood that runs leaves you cold  
Time will heal us - every dog still has his day*

*So place your trust in a place  
Hide your face within your face  
Keep faith believing - keys to gates always open gates*

***I never said that this'd be easy  
I never said that this would be fun  
Cry, cry, and cry - with your crying eyes***

***I never said pain would be leaving  
I never said that this would be fun  
Cry, cry and cry - with your crying eyes***

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# Second Chance

## 1 - Intro

I tried to find the right words but they just refused to come so as usual I swore!

"Fuck!" *There, that felt much better.*

"Fuck you too!" Casper turned to walk out and I grabbed his right shoulder and he came to an abrupt halt.

"Dad! Let me the fuck go!" Casper wasn't that small anymore and he was telling me ... *don't make this physical!*

"Look ... look we need to sort this shit out!" I pleaded as Casper pulled away from my grip and I saw the death arrows release from his brown eyes ... and hit their target - me. I let him leave, we would resolve this later. And as he slammed the front door I heard,

"Later Dad."

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## 2 - The plan

It only seemed like yesterday, me picking up this tiny baby and from the moment he breathed oxygen, changed my life or at least the meaning and purpose of it! I was never a religious man but I always had faith – faith in being a good person and followed by faith in being a good father. Yet somehow I had derailed and my son's brown eyes told me so. Where I actually went wrong wasn't quite as clear as the outcome but at least I could admit that this was the truth.

I think it started when Casper was only twelve and almost overnight. One day he was this beautiful rugby playing boy with above average grades, then the next moment he was an emotionless demanding kid whom believed he was owed the world (not schooling) ... and I would be paying on demand.

By the time he was sixteen it was all too late for me as I had already lost him. It started with pot smoking (who knows what other drugs as well) was way above what I did at that age. I'm not a prude by far for fucks sake! I admit I'd partaken in my fair share of pass-the-spiffs behind H – block after school, bought he odd ounce or two in my time. But those days Casper's eyes were constantly stoned and the aftermath of coming down was so hard to handle ... so fuck it! And that is where the silence started.

Casper turned eighteen a few months back and no partying with Dear Ol' Dad happened. He came home after drinking (officially) three days later smelling like the B.O. and Vomit Stained King of Australia!

I suppose you are wondering what or where is his mother? Julie and I were married in September of '82 as the two young lovers we once were. It was a wonderful marriage for the first ten years, right up to the time I cheated on her and our rock-solid relationship. I pretended I never saw it coming but the truth is ... it always was! What is that saying? *'Once a cheater ... always a cheater!'* Maybe I don't like to think about it or the guilt that comes afterwards but I do admit it ended something quite special and Casper was only nine at the time, when the only woman I truly loved, disappeared from my life.

Julie was diagnosed with cervical cancer when Casper was twelve and after two long years of pain and torture in chemo, she went and died anyway. It was hard for me to watch her die from a distance and all I really wanted, was her forgiveness. Did I deserve to see it? No! But that didn't mean that I didn't want it ... of course I did! This was my fault and another wall between my son and me.

But life goes on and we both live with each other day to day awaiting for change – any change. I love him so deep inside and if only we could turn back time to correct our mistakes or better still show them who we really were? Not just the

shell of the person they believe we are now. If I had one wish that would be it! I would grab him by the scruff of the neck and drag him back through time in a time-machine with my ghosts of past. I would say two weeks would be sufficient, surely he would see where my foundation was built from ... just maybe I would come out of it all being seen as a better father and human being. But simply dreaming is not the solution here so I cracked open my first stubbie as I lit myself a rollie on the back deck to the far-off sounds of somebody having a way worse day than I was – *sirens!* I blew out the first lungful of smoke as I toasted to myself,

“Cheers Big Ears!”

And then I knew it was now or never.

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### 3 - Fix it NOW!

I loaded my shotgun as I heard Casper slam the door shut not even attempting to give a fuck whether he woke me or not. I glanced over at the time as I flick clicked the barrels shut – it was 4.13am. I lowered the gun to my right side as I leaned over and drained the last of my warm can of beer - it was time!

Casper turned on the lounge room light as I raised the shotgun point blank to his chest. Almost reflex-like Casper threw his arms upwards in an '*I surrender*' stance.

"What-wha the fuck Dad? what the f...?"

"Sit down Casper." I ordered in a deep lowered voice as I pushed the double barrels and guided him to the chair I placed especially for our little journey together. Casper teared up with fear as my frown only confirmed to him – *I wasn't to be fucked with!*

"Pick up the gaffa tape and tape your ankles to the legs of the chair!" Casper was shaking and his eyes were red but I couldn't establish if it was fear or drugs ... most probably drug infused fear then! "Now place your hands around the back of the chair and through the zip-tie I have there already."

"But Dad ... why?" Now Casper was sobbing.

"Just fucking do it Casper or I'll blow your fucking brains all over the fucking TV behind ya!" I re-aimed the barrels to place them straight between his eyebrows. "Do it son ... 'cause I fucking will!"

Casper's hands found the out-stretched zip-tie and I reached around and tightened it as his hands clasped each other in a locked finger grip.

"Right Casper now's time for you to listen to me ... and I mean LISTEN CLOSELY! Me and you ain't been spending a lot of time together lately ... so we will be for the next few days, just like father and son ... and doing it all Dad's way!"

As Casper was now restrained I lowered and placed the shotgun against my chair as I opened a bottle of water and hand gestered a '*do you want some?*' tilt towards him,

"I suggest you take a sip or two as you're gonna get thirsty!"

"Dad," Casper whispered or more like whimpered, "Why? What the hell? This has gotta be a joke ... hasn't it?"

Then I poured some water into his mouth and he swallowed two or three gulps. I placed the bottle down and picked up the gaffa tape at his feet and tore a piece off, big enough to cover his mouth ... and it fit perfectly.

“Good night Casper ... we’ll be talking more in the morning.” I grabbed his hair forcefully pulling his head back as I leant in and whispered, “Sleep tight ... don’t let the bed bugs bite!” Then I bit his ear.

I turned the lights out as I heard Casper whimper again. My bed had never felt better and I drifted off quite easily and quickly for the best night’s sleep I’d had in years ... I was in total control for the first time in an eternity.

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#### 4 - New day

“Good morning Son.” I smiled as he slumped in the chair he had been restrained to for coming on five hours now. It was obvious he had not slept and he was crying but I was unaffected by his suffering just as he had been re mine for how many years now? I made my way to the kitchen and put the jug on and went for my morning piss.

I knew Casper’s bladder would be bursting by about now so I grabbed a blue plastic bucket from the laundry and returned to the holding area. I placed the bucket underneath Casper’s chair and said,

“There you go, piss your pants but I’m not letting you out!” The jug boiled so I exited and made myself a brew ... a fucking strong one to accompany my first durrie of the day.

On returning to the lounge room it was obvious that Casper’s eyes were pleading with me. I could read them clear as day, *‘Let me go please.’* But the journey had only just begun and we had such a long way to travel!

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## 5 - Cards on the table

After my breakfast of bacon and eggs I thought best to start this ... he had waited long enough. I placed the wooden laminate coffee table between his chair and mine (which were face to face). I pulled out the tattered old Monopoly game that was in the buffet and set up the board game.

"I'm the boot ... you know I'm always the boot! You wanna be the car ... remember? You're always the car!" Casper's eyes darted left and right as tears trickled down his face.

"Suppose I'll roll for you then Bud as you're a little tied up! Ha!" He didn't laugh at my crappy Dad joke but I thought it was fucking hilarious! "Go to jail ... do not pass go! You're fucked me ol' fruit gum!" I knew my teasing was giving him the shits but I was doing this to let him truly know ... who was truly in control - lil ol'me!

We played (or more like I did) for about two hours before I announced my win,

"Dad wins again eh!"

I had left him there on the chair for a fair few hours to reflect on the situation. Casper was exhausted I could see, so I tore off his gaffa taped mouth piece and he gulped the water that I poured into it. I made him a vegemite and cheese sandwich and fed it to him but he did not say a word. After his replenishments, I retaped his mouth shut and Casper tried to put up a fight by twisting and turning but it was futile.

I turned on the tele and maneuvered Casper's chair so he could watch it too!

"Scooby-Doo! Fuck I love Scooby ... you do too ... remember?" I slapped him hard on the back as he jerked forward by surprise. We watched together as Scooby and the gang solved another ghostly mystery. I flicked through the channels and fuck all else was on but some kiddie's arvo show or Ridge deciding whether to fuck Taylor or Brooke? So I turned it off.

"Shit mate ... all shit!" I returned his chair to the original *face me* position as asked,

"Wanna beer?"

Casper nodded and I stood up and made my way to the kitchen lighting a previously rolled smoke. I ventured back in with two coldies and cracked one and it frothed a bit, so I sucked the bugger to avoid the carpet spill (even though it was already freshly piss-stained). The beer was icy cold and it was quite humid probably about thirty three degrees today I guessed. Casper's eyes were pleading and focusing on the second beer. His Adam's apple was bobbing up and down as it knew it was coming and to quench his thirst ... but was it?

I skulled the first tinnie and crushed the can followed by throwing it at Casper's feet. On cracking the second I could see his despair, as reality was smashing him in the balls for he knew – no beer for him as I drank it!

"If you behave yourself Son ... tomorrow ... understand?" The boy was infuriated and bouncing his anger up and down on the chair as I slowly sipped on his beer and dragging on a fag. His temper was escalating so I sat in front of him and grabbed his throat,

"Now settle down Casper ... SETTLE THE FUCK DOWN!" My raised voice got his attention and then he did rather smartly, "Good boy ..." and I patted his shoulder, "- good boy, good boy."

I tore off the gaffa tape from his mouth and gave him a sip of beer ... he gulped it down. After a drag on my cig and another final sip, I then replaced the used tape back over his mouth,

"Now that's better ain't it mate? Much better!" *Yeh, I know I'm a big softie!* Casper's eyes lowered as he nodded so I had a feeling and asked,

"You probably need to shit right?" His head was nodding and again he was sobbing under the gaffa. I let the boy piss his pants but that was punishment enough (besides I didn't want to smell his shitty pants!) so I grabbed my shotgun and placed it at the back of his skull where he couldn't see that I had let my grip go, with the stock between my legs, resting tightly in my crotch, while I blindfolded him. I cut the gaffa tape from his ankles with a kitchen knife and lifted him upwards so his arms made their way over the top of the chair. He was standing with me right behind him with the gun back in my hands and at his back.

"Now don't be a fool Casper ... I don't want to kill you mate." I walked him to the loo and he knew the way blindfolded ... made me think that he'd done this many a time before either drunk or stoned amongst the darkness, late at night.

I dropped his trousers and he sat leaning slightly forward re his arms still restrained behind his back, where he pissed and shit ... as you would.

"Bend over Son," but he didn't want to and I could hear him mumble a 'No', "Do you really think I can't wipe your arse for you? C'mon I've done this a few times before mate." So I forced him over and wiped it!

The night came around and I was hungry so I knew he must've been starving. Pie and mushy peas topped with Worchester sounded good to me ... perfect footy food and the footy was coming on soon.



“Do you wanna watch some footy mate,” I knew he would agree and he did.

The pies were ready at kick-off so I let them cool a bit. I didn't want to burn the poor fucker's mouth! The microwave dinged and the mushy peas were ready for the pour over. I cut Casper's into small mouthfuls.

I fed my son as we watched the Broncos flog the Sea-Eagles together. I was getting into the spirit of it yelling at the tele but Casper was just sitting there quiet as a mouse. This is where it all went wrong. For the last thing I saw just before the lights went out, was that Casper had his hands free and the wooden stock of the shot-gun swinging through the air, as it took me down ... and quickly!

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## **6 - Down and out**

I quickly ripped the gaffa tape that held my legs to the chair. The old bastard was down and out – thank fuck! What the fuck was he thinking? I had to be quick as Dad was already stirring. I grabbed the open packet of zip ties that he'd left on the sideboard and my hands were shaking but I managed to get one around the middle of the curved leg of the lounge which was way too heavy for him to lift by himself. I looked around the room for something that I could zip-tie his out-stretched left leg to ... the TV cabinet! The drawers removed, left me frame work so I was able to zip one around the frame and one around his leg. Dad's leg was raised up a bit from the floor but I had no choice ... he was going to be pissed when he wakes up ... but then again so the fuck am I!

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## 7 - Tables turned

I checked the load of the shot-gun and I had it aimed at the stupid prick as he came back to the real world. My heart was pumping so fast and the adrenalin was making my head feel like exploding.

"Welcome back you miserable old fuck!" My voice was shaky but my tone was authoritative. His eyelids were fluttering as the glow of the tele streamed into them and the questions were about to fill his confused mind just as mine had gone through over the past day.

"Oh Fuck!" The old bastard was back and understood the situation or more simply the depth of the shit he was now up to his neck in. I greeted him with,

"Yeh Fuckhead! Time for YOU to do some listening ... and not flapping your gums!"

"What you gonna do ... shoot me? No you won't - you gutless little cunt!" And the stupid fuck took a swing at me with his free arm, so I shot one into the ceiling as he yelled,

"Shit!" Now the old fuck decided to give me the respect I so deserved as the plaster from the ceiling covered his face with white dust and plaster particles. Living out here on a property, 20k's from town assured me I could fire away all I wanted – no one would hear it or even care!

"I'm in charge Dad ... you are gonna answer some fucking questions ... before I make you suffer!" The room was silent ... you could've heard a pin drop, "So start the fuck talking ... why?"

He looked up to me and his eyes welled up,

"Because you're a fucking cunt of a son!" You had to give it the decrepit old fucker ... he had balls - BIG balls! A loaded shot-gun in his face and he still didn't pull any punches!

"Elaborate?" As I sat down with both barrels still aimed his way.

"What's not clear? I haven't seen my son in fucking years ... just some drug-fucked grunting zombie that reminds me of him."

"And that gives you the right to take him/me ... hostage?" My question was feasible.

“Fucking oaf it does! I brought you into this world from the jizz of my ballsack and I’ll take you out ... if it comes down to it!”

I lost my temper and fired another shot at the ceiling before reloading then screamed,

“You stupid fucking asshole ... I’ll fucking take you out!”

I leant in and king-hit him with the shotgun stock again and his arrogance went fucking down as the claret poured from his nose ... I’d broken it. Then the cunt started chuckling and that infuriated me even more!

“I should SHOOT YOU for what YOU done to me!” I screamed at him then I started pacing as my heartbeat raced to a new unheard of speed (without the good stuff helping to kick it up!)

“Put the gun down Casper,” Dad’s voice was calm, “Just put it down mate ... we’ll talk.”

“I don’t think YOU tell me what to do OLD MAN!”

And I left him there to rot in Hell as I decided to have a shower to wash the piss smell off and put some clean clothes on ... but first I headed for the fridge and skulled one his precious beers .. in front of him.

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## 8 - Dad's dilemma

I wasn't sure how pissed off Casper actually was? I heard him grumbling in the kitchen and then the magical hiss of the can of beer being opened so I asked anyway,

"I wouldn't mind one Son, you have one too!" Yeh, I knew the bastard would just ignore me but it was worth a try. The little prick had fucking got me good'n'proper and totally by surprise, so I needed to get to him from under his skin. How the fuck did he get his hands out of the zip-tie? Fuck! He must've puffed up his hands a bit when I zipped them tight – but not tight enough! Didn't matter really, the tables had been turned except one major thing ... I was still in charge and unbeknown to Casper.

"Oi Cunthead! Get me a fucking beer or I'll get up and kick your fucking arse!" I knew that'd get a reaction. Casper came running back in and pegged a full tinnie, connecting with my face and a nice little reminder that my nose was actually already broken (*see I'm in charge ... he still comes running*) and then the pain intensified and was so intense my mind went dizzy and started swirling ... just before I passed ou-u-u...

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## 9 - Kick it out

I came to and it was dark and quiet; hours had passed. I could see the toilet light was on so I could just make out silhouettes of the various furnishings. I pulled at the sideboard to try and free my upright leg that was already well heading into the excruciating needles and pins feeling, but it was useless.

“Casper! Casper!” It was obvious he was gone ... and so was the shotgun. My face was itchy from the dried blood and the little bastard had zip-tied my other hand to my thigh while I was out cold ... I didn’t realise until I went to scratch my bloodied and plaster covered face that I couldn’t move it!

My left leg was still free though, so started kicking the framework of the TV unit that my other leg was restrained to. I kicked and kicked and kicked even fucking harder than I thought humanly possible. After half an hour I was truly fucked and about to give up (*teach me a lesson not to buy decent furniture like this and next time - chipboard crap*) when I heard the sweet sound of the Baltic reinforced pine frame ... crack! My energy was renewed and within five more minutes it was broken and my foot was free so I rested the tired leg. The pins and needles were so bad I had to keep it moving until it finally disappeared. I turned my body to face downwards then pulled my body up into a kneeling position. One arm still tied to my thigh, while the other still to the curved sofa leg. My thigh’s position had changed and the muscles tightened so now my left arm had been given a slight degree of movement and I was able to slip it through and out only ripping the skin off all my knuckles – small sacrifice.

I pushed as hard as I could with all my strength from the kneeling position to flip the couch – it was heavy but I did it easily with the assistance of adrenalin. The leg I was tied to was curved and the zippie was tight around the smaller circumference. I had bought the thickest zip-ties available, so knew they weren’t going to break anytime soon. With my free hand, I slowly began unscrewing the leg from the lounge. It was slow work – but I got there.

After popping three pain-killers (my head had taken a pounding –twice!) my nose needed attention so I made my way to the medical box in the bathroom under the sink. There was fuck all in it (I’d been meaning for years to top it with fresh shit) but I found some elastic tape and some cotton wool which was better than nothing. I stood up and faced the bathroom mirror and looked at my face covered in dried blood mixed with white plaster dust (as my new plaster hair style) and the crooked position of my nose ... *AAH FUCK! There goes my good looks!*

After plugging my swollen nose and cleaning up, it was time to get back to business – I had to be prepared. The little prick had taken my shotgun and this left

me weaponless! Searching the house I found what I needed – Casper's cricket bat! I test swung the fucker through the air and making my imaginary connection, *SIX!*

Yeh, this would suffice and get me out the shit.

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## 10 - Let's dance

For sure Casper had gone over to one of his drug-fucked mates place to get a hit. So I wasn't sure how long he'd already been gone or even if he was coming back? But I had to wait there in the silent darkness with a six-pack of XXXX tinnies and a couple of vegemite sandwiches, as well as a far few rollies keeping me company. I don't know why but I kept hearing that Bowie song from the 80's – '*Let's Dance*'? It stuck in my throbbing head as my mind played it over and fucking over!

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## 11 - The prodigal son returns

I heard my Harley rumble in *(the fucking little cunt took my fucking Harley ... FUCK!)*. So I waited behind the front door, crouching down like a panther ready to strike.

I swung hard and it would've made Boonie proud as I screamed!

"Welcome the fuck home son!"

I hit the prick across the back of the head as he walked through the entrance doorway ... and he went down like a sack of potatoes! Instinctually he dropped his shotgun stance to grab and protect his skull from the beating and the suffocating pain, for where I would NOT miss my one chance to regain the gun by hitting his gun arm with the bat. I was way too quick for the little cunt and he looked up at my eyes in the moonlight as he was kneeling holding his bloody head.

"Oh f-f-u-u-c-c-k-k!"

Casper's frustration was obvious as I threw the cricket bat outside to free both my hands for the shottie, as he screamed,

"Dad ... c'mon this has gone far enough ... too fucking far ... please!"

He was 100% correct of course, but all I could see was - my beautiful son's eyes in the moonlight and the size of his pupils from the drugs ... fucking drugs! I couldn't smell any pot on him so he was taking that evil chemical shit!

"Dad! Can't we just talk ... like men," he pleaded, "just like fucking men?"

I was silent. The upward motion of the barrels was enough for Casper to stay still caressing the split in the back of his head. With the gun in his face, we stood slowly then made our way back to the lounge room ... and Casper's favourite chair.

"Sit the fuck down." My tone was deep and volume low but it conveyed to him – I didn't have far to be pushed before I would - *end it ... and end it all for us both!*

There was no restraining this time as I faced my chair towards his with the shotgun connecting our two bodies,

"Okay son, let's talk, let's really fucking talk!"

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## 12 - Truth

The old bastard had balls as I said! I just never could deny that fact. How the fuck he did it (escaped) just amazed me! I could see the sideboard broken and the lounge tipped over ... and the chair's leg still zipped to his wrist, like an oversized watch. If there was any time to talk my way out of something, then it was the present!

"Dad, put the gun down," I glanced down to the remaining four beers still in their plastic six-pack ring, "let's have beer instead ...please." My tone was sincere and I could see a teardrop appear in his left eyeball.

"I don't think so mate."

"But Dad, enough is enough ... we need to fix this ... make it right." I hesitated then whispered, "I don't want to die, Dad." Dad's single teardrop was joined by one more in his right and that was it - I was winning!

"Why do you wanna live ... tell me?" His voice was cold and unmoving and he tightened his finger on the trigger, "I wanna know Casper, I really wanna know!"

But he never let me get a word in ... not just yet.

"If you want to live, then why the fuck, do you poison your body with that shit!" And the old bastard pointed to a sore on my arm, "Doesn't add up to me."

He wasn't finished.

"I lost you years ago ... lost you for good. Didn't I?"

"I was angry!" It was a start as the old bastard was communicating.

"And I have been too, you stupid little self-righteous prick!" The gun was pushed harder into my chest.

"But Dad ... I lost ... Mum."

"And I lost both of you!" Now the eyes were watery ... but they were mine. "I don't understand why you take that crap? It's no good for you Casper ... is it?"

There was only one answer, "No."

"So why do you do it?" Dad's eyes were bloodshot red.

"Makes me feel good ... and why do you drink that all the time? You're always pissed!" as I pointed to the beers. "One man's poison is another's ... you know what I mean. Don't we escape ... reality?"

"To escape reality? Why would you wanna do that ... it's all we fucking have idiot?"

Dad just didn't understand the way I felt – the burning anger, the hopelessness, the not wanting to be me or simply just dealing with things – my way, so who's the fucking idiot here?

"When Mum died ... so did I ... and I fucking miss her!" I was starting to get choky.

Then the old fart lowered the gun to the floor and grabbed the remaining beers and offered me one. I accepted with a nod and a small smile of hope as we both cracked them simultaneously. For the next five minutes we sat and drank warm beers in cold silence.

But I had defeated him with what he wanted to hear and with this stand-off, I never missed my opportunity and I stabbed him in the leg with the kitchen knife that he left sitting on the floor from my toilet break. The blade went in deep and his reaction was the same as my cricket batted head – nothing but pain and grab.

The shotgun was back in my control.

"Now it's time for you to die, you miserable old cunt! That's why I came back! To KILL you! That's it ... you are already DEAD to me!"

He never said a word, just lowered his head and grabbed the barrel and placed it on his cranium while the knife protruded from his leg.

I stiffened my stance and stated,

"I fucking will pull the trigger!"

And then the fuckhead decided to speak,

"Go ahead ... I'll be gone for good ... no more of your emotional punishment to accept!"

The old fart knew his mind-game words made me hesitate for a sec or two so he continued, "The cops'll catch you, that's for sure ... won't have to look too far, will they?" I strengthened my stance as I listened, "I 'spose at least in jail you won't have

to think about me. You'll be too busy trying to keep the cock out of your sweet little arse! Ooh! Nice'n'tight too ... I'd just seen it!"

The *FUCKHEAD!* But he was right (to a degree) as I didn't want to go to jail! I pulled my aim from his skull to the ceiling and fired one off again! Another perfect plaster hit covering him again! So I yelled,

"You fucking shit me!"

The old cunt was smirking ... he had won!

"Now ... do you wanna talk ..." cocking his head with that stupid mouth curl and eyebrow raise, " - properly?"

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### 13 - Winners and losers

We both sat there crying together as we watched a video of Mum on their wedding day; she was so young. Dad was a fucking mess and bawling like a baby and I had never seen him cry ever before, not even at Grandpa's (his own father's) funeral yet here he was watching her (as I was) - VERY alive and in love and it was him she was in love with.

"God, she was beautiful ... the most beautiful girl in the world!" Dad was sobbing as he wiped his red eyes. My eyes weren't much better but it was the cold hard truth as Mum was just stunning. The old bastard then went ahead and at least acknowledged what I already knew.

"I let her down mate ... I let you both down."

The home movie flickered and the scene changed ... I was a baby. Grandpa was still alive and was hugging Mum as she held me – I had just come home from hospital and I was their first grandchild. I hadn't seen this old movie since I was a kid; it made me smile.

"Man ... have a look how small you fucking were ... unbelievable." Dad's eyes were now smiling as his face was and I couldn't remember seeing him look at me this way ... ever. "Your Mum wanted to call you Aspen ... fucking Aspen!" His eyes looked upwards and continued, "That's when I reached into to my 'No fucking way' bucket and pulled out Casper as a name," he laughed, "you were nearly named after a fucking mountain!"

*Did he honestly not realise he named me after a fucking cartoon ghost instead?*

My mouth was getting dry from the home movies and the emotions they were stirring deep down.

Suddenly I was ten and happy ... so fucking happy playing rugby with Dad at the park while Mum filmed us both ... happy and I could hear her laughter as she filmed. I broke down as the emotions overtook my anger and I looked at the old bastard and even though he was more wrinkly and balding ... I could see the real him.

"Why Dad? Why did this end up like shit?" I questioned but we both knew the answer ... and it was Mum, without Mum we were both lost souls.

"Casper ... she would kick our balls!" Yeh! It was a statement and I never doubted it for a moment. She would kick mine for the drugs and just being an angry

bitter little fuck and him for being a cunt of a father ... let alone this whole stupid fucking ordeal called the present situation.

“She wouldn’t be happy about this shit, would she?” I asked him and for once, Dad was silent and just nodded. “Why did she have to die? I still don’t get it ... Mum didn’t deserve that!”

“Yeh mate, you’re right ... it should’ve been me.” Then he looked at me and knocked me for six. “I love you!”

I was at first shocked but then reality kicked me back to Earth ... and he had no right to love me.

“You love me? What a crock of shit! Fuck your love!” I spat at his feet as I lifted the shotgun and placed it on his forehead before finally speaking out loud what I felt inside for years, “I fucking hate you!”

Dad just lowered his head and opened his hands in the *‘that’s all I got ... I’m done’* gesture.

“Mate ... my leg is bleeding pretty bad?” Dad’s voice was of a beaten man and I lowered the firearm. He was holding his leg with the knife still in it ... he knew from doing first aid not to remove it (yeh I learnt that at school too!) but still the blood was pissing out.

“Fuck!” I screamed and ran to find the first aid kit and returned with the cotton wool and tape that was on the bathroom sink. I threw it to him and he did his best to pad around the protruding knife and wound the elastic tape around his leg – top and bottom.

The video was still playing without us watching and then I noticed it had changed to Mum’s funeral and I had never seen this and it was Dad on the screen and he was a fucking mess. I was watching it as if I wasn’t even there, yeh, I was but I was numb on that day and a young boy, yet today I wasn’t that boy and I could view it all as a man. I watched as the much healthier looking Dad needed to be assisted from his eulogy by his best friend - Jimmy. Then Dad could see my attention was fixed on the tele ... so then was his.

“That was the worst day of my life mate ... just the fucking worst!” He sobbed open and unashamedly then he thanked me, “Thank you for letting me show this mate ... I appreciate it ... truth!”

I nodded as what else could I do? There were no words that would suffice – even slightly.

My anger disappeared as quick as it had come ... this was insane! My emotions were up and down like a jack-rabbit. My hands were shaking so bad as I held the shotgun. It was hard to swallow as my mouth was dry. Then the video played the coffin being lowered into the ground ... and the memory of that nightmare – returned.

I threw the shottie across the room as Dad sat in the chair holding his face (not his leg) just crying.

*Why, Fucking why? ... How long has it been?* But still we were both so lost in life and all we could manage - was hating each other's guts!

We were pathetic!

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## **14 - My son**

My leg was throbbing but it was a dull throb and when I saw the coffin sink into the ground, the pain just disappeared; I was back there again. I turned and glanced at Casper's face ... it was my son's true face. I raised my hands to cover mine as for the second time in my life, I watched the one person's face I'd give my life for ... die yet again. It wasn't fair and was all too hard and I broke down.

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## 15 - Forgiveness

The coffin scene was just too much and my head was about to explode. So I blocked it out and looked at Dad. My dad was a mess and not just emotionally but also physically. He had lost a lot of blood from the knife wound and his broken nose was the icing on his cake.

I had never seen the old bugger this broken and raw before and I admitted – I didn't hate him at all ... I fucking loved him!

I stood up and helped him from the wooden hostage chair to the over-turned lounge.

"Help me flip it." Dad did as best as he could and I made him lay down and gently raised his knifed leg to a raised position, resting on the cushions before I spoke, "Dad ... you need to go to hospital ... you're pretty fucked up!"

He shook his head as he frowned,

"Not just yet mate ... not yet."

"But Dad ... the blood!" I pointed to the knife still sticking upwards, "You'll bleed to death if we don't!"

And then he grabbed my wrist with his hand still zip-tied to the chair leg. I sensed something was wrong, so I asked,

"What is it, tell me."

"I want to give you something," his eyes were welling again.

"Give me what?" I asked. He pointed to the sideboard and to the side glass cabinet piece, so I asked again, "What is it?"

"Up there, top shelf, in the shoebox," he summoned me to go get it so I did. I opened it while I was making my way back to the lounge and I saw it ... a DVD with **'For Casper'** inked on it in Mum's handwriting.

"I wasn't sure when I was supposed to give this to you ... so I guess it must be now."

My eyes were fixated on it, my only memories of Mum were ones that I had already lived before but here was something from beyond the grave ... a whole untouched, soon to become new memory.

Dad spoke,

“Mum left it for you. She said I was to watch it with you ... when we were ready.”

I was silenced and confused so I questioned,

“So why now?”

“Because it’s now or never ... this is both our crossroads mate, the only one we’ll most probably get.”

The old bastard was correct. We had fought, we had hated, we had cried and tasted each other’s blood and the ridiculous thing was that none of it mattered to either of us ... we just wanted to see Mum again - alive.

\*\*\*

## 16 - The message

Looking at Dad, he was still nodding for me to put it on, so I did. The Tele flickered as the home movie dubbed down was apparent. I watched with baited breath to see her ... and there she was, sitting up in her hospital bed smiling at me with her dark cancer eyes, her skin pale but she was alive! She was holding a picture of me when I was still eight or so. Dad was the cameraman as I could hear him mumbling something muffled like – ‘Are you ready to do this?’ plus his shaking of the camera was typical him – *hold it still Fuckhead!*

Mum opened the video with,

“Casper, my little Caspie Waspie!” And she pointed to my picture of me at the beach in the surf. Tears automatically flowed as I hadn’t heard that moniker in years – I had forgotten so much!

“Casper ... if you are watching this, then I guess a few years have flown by, since my passing.”

Mum was smiling but the word passing even made her eyes well – for it was her facing a cold hard truth and her own immortality. Then she drew a breath and continued,

“I can’t imagine how you got through all of this ... but I pray it was with your dad?” Dad spins the camera and there he is and he was crying but doing that stupid grin of his I now hate but use to love.

“We both love you Casper ... that is the one thing that has or will NEVER change ... we love you ... to death.” It was obvious Dad was crying as he filmed, the hand-held camera was shaking more. Then my mum told Dad what to do and he did! I instantly realised – without her in his life he had lost her directions.

“Stuart, just put the camera on the bed table facing me – flip the screen so we can see it and ... oh just let me,” she reached towards the lens filling the screen and the recording cut there. The movie flickered it’s grey wobbles and they were back, this time Dad was sitting next to Mum on the edge off her bed (the side without all the drips and hospital shit) and so she resumed,

“Sorry honey ... Dad stuffed up! Didn’t you?” Mum whacked him hard on the arm in joyful banter and he pretended to jump; this was the last time they would together, I was sure. “Anyway I’m guessing you’ve grown up and I hope Dad has done his best to bring you up as a bright young and respectful man, I always hoped you would be?”

My head lowered as I glanced at Dad with his beaten face covered in cotton wool but he wasn't watching - as he was as shamed as I.

"Casper ... you are alone – we know! Your father is human ... and he is alone!" The words were soul-drilling and I felt heartache deep inside ... if only I had some shit! Then Mum started the nightmare.

"Casper ... my only son, we have a problem,"

*What the fuck?* So I listened,

"If you are watching this then there's a real problem ... you!" My heart sank into my mouth. "Your Dad must be worried sick about you ... I would be too!" Mum paused and took a sip of water while Dad was lowering his eyes in the movie and doing exactly the same in unison back here in reality.

"It's the drugs isn't it Casper?" Mum eyeballed the lens and her honest eyes drilled me yet again, I mumbled back,

"Yes!"

Dad was silent and hadn't moved a muscle and was hanging on to every word he already knew.

"Honey! I hope you haven't hurt your Dad too bad?" Mum smiled as my eyes bulged and my tongue filled my throat – *Fuck off!* And my head was starting to spin as she continued her message from the darkness.

"Dad and I, (she paused and glanced at him) had made a decision to save you ... and now! If you think we would both let you ruin your life without trying everything - then you have forgotten us both!"

My fucking head was exploding in a mixture of emotions and pain ... and confusion! Then she announced the killer of all statements!

"The whole hostage idea was mine!"

Silence followed from the video and here at home, until it sunk in and I stood up and kicked my chair over as Dad looked at me raising his eyebrows in a '*sorry mate, had to be done*' look! I did my block!

"This is total bullshit ... Fuck!" I screamed as I picked up the chair and smashed it to smithereens just as Mum started again ... so I stopped dead in my tracks and watched her.

“Out of your system Honey? Just calm down ... it’s normal to be angry and confused.” I was sobbing and I wasn’t sure I could take much more. “Casper, listen to me ... this was NOT your father’s idea ... it was mine alone! I made him promise me he would go through with it ... if he ever felt he lost you.” Dad just looked upwards to me and nodded before he croakily whispered,

“I would do anything for you and her mate ... including dying!”

I fell to the carpet in a ball as Mum just sat silently looking ahead on the tele as if she knew I would need time to take this all in.

“It’s the truth mate.” Dad spoke and I accepted his words when Mum’s voice got both our attention,

“You taking drugs, we don’t mean smoking a bit of pot – we both are quite guilty of that!” Dad in the movie was smirking and nodding as he interrupted her,

“Remember how bent we were when we saw the Angels at Cloudland?” Mum shook her head, raised her blackened eyes and resumed,

“Hard drugs Casper ... we know you are taking harder drugs ... ones that will ruin your life ... or worse ...” and she stopped there for a breather; she didn’t need to finish the D-word.

Now I cried as it was the truth ... I was a junkie and I couldn’t control the monkey on my back.

Mum spoke,

“Dad loves you with all his heart, he will help you ... talk to him. We both knew if you have this problem then you would more than not, lash out and hurt him in denial ... he will be ready for this - mentally.”

I looked at what I had done to him physically – broken nose, concussion and a knife wound and the only thing he had really had done to me physically in return was in self-defense, when I came back to shoot him dead ... and I was coming! His torture to me was all mind-games and emotion waking.

“I think we need to get you to hospital Dad,” I asked as the old bastard wasn’t looking too good now and I could see pain wearing him down, “but what are we gonna say?”

“Wait mate ... Mum’s nearly finished!” Dad pointed to her face and she was crying.

“Casper ... this is the last time you will hear me ask anything of you!” So I listened intently,

“Forgive Dad ... it wasn’t his plan so if you need to be angry, be angry at me! He loves you and misses you ... you two only have each other now! Dad will help you get off the drugs, he will take you to the clinic and help you ... he promised me. Casper please DO this and I promise you, your life will change for the better.”

I could never let Mum down ever just as Dad couldn’t and we both had! So I nodded and went to my Dad to help him up as he spoke softly,

“I fucking love you mate ... you are my world. If you leave me too, then I’m fucked!” He patted my chest to watch Mum’s last words,

“Casper and Stuart, this stops here ... so promise me, you will fix this together ... for me,” and as Dad got off the bed in movieland, to turn off the camera, Mum blew me a kiss with her final farewell,

“I love you Casper! Become a man for me.”

As the four of us all were in tears (Mum, me and my two versions of Dad).

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## 17 - The fix

Casper pulled the ute up in the hospital emergency car-park and he asked,

“You ready Dad?” yeh I was and I knew it was gonna fucking hurt!

We had already redressed the various wounds it was down to getting rid of the evidence.

Casper grabbed the kitchen knife still embedded in my leg as I grabbed the manual from the glove box to bite down on. With one enormous reef ... it was out but so was ...

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## 18 - Awake

I awoke in a hospital emergency room spinning with Casper's face directly over me,

"Thank fuck!" I heard him whisper.

I glanced around the room; we were alone as the staff bustled in the background. Casper stood up and closed the curtain then grabbed the water bottle and plastic cup. I swallowed some water he offered to me for my dry throat before I questioned,

"How'd it go? Did they believe you?" Casper was on his own through this significant part so he reconfirmed our plan,

"Yeh all good! You were plastering, lost your balance - most probably coz you were drinking, fell off scaffolding and fell on sharp edge and then broke your nose on landing and knocked yourself out! I came home found you and here we are!" But I still had to ask the obvious,

"Did they quiz you about why you didn't call an ambulance?"

"Told 'em I thought I could get you here quicker ... they were more concerned with your injuries."

*Yeh that'd do* ... even if they didn't believe us, so fucking what! He isn't gonna blab nor me ... it was time to put this all behind us.

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## 19 - Rebirth

13 months have passed and yes we are both alive and well. Casper has beaten his drug problem (for now anyway) and I agreed to go to A.A. as well as giving up the cancer sticks, so we are both sober and clean ... better still – best of mates!

The trip to America was our reward and target to reach at twelve months and it worked a treat and what a fucking treat!

To take my boy to Disneyland at twenty years of age, was just as good as if he was twelve ... no! It is better ... and as we walk around *Fantasyland* together, we are both reminded of how wonderful the gift of life truly is ... don't waste it!

I knew his mum would be proud now as we had succeeded in her bizarre rescue plan. Did I ever truly think it would come down to it? *NAH! No way!* But in my life I remembered the one person I could trust wasn't me - but her! So I put my trust into her words and expectations for the very last time.

She was on the money once again.

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# ***Message from the Devil***

*Welcome to my hot little palace  
Soon your blisters turn to callous  
Feel the anger of your blackened soul  
Your name was etched onto my role*

*Regrets mean nothing in my world  
I pick up pieces of aftermath spilled  
Now you're mine, cry all you like  
Hold out your hands, here comes the spike*

***Welcome to my heated world  
Some people like to call it Hell  
Feel your heart burn to a cinder  
'Til nothing's left but ash & splinters***

*Did you expect the pearly gates?  
The life you led sealed your fate  
Now it's time to pay back my bill  
Eternity's mine and gives me a thrill*

***Welcome to my heated world  
Some people like to call it Hell  
Feel your heart burn to a cinder  
'Til nothing's left but burning winters***

*Don't tell me you really believed,  
of innocence and being deceived  
The truth was right before your face,  
still blinded by a lack of faith  
See evil has a cunning way,  
to wind you up and make you play*

*But I could not do what I do,  
if disciples never wore new shoes  
So scream out loud it doesn't matter,  
no one hears a heart that splatters  
Pain is music to my flaming ears,  
get used to living amongst your fears*

*Too late for your pathetic regrets  
No one listens so best to forget  
My punishment that I dish out to you  
Makes me smile while you burn bright blue*

***Welcome to my heated world  
Some people like to call it Hell  
Feel your heart burn to a cinder  
'Til nothing's left but dying sinners***

***Welcome to my heated world  
Trapped inside your own mind's shell***

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# Toxic Twins

## 1 - The news

Kelvin Bentley sipped his morning cappuccino as the early morning TV news reporter assisted his still numb brain into his full wake-up routine, whilst his wife Jamee buttered two bits of toast for the 13 year old twins - Tyler and Stevey.

"Do you want some Babe?" Jamee smiled as she had already pre-empted his response and the plate with toast, was under his nose.

"Ta muchly." And Kelvin accepted the toast.

"Can't we watch cartoons Mum?" Jamee glanced over at Kelvin and then glanced back to the boys. "Dad's still watching the news ... aren't you?" before she rechecked that he actually was. Kelvin was still half asleep as he was spreading Jamee's homemade marmalade.

"Yeh sorry Ty but I am! Now shush pal." Kelvin refocused back to the LCD mounted above the microwave hutch. The announcer returned from the ad break and some breaking news was coming in.

A young girl had been reported missing. The camera crew were already there with live footage coming through from the Jacobs mariner. The reporters were interviewing the father and he was distraught. Kelvin's attention was brought to its fullest when the father pleaded for anyone with any information to help find his missing twin daughter. Kelvin's heart sank as the twin offspring connection brought the situation close to home. Her body hadn't been found at this stage but reports were flowing in from the police requesting any information on a metallic blue pulsar seen in the area. An interview with the police stressed they were following up leads on suspicious phone calls prior to the girl's disappearance and the possibility that this was a hostage situation here. The father was distraught as she had gone for her morning swim and now she was gone but he was desperately hanging on to hope and this put Kelvin off his toast ... but the reality was she was most probably already dead - drowned.

"Oh Kelvin that is terrible!" Jamee was watching as intently as Kelvin was as both Tyler and Stevey were too busy fighting over the bonus novelty animal that came in the cereal.

“Shit! Makes you realise just how fortunate we are eh?” Jamee nodded as she walked over to the ascending novelty feud and removed it from the clutches of both boys.

“That’s it! If you two can’t behave like normal human beings ... then I’ll decide who gets it!” Jamee handed the plastic dolphin to Kelvin and he placed it in his top pocket while his eyes were still glued to the news at hand.

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## **2 - Business as usual**

Kelvin's day seemed normal as any. As usual someone didn't show up for work so as the project manager he would call in someone from his back-up crew. Fibreglass pool shells weren't actually that hard to put in the ground but it always depended on the right people for the right job and of course good weather. And if one element goes a little haywire then his day would not be such a normal one. But today Bobby Kinan (his favourite and most trusted crane driver) was here and with his number 1 digger - Phil Sykes. All was going well as the sun beamed its happiest of rays.

"Did you see the news this morning?" asked Bobby to Kelvin as he guided the shell directly and effortlessly and straight over the Johnson's 2-story to Phil's now perfect hole.

"Yeh pretty fucked-up alright. Poor buggers, she was a twin." Kelvin felt the need to add the one detail that had affected him personally a little harder.

"Poor fucking family ... real fucking shame. Hope they get the bastard ... castrate him if he did anything!" Bobby lowered the shell to Phil's guiding hand and as usual his once only drop record was spot on and intact.

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### **3 - Avon calling?**

Kelvin was on the way home when his mobile rang and with a blocked number, so he decided not to answer it, they could leave a voice message. He turned the mobile onto silent as he just wanted to get home. The day was a hot one so a cold beer and a swim with the boys was now his main focus.

“Hi Sexy Legs!” Kelvin squeezed Jamee’s tight little arse while she was bending over and feeding Mr T (their three legged Jack Russell), “Grab us a beer, gonna get outta these and I’m in the pool with the boys.”

Kelvin made his way to the bedroom and to grab his budgie smugglers. While getting undressed he threw his mobile on the bed realising he had three missed calls now. Thinking nothing of it, Kelvin was in the pool with the boys as Jamee brought him his well-deserved (well he believed it) first after-work beer. It was still hitting the usual Queensland summer thirty five degrees Celsius at 5:00pm. They played water volleyball until Kelvin gave in to the twins’ defeat.

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#### **4 - Blocked**

Jamee was fixing them all some snacks while the males of the house were swimming. She made her way to the bedroom to put on her bikini when she saw Kelvin's mobile flashing missed calls, so she went and grabbed it.

"Kelvin, did you know you've got over ten missed calls on your mobile?" Jamee handed Kelvin the phone as he finished drying off his hair, sitting beside the pool as the kids splashed and she placed the plate on the outdoor table.

"How many?" Kelvin's voice sounded a little shocked, "Shit! Must be something wrong at work, is it Bobby or Phil?"

"Number's blocked," as Jamee handed the mobile over to him, "not sure, could be?" Kelvin stood up and walked away from the noise as he rang to check his messages. The first message was an ear-piercing frequency that made him pull the phone instantly away from his near bleeding ear.

"Fuck!" complained Kelvin as he stuck his finger in his right ear, to relieve the pain. Mr T was going ballistic while the message was playing; the frequency annoyed him as well.

"Fuck off!" as he pressed to the next message ... it was the same just as the rest. "Shut up, Mr T!" and the dog whimpered down, "This is fucking ridiculous! Either someone's phone is fucked or ... ?"

"Or what?" Jamee asked as she threw a towel each to the twins who just jumped out of the pool to eat the crackers and dip set out in the pool's entertainment area. But Kelvin couldn't answer as he had no idea why.

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## 5 - Glow

The ringing of Kelvin's mobile woke Jamee before Kelvin, so she sat up in bed reached over to it from his bedside table ... the number was blocked so she answered it! The squeal was too loud and just as the ones Kelvin had made her listen in his messages before he had deleted them; she threw the phone on the bed.

"Kelvin, wake up!" Jamee shook him hard until he started to rise from the dark silent world of sleep. Mr T came from nowhere and was on their bed, snarling and barking at the window.

"Wha-what's wrong?" he rubbed his puffed eyes as Jamee flicks on the lamp on her side of the room and his eyes complain by squinting.

"It was that sound again ... that squeal!" Jamee's eyes were teary and she looked scared.

"Gotta be a prank Honey ... T ... lay down!" Kelvin tried his best to reassure her it was nothing. Suddenly their bedroom was filled with the sound of pain and as they went to cover their ears, the light that accompanied was blinding – and it was everywhere! Mr T was now under the bed and whining.

"The boys!" screamed Jamee as Kelvin was already scrambling past the door and in the hallway.

"Mum-Dad!" Tyler was first out of his bedroom with Stevey close behind.

"Quick boys, to our room!" ordered their father as they all ran hunched (army style) to join Jamee in a four-way hug on the bed as the light and sound increased.

It was Tyler who spoke the words they were all thinking, "I'm scared!"

Darkness hit as quick as it had been taken and they were all left in the now only light of the bedside lamp.

"Kelvin, what was that?" Jamee was crying as the boys were while Kelvin's stomach churned. He just shook his head as he questioned what or even if that had just really happen. Jamee spoke, "We should ring the police." It was the obvious thing to do. Kelvin grabbed his mobile but its screen was dead.

"Phone's been fried ... I think?" Kelvin stood up from the bed and went to the bedroom window. Glancing outside he could see there was no one there in the backyard, nothing in the sky but the moon except one thing – the pool was glowing aqua blue.

"Do you see that? I'm gonna ring from the kitchen!" stated Kelvin, "I think we should get the cops ... this is bloody crazy!"

Kelvin made his way downstairs after grabbing his number one iron for protection. He tread lightly and quietly through the darkness with the golf club in a baseball swing position. He was just about there when all of a sudden he heard,

“You okay Hon?” It was Jamee’s voice from the top of the stairs that made him jump and nearly drop the golf club as he felt his heartbeat push his eyeballs outwards!

“Fuck! You scared shit outta me!” he bellowed back. “It’s all clear!” as he switched on the kitchen light with a final glance around the open area before dropping his defense stance. Kelvin picked up the phone from the wall mount and hit the button for a dial tone ... it too was dead.

“This phone’s cactus too!” he screamed as the three joined him and huddled in – Mum and her two fledglings under her wings with Mr T at her feet.

“What do we do now?” Jamee asked.

“All looks normal, except the phones ... I’ll check around, anything sus and we’ll wake Ryan next door!” It dawned on him then that Ryan must of seen or heard it too!

“I think you should get him now!” stated Jamee.

“I’ll just check out back first ... wanna come?” Jamee reluctantly nodded; she didn’t want to be alone with the kids.

The three huddled close behind Kelvin who was back in his striking stance as he swung open the back door. He stepped out first with a double take sideways perusal; the coast was clear!

“All good, let’s go,” whispering his commands, “... stay close!” They all slowly ventured along the stone path to the lighted pool – it was glowing all right!

“It’s blue Dad!” stated Stevey as Kelvin just nodded in agreement. Kelvin made it to the pool first and took a glance in to see what lay at the bottom of the pool that made it glow! Jamee was next to look in the pool, with the boys tucked in behind her as Mr T scampered behind, and then she saw what Kelvin already had.

Nothing!

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## 6 - Dr Bell

Kelvin left for work as usual as the glow of the pool disappeared at sunrise; there was no evidence of anything being wrong or even to the fact about the light or the sound, even the phones had started working again. They were all wide awake and it all had happened at around 5:00am, so the first thing he did was speak to Ryan next door just as he was leaving for work at sixish. But Ryan had just laughed and joked, "Save me a bag of what you're smoking mate!" Ryan had heard or seen nothing.

Jamee kept the boys home from school as they both had a slight fever. Somehow the light had done this to them, she was sure or was it the glow from the pool? Doctor Bell would hopefully answer this one. At first radiation poisoning popped into her head (for no apparent reason) but why wasn't Kelvin or her sick too? They all would be if that was the case.

"Mum!" Tyler complained as Doctor Bell's nurse extracted blood from his arm while Stevey was already finger pressing his band-aided needle-mark. Doctor Bell had organised the blood test and an appointment was made for the following day for the results but he believed it was just common cold symptoms – nothing for Jamee to even worry about. But since she insisted, he organised the tests.

Of course the boys told Bell about the excitement of the glowing pool but he looked over at Jamee who just raised her eyebrows and shrugged it off.

At work Kelvin wasn't winning with his explanation of the night's events either.

"Bullshit!" laughed Bobby as Kelvin did his best to convince him and Phil of his night before ordeal but they weren't biting – only into their way too hot smoko pies.

"I'm telling you! The pool was fucking glowing – pulsating a brightish aqua!" Kelvin bugged his eyes to give the story more believability as he bit into his cheese 'n' bacon.

"Fuck off! You probably just got a phosphate problem and it was the moonlight!" Phil agreed with Bobby's answer – it made more sense!

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## 7 - Red or blue?

Only the light (not the frequency) returned twenty four hours later, exactly as the night before but this time it was different for they all slept through it! Jamee hit the alarm at 5:30am and noticed the pool was glowing again but this time it was pulsating between reddish purple and aqua.

"Honey, wake up!" she shook Kelvin's arm hard 'til he opened one eye and frowned at her, "It's been here again!" Kelvin rubbed his hair, staggered to the window arching his back and glanced out the window; Jamee wasn't lying.

"It's fucking red!" he stated.

"Just keep watching!" she ordered.

"It's fucking blue?" Kelvin rubbed his head as the Sun rose above the horizon and the first rays hit the pool water and the glowing stopped – instantly!

"What is it Kelvin?" Jamee held her mouth as he turned with his puffy eyes open and looks straight into her eyes as he speaks,

"Whatever it is ... I don't really want to know?"

They both held each other looking through the window at the steam emanating from pool water as the morning sun merged with it and the glowing vanished.

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## 8 - Sickness

“Mum ... I feel sick!” and Stevey threw up on the kitchen floor. Kelvin came to instantaneous halt of eating his porridge as the visual comparison was just a little too similar.

“Oh Darl quick!” Jamee the mother rushed her son to the bathroom where she held Stevey, as he vomited once more, this time reaching the target. Next minute Tyler walks into the kitchen and his face is white as a ghost, Kelvin puts his spoon down on the breakfast bar as Tyler sways a bit and his eyes roll back and he faints straight to the wooden floor.

“Shit!” Kelvin jumps off his barstool and runs to pick up his fallen child as he starts to awake. “Ty ... you okay?” followed by a nice pool of vomit at his feet.

“Jamee! Tyler’s just thrown up too!” announced Kelvin as he helps his son to the bathroom where Jamee was washing off Stevey.

“I told you something was wrong!” Jamee whispered to Kelvin as he passed her redirecting Tyler to take his turn at the bowl. Kelvin just raised his eyebrows.

“Could be food poisoning? Didn’t they eat left-over pizza for dinner?” Kelvin questioned the more sensible reasoning, it just couldn’t be the other - then Jamee spoke,

“The results of the test will be back today but I’m not waiting that long ... let’s take them to St. Peter’s!” Kelvin rarely ever heard Jamee’s *‘just do it!’* voice but it was here and they were going to the hospital – and now!

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## 9 - Motherly concern

“Just a little case of food poisoning, I’d say!” The intern disposed of Stevey’s tongue depressor, before getting a fresh one for Tyler, “You boys scaring mum eh?” Jamee glanced over to Kelvin as she grabbed his arm in a *‘thank God’* hold as the two identical boys sat side by side smiling at the on-duty medic – Roger.

“I think you two better stay home today ... just in case!” and Roger shot the boys a secret wink that Mum and Dad didn’t see.

Jamee kept looking over her shoulder on the way home, in case the boys deteriorated but they were fine. Kelvin could see his wife’s motherly concern so reached across and touched her beautiful blonde mane.

“They’ll be fine!” he turned his head back to draw his attention away from her and back to the road.

The day wasn’t lost so Kelvin left for work at ten. It was just after lunch when Jamee rang Kelvin’s mobile and demanded he get home – quick!

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## 10 - Rash

“Look!” Jamee pointed to the marks that were appearing on both boy’s backs. Kelvin scratched his head; it was a rash but not just any rash! Several small circular rashes covered both the twins’ backs, symmetrically reversed on the boys – exactly like looking into a mirror.

“What the heck,” Kelvin questioned, “what is that?”

“Their fever and vomiting has gone ... but now this?” Jamee pulled the shirts down as the boys turned and faced their parents and as twins always do ... spoke in unison,

“Are we going to die?”

“No-No!” Jamee pulled them into her hugging zone and did her best to convince them it was simply nothing, “Just a silly rash ... will probably be gone by tomorrow!” She glared at Kelvin to reaffirm this to the boys.

“Just a rash boys ... probably from the pizza ... allergic to something?” Kelvin did his best.

“We’ve got to leave soon to see Doctor Bell for your blood test results ... he’ll look your spots over then, okay?” Mum’s words were comforting, even to Dad.

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## 11 - Birthmark

By the time they got to the doctor's surgery the Bentley boys' rashes had gone opposite ways. Tyler's had half disappeared and Stevey's had all disappeared bar one, that was now a saucer plate size raised circle, circumferencing his birthmark.

"I've never seen anything like this?" Doctor Bell ruffled his head as he placed the boys side by side. It was obvious the boy's weren't in any discomfort and yesterday's slight cold symptoms had completely disappeared. He was quite concerned re the morning's vomiting but here they were both healthy as.

Bell prodded Stevey's raised rash and announced,

"Truly weird, I think antihistamines should take care of it but if it's not gone by tomorrow I will have to refer you to a skin specialist ... I don't really know what it is?" Doctor Bell sat back at his desk tapping his pen on his cheek after telling the boys to put their shirts back on. He handed Jamee the prescription and finished with,

"If there are any changes please let me know straight away, phone me on this number!" He directed Jamee's eyes to the handwritten number on the back of the envelope, "Okay boys, you're outta here!"

The boys grabbed their traditional lollipop on the way out! And again in perfect twin unison, "Thanks Doctor Bell." How could he not smile?

One hour later Tyler's rashes had completely disappeared just as Stevey's was down to just a faint outline of a circle around his shoulder's birthmark.

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## 12 - Hot Tottie

Kelvin couldn't sleep so he lay awake watching the clock; it was 2.25am. He seriously thought about putting the TV on but he didn't want to wake Jamee as he knew she'd had a big day and her darkened eyes hadn't lied; she needed the rest more than him.

An hour passed and he was still tossing and his back was getting uncomfortable, so gave up for the night and accepted it was morning. Kelvin went downstairs, made himself a hot chocolate while he carried a half-chewed Tim-Tam in his mouth between the fridge and the boiled jug. Curiosity got the better of him so he took a stroll around the backyard sipping his hot chocolate in the darkness, until the glow of the sensor light clicked on and broke it as he walked the pool coping. What had happened here? It still baffled him. The hairs on the back of his neck rose, as he took a glance deep into the pool. What was in there? Something was in there! Kelvin gave himself the *hee-bee gee-bees* so he made his way back into the kitchen.

Jamee came down the staircase as he was leaning against the breakfast bar finishing his chocolate.

"Bugger! Didn't wake you, did I?" Kelvin smirked and cocked his head in an '*I'm sorry*' way and Jamee did a gayish limp wristed hand wave to say '*All okay Honey!*'

"No ... just worried about the boys!"

"Want a hot tottie then?" he asked as he was already reaching for her favourite *Aerosmith* mug.

"Sure." Jamee tightened her robe belt and she shuffled towards him in her fluffy pink slippers.

Kelvin wasn't going to say anything then he decided to speak up,

"This whole thing is freaking me the fuck out!" as he was poured the microwaved milk into the cup while stirring, "Do you think it's ..." Kelvin hesitated as he couldn't believe he was going to say it out loud, "aliens?" He was expecting Jamee to laugh at him but instead she nodded and there was silence – they both were silent as the night!

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### 13 - Taken

At 5:09am while the conversation in the kitchen was about the ridiculous possibility of aliens in the pool, the pool itself had started again without either of them realising. The colours glowed aqua first, then purple to red and that was when Kelvin's attention was drawn to the twins sleep-walking side by side, making their way down the stairs and towards the back door, heading straight to the reddish glow that was reflecting upon their faces through the windows.

"Steven, Tyler!" He placed his empty cup (that he was still holding onto) on the breakfast bar, as Jamee did the same with her near empty one. They ran over and grabbed the boys (one each) as they both attempted to shake their respective child from the sleep/trance state and bring them back to the real world while guiding them back to the safety of the kitchen area.

"Tyler, open your eyes! Tyler!" Jamee was shaking him when his eyes slowly began to open. Kelvin was still shaking Stevey, when the boy tried to push away his father's hand and did with the force of a man; he wanted to get to the now blood red water of the pool.

"Stevey wake up! Wake up! Wake up Stevey!" screamed Kelvin but the boy was dead to the world and that was when the extreme brightness of the white lights stupified both him and his wife to a crouch position, as the hi-pitched squeal began and it was already crippling enough to force them to cover their ears. Kelvin had to let Stevey go – the pain was sickening and piercing. Stevey was unaffected by it and opened the door just to keep walking towards the pool. Kelvin tried his best to get to his tranced son, but it was impossible. Jamee held Tyler as tight as she could and he was fully awake now and scared stiff – crying and holding his ears as Mr T howled from the bedroom. Kelvin forced himself to scramble his way towards the doorway. The blinding lights and the soul-piercing sounds were ten times louder and brighter than they had heard before but he had to get to Stevey ... but it was too late. Tears rolled down his face as he watched his son fall face first into the glowing water of their in-ground pool.

Kelvin fought the pain and dragged himself like a snail across the grass to reach the closed pool fence that left the father trapped outside. He must stand up and save Stevey – his son, he was drowning and he knew in his heart, he would only get one chance to save him. He pulled his own weight upwards by holding the poles of pool's metal gate and clicked the gate open. He again fell to the ground and the paving as he crawled as fast as he could, his ears were now bleeding and he had a knitting needle pain fill his ears and it was telling him that his eardrums had most probably burst.

Kelvin dragged himself quickly to the edge and looked into the red glowing water, he could see the bottom clearly from the intense light and to his horror, Stevey wasn't in there – Stevey was nowhere to be seen, he was gone. Fear engulfed his

whole being as he wasn't dreaming when he saw Stevey fall in only forty five seconds prior and without thinking about it, he dragged his paining body into the glowing blood coloured water and as soon as he hit the water, the colour started to change back to aqua but it was happening from the top to bottom and seem to be chasing him. Instinct made him swim hard to the bottom as the pain of sound was blocked by the water and with a complete peaceful silence, not even a long distance muffled bass water filled sound could be heard. Kelvin's eyes were open as he looked everywhere for Stevey, he was down here – he just knew. Then the coolness of the aqua was engulfing him into a tranquility were everything stopped and it didn't matter anymore. But his son's face filled his mind and he forced himself deeper to the red and away from the solace of the aqua.

In the kitchen Jamee was still holding Tyler when the lights and the sounds stopped instantly, quickly regaining her thoughts; she had to get outside to help.

"Stay here Tyler ... if something should happen ... run, run to Ryan's house okay!" She stood up and grabbed a knife from the parquetry block on the kitchen bench as she ran outside.

The pool was aqua and the sun was rising, but where was her husband or her son and it hit home – the pool! Jamee ran to the pool area clumsily opening the pool gate while preparing herself for the worst.

She looked into the pool and it was empty as the Sun's rays filtered the last of the aqua off.

Jamee fell to her knees and dropped the knife, she started crying for she knew in her heart, Stevey was gone and her husband was with him.

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## 14 - Operator

The aqua was soft here and there was no hardness, only the pain within his ears. Kelvin's fear was evident and the visitors could sense it – they must calm him. Kelvin looked at them and counted – there were seven visitors in total and to him they all looked the same, except for one that had a much larger brain area. Their enormous emerald teardrop eyes were haunting and lifeless and very one dimensional. They had dragged him from the red room where he arrived and carried him to this aqua room. He was surrounded by the whitish grey creatures and he couldn't see his Stevey anywhere. As Kelvin knelt with both hands flat on the soft aqua his wet clothes were dripping and dispersing amongst the swirling aqua, but Kelvin couldn't stop looking at them as they drew closer.

The *Operator* outstretched his hands towards Kelvin as the workers obeyed instructions and carefully helped him into a standing position. They were gentle with their frog like fingers and they were soothing – he could feel them. But Kelvin fought the calmness and searched inside for his anger, he needed to find his anger and his son.

"Fuck off! Leave me alone!" Kelvin yells and pushes away their hands making them all take a step backwards from their encompassing circle. The *Operator* raises his right arm, outstretching his longest finger to touch the head of the closest and in turn, touches the next and the cycle repeats until the circle is whole and completed as one, around Kelvin. But as scared as he is, Kelvin thrusts outwards but he cannot touch them as the intense awful death sound returns. He cowers to the ground in a ball yelling,

"Stop! Please stop it!" And his right ear begins to bleed again as the aqua that surrounds him turns purple with anger and now he knew where the sound had come from - them.

The *Operator* breaks the circle and the silence returns as the aqua. It steps and leans forward and places its finger on top of Kelvin's head as he was still crouching. Kelvin understands, he doesn't like it but he understands. If he wants to live then he **must** understand and obey the *Operator*.

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## 15 - Liquid

Breaking their circle, the visitors now step forward and close in on Kelvin but he could sense they weren't going to harm him (just yet anyway). One of them bends down and scoops up some of the liquid aqua floor and places the liquid on his bleeding ear and the pain disappears almost instantaneously.

Kelvin looks up at the expressionless visitor as its frog eyes blink twice; it was a female of the species, he knew that for sure. Another one of them steps closer and the two visitors help Kelvin to his feet and regain his stance upon the aqua. He looks at the second one and it too is a female, now he could tell their eyes were different and softer and their light grey skin colour was much paler.

The *Operator* gestured Kelvin to follow him with a slow finger movement as the others parted the way for him. Turning towards what seemed like a solid silver wall the Operator touched it and an opening appeared in front of him as if the wall wasn't actually there at all and just an illusion. Kelvin followed him as his two female visitors were either side of him both holding one of his arms each. The more the females touched him, the calmer he seemed to get; they were soothing. His anger had dissipated to a near nothingness and he sensed he would see his Stevey soon.

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## 16 - Google it!

Jamee sat in middle of the kitchen floor holding Tyler and Mr T as tight as she could, rocking back and forth. Her mind swilled and swayed with mixed emotions and random thoughts, "*What was she to do next?*" She had always been the problem-solver in the household but this wasn't as simple as chasing a possum out of the lounge-room or cleaning up the dog's accident or being first aid mum – this was total insanity! It was aliens and she knew that for sure and all the craziness of those reported abductions she'd laughed at on TV, now weren't so funny. Jamee knew if she rang the police they would only laugh at her and commit her or worse accuse her of foul play. Tyler remembered nothing of the events which she thanked God for, but she had soon realised – she was on her own!

Standing up and grabbing the phone book from its home (on the breakfast bar under the wall phone) she flicked through the **A** section but it was useless they just don't list Aliens in there! "*Think Jamee, fucking think!*" she demanded of herself and her brain was going faster than her heartbeat.

"Tyler, Honey, I want you to go and take a shower ... take Mr T with you!" Tyler stood up as Mr T hobbled upwards on three legs and bounced along behind Tyler's exit.

Jamee raced into Kelvin's office/study and flipped open his laptop. After the seeming to take forever load up, Jamee clicked on Google and searched *Aliens* but there was too much to look at. Pages upon pages of everything and it was total overload! She must refine her search so she re-entered - *Australian Alien Abduction*.

The first site she entered showed her information and cases leading back to the fifties. Jamee scanned through them, so she narrowed down her reading to Queensland cases.

Jamee was getting frustrated and emotional and she started to cry – alone.

A lot of the cases were further north and mostly driving trips but one local one in particular caught her attention. It was a case of a twin being taken ... and it was in 2000. There was a hyper-link to another webpage so Jamee clicked into it. The page loaded and it had been created by the missing twin's father – Roy Buckingham. At first Jamee just clicked through the attached low quality images of various family photos. A daughter only thirteen years old (exactly same age as Stevey) – Kylie had been taken. Jamee started reading and chills ran up her spine as Kylie was taken early morning and through their above-ground pool ... water! Jamee clicked on another clearer school photograph of the twins and her hand went to her cover her open mouth immediately as she was looking at a female version of Stevey, only with blonde hair; the similar features were a little too coincidental. Her brain thumped as

she continued reading. The father's page stated that it was here for all to see now and to hopefully find the answers to his on-going nightmare.

As Jamee read the page, he had reported several similar cases which paralleled hers to a degree – all similar looking twins (to her own) all contracted fever and weird rashes yet the most important detail was - water! Either pools, lakes, rivers even the sea. Most reported cases were here in Australia but some were cases from New Zealand, some Canada even one odd case from Russia!

Jamee clicked into Roy's blog page and read the comments good and bad from both believers and non-believers. Roy was the only real connection she had to her own crazy story so it was imperative to get his attention, so by blogging that she may have vital information in regards to his daughter's disappearance seemed like her only chance.

Jamee sat back in Kelvin's leather desk chair and lifted her legs to the chair as she placed her praying hands over her knees, touching her chin ... and now she would wait but she didn't have to for long.

A whole fifteen minutes to be exact.

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## 17 - Eat

The visitors guided Kelvin to an eating place where against one of the silver walls protruded an aqua floating table top covered with various fruits. Everything that Kelvin could recognise plus a few he did not; they weren't from Earth. The females walked him to the fruit and cocked their heads in unison as for him to eat. Kelvin wasn't hungry but did not want the angry sound to return so he picked up some grapes and placed one in his mouth as he smiled and nodded *thank you* in return.

The *Operator* stood a far distance away as he summoned the remaining 3 through a new exit he had created. Kelvin offered a grape to the females but they just blinked twice in succession and slowly shook their enlarged heads. The *Operator* moved closer to Kelvin and placed his hand on his head. Now Kelvin could hear him – no ... feel him!

“Food! Eat food!”

Kelvin responded by placing another seedless grape into his mouth as he eyeballed the *Operator*. They were connected but there was no trust between the two and they both acknowledged that. The females were harmless but this male leader wasn't!

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## 18 - Blog

Jamee was tired but she had covered her tracks enough (during the waiting game) to keep everyone that didn't need to know at bay and to buy her twenty four hours leeway, such as ringing in sick for the twins and advising Bob that Kelvin wasn't coming in to work re a migraine. After Tyler showered he returned to his bed and slept for most of the morning as he seemed to be extra drained from the night's events but again with no memory of it.

Jamee had responded quickly after checking the blog and getting the reply she had been waiting for and started reading,

*"Who are you? What do you know?"* She had quickly sat down and started typing,

*"My name is Jamee Bentley (pause) I believe you (pause) my twin son and husband have been abducted (pause) today exactly as your daughter was (enter) ... through our pool that glowed (enter)."*

The reply was quick, *"Ring me (pause) no I will ring you!"*

Jamee quickly typed and entered her phone number and within one minute the phone rang.

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## 19 - Stevey

A chair was created for Kelvin from the silver wall and the two females guided Kelvin to sit on it. Kelvin sat on the liquid chair as the females blinked at him twice again and then left as well; it was only him and the *Operator* now. The calmness of the females left with them and fear returned. It pointed at Kelvin to remain seated as it blinked and nodded. It was clear that he was being ordered to stay put, then the *Operator* left and the exit closed.

Kelvin sat there for the next ten minutes just looking at the alien structure that he was trapped in. It was amazing and that he could not deny, for the floor was liquid and as he leaned down and scooped up some of it in his hand, it ran off to rejoin the floor. How was this possible? It was liquid yet it was solid and related to the sound somehow. Kelvin tried to push his foot through it but it was hard as concrete when pressure was applied to it. He then touched the silver walls which looked a lot more like a metal, which was a smoother consistency than the floor, yet the visitors could manipulate it to form shapes and doorways and it was warmer - lifelike.

After the ten minutes of the room examination, Kelvin's mind returned to the one true issue at hand – Stevey. They had taken him and now only by persistence and chance, he was here as well. Kelvin's fear was his son would be alone and terrified. His thoughts cleared and it was all he could think off – Stevey and escape, but how? Calmness was his own answer for the present, but he must be ready.

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## 20 - Roy B

“Two sugars and black thank you.” Jamee obliged and stirred the cups before she handed Roy Buckingham his, before she sat side by side at the breakfast bar. Tyler was awake now and had asked a lot of questions of his brother’s where-abouts which were answered by his mother saying his brother was up extra early so Dad took him to work and they would be back later; she lied! Tyler was ordered to stay home and play X-box in his room – no questions were asked after that, as this never happens on a school day!

Jamee replayed the events from the beginnings to Roy as he sat quietly drinking his coffee, listening. But before Jamee got to finish he interrupted,

“Then the day after the boys got that weird rash ... the pool water turned red as the sound was something you have never heard before and never want to again as the brightness!” Jamee just nodded as now she was silent. Roy continued,

“I believe it is the twins they want ... but only one! This is the last photo I took of Kylie.” He dropped his eyes as he handed Jamee the aged and curved white bordered photograph then as a single tear ran down his left cheek, Roy eye-balled Jamee, “They want the first born, bigger, healthier twin!” Jamee covered her mouth again as she looked at Kylie’s image and it was Stevey to a tee but with long blonde straight hair.

“Why do they look the same?” she questioned. Roy just raised his eyebrows and added,

“They all do ... every taken child, especially the older twins.”

Stevey was the first born and was always healthier than Tyler as also being the more dominant one with stronger individual features. After a brief pause Roy added,

“Kylie was my first born.”

“So was Stevey ... by 13 minutes.” Jamee’s eyes now leaked and it was then Roy floored her as himself with his words,

“My Kylie was 13 minutes earlier exactly!”

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## 21 - Examination

Kelvin raced back to the chair when he saw the wall starting to shift into its doorway again. This time two males were first in and he sensed that these were the warriors of the visitors – the henchmen, body guards ... or most likely *the Executioners*. They were slightly taller and their body frames were more masculine and they had what appeared to be dark grey leopard spots on their backs so he assumed this was their identification to all – the scare factor; it worked! The *Operator* followed as he turned and hand gestured to bring him in; it was Stevey ... or was it? It looked like Stevey but something was different!

“What have you fucking done to him?”

Two more spotted warriors walked Stevey in as they held an arm each. Kelvin stood and went to run to his naked son but the first two warriors grabbed and restrained him as The *Operator* blinked twice and shook his head in a *no-no – do not touch!*

“Stevey! Wake up Stevey!” yelled Kelvin but his son was still in a trance and naked. Why was he naked? The *Operator* ordered the two to take Stevey away and then they were gone. Kelvin tried his best to break the grips of the warriors but they were too strong so he screamed,

“Let him go you Freddo Frog-faced fucks! Let my son fucking go!”

The *Operator* then summoned the two females to re-enter and they undressed him as the warriors ensured there would be no resistance with a blade at his throat and there was none.

Kelvin stood naked, just as they were. The females gathered his clothes and exited as the *Operator* turned and the warriors held his arms as they followed him through the make-shift doorway before it closed. They were now in what seemed like a corridor or the backbone of the ship. Kelvin looked upwards and it was an enormous black backbone he was now sure, with ribcages running off of it, housed by the silver walls and the liquid floor. Kelvin dropped his glance to look straight ahead to where they were heading but it all looked the same – ribcage after ribcage; the ship was alive! The *Operator* stopped and faced one of the ribcaged sections and as he placed his hand upon the silver frame, a doorway appeared and the warriors guided Kelvin through it. He could see another two smaller visitors – one male and one female he had not seen before, standing either side of what made Kelvin fight and scream instantly - an operating table made from the silver. It was the medical examination room.

“Fuck off you fucking freaks!” screamed Kelvin as he twisted and turned in the grips of the two warriors but they just dragged him towards the table. “Leave me the fuck alone!”

The male stepped forward and held what looked like a piece of turquoise asparagus. He lifted it towards Kelvin and by twisting and turning the head of it, made the end glow white. The examiner touched Kelvin's forehead with the glow and the fight was over. Kelvin's body was paralyzed, yet he could feel his own weight within the warriors grasp. They raised and placed him face down on the table, as he saw the reflection in the aqua floor before he felt the pain. Snake-like three inch needles created from the silver lowered from the ship's ceiling and entered his back as he felt the anal probe enter as well. To only scream, but there was no sound or action, only feeling and it was silent and terrifying.

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## 22 - A plan

"The truth is my wife ran off with my other daughter - Karen, I think she believed I was guilty somehow." Roy placed the empty coffee cup on the breakfast bar, "She saw what happened too; she was there ... but unlike Tyler ... I believe my wife - Julia's memory wasn't wiped ... she was simply terrified! I've never heard from either of them." Jamee touched Roy's arm as he teared a little before she asked the obvious question,

"So what do we do now?"

Roy stood up and paced the kitchen before he answered,

"They don't want your husband! They don't want any adults at all! No adult case has ever been reported ... and I'm sure they only keep the oldest twin!" He paced some more and added, "We must be prepared for Stevey's rescue, they will return tonight," he paused, "if they haven't already killed ..." and Roy stopped.

"So we just sit and wait ... for how long?" Jamee asked.

"We need to get our children back ... both our children!" Roy paused before unveiling one more detail, "Tonight, it will be tonight ..." Jamee was silent as Roy continued, "they will return, and I know for sure they will return ..." Roy paused and walked around the kitchen unsettled and gripping his chin before continuing, "only one other adult has ever returned that I know of! The other adult ... was me!" Roy hung his head downwards and cried as Jamee stood frozen, clutching her empty cup.

Roy explained to Jamee of his very vague memories of the living ship's enormous size and the terror of the examination room, the reptile-type aliens themselves and of the variety of workers much like an ant world, but with a leader or as he called it ... *Operator!*

"We must be prepared; we need to get on that ship!" Roy then announced, "I have brought guns!"

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## 23 - Scream to live

Kelvin's body control slowly returned during the examination as he lay still on his stomach on the silver substance table. He could see that he was now alone with the two *Examiners* and they both were leaning over some sort of work area, examining the various liquid and solid samples from his body. He could see that they had surgical tools of an alien description on a table between him and them. It was apparent they were of an alien metal and primarily to cut and slice and by the blood on that particular instrument, it was the one they used to slice the strip from his thigh and the pain was intense.

The needle snakes were still inserted in his back as the probe but Kelvin could feel slight movement, so he practiced clenching and releasing a fist with both hands. To lay still was a must, not to draw any attention to his body's controlled awakening.

The male turned and Kelvin glared at the incisor tool as it stepped towards him. It was now or never and Kelvin reached out with his left arm and grabbed the hand of the male *Examiner* as his regained strength was too much for the small male and the incisor was stabbed into the male's brain with his other hand. Kelvin ripped out the probe instantly (which made him scream and could be heard clearly now) as the female dropped her samples and backed towards the silver wall. Kelvin sat up with the needles still lodged in his back as the dead male oozed a dark green, nearly black blood dissipating amongst the aqua floor. The female was weak and Kelvin sensed that, as she blinked twice and looked towards where the closed exit should be. Kelvin stood and as he did, three of the six needles pulled out from his back. He screamed again in pain but this was his fight to win and he refused to lose. Kelvin pulled against the remaining three needles and they left his body; he was free. The female was scared and made a futile attempt to get to the exit. She had actually made it and opened it by placing her hand sideways and softly against the silver. Her body fell to the aqua when the same alien incisor pierced her enormous soft brain from behind; Kelvin was free!

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## 24 - The Library

*'Protection from the death sound'* was the first the first thing that came into Kelvin's thoughts so he rummaged through the *Examiner's* table of instruments and found what he believed were earplugs or at least would suffice. Remembering the healing powers of the liquid floor Kelvin dipped them in before placing them into his ears and the soothness was instantaneous. So he again drew his attention to the table of contents and decided to leave it all but keep the blade that had already saved him.

Kelvin duplicated the visitor's hand movement from outside the examination room and on his third and much softer attempt he succeeded, by lifting his middle finger to leave three only; the exit closed. His first thoughts were, *he must hide, but where?* He was naked, standing in the craft's hallway and holding the larger of the alien's knife-like instruments; it was hooked but was made of metal similar to stainless with a finger style grip which suited the visitor's three elongated fingers but as he sliced it through the air, he accepted it would serve it's now given duty as a deadly weapon.

The corridor was long and empty but Kelvin was exposed and vulnerable here so he needed desperately to find a room or better still, Stevey. Counting the ribcages as he ran gave Kelvin some sort of mind map of the ship. It was imperative if he wanted to get out of here that he must take note. He began touching the walls next the ribcages as he believed they were the walls between the rooms. A doorway opened and the liquid floor glowed red, he recognised it immediately; this was the doorway in and out! He closed it and recounted the ribs from the end - it was 13 ... he must remember 13. Kelvin counted another 13 (and he would use 13's as his memory reference) from that room and decided to try his luck again. Placing his hand in the correct position worked as a second opening emerged out of nowhere as Kelvin stood in an attack position but the room was empty. He quickly entered and closed the opening behind him; he was in some sort of library and yet there no books here ... only the Devil's work.

The walls were all holding tanks of various sizes but Kelvin felt sick when he could see they were all holding dissections of humanlike life forms. They weren't all from Earth but it was evident there were heads, arms, legs, hearts and brains ... it was all here. But what was most disturbing was ... they all appeared to be parts from ... children ... and the heads of the boys and girls were way too similar to Stevey. The remorse for killing the small aliens was soon gone.

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## 25 - Stevey?

Noticing a blank wall between the storage tanks rang 'doorway' in Kelvin's mind so he started the sideways hand placement at various spots, until he found it and it was a touch warmer, now he knew - the locks were warmer.

The opening had led him to another medical room exactly as the one he was nearly butchered in except this one was larger. Quickly glancing around the room Kelvin took in that there was only one alien and Kelvin had startled him. As it turned and blinked its eyes twice, it made a run for possibly an alarm spot on the silver alien wall. Kelvin's adrenalin and instinct took over as he thrust the weapon deep into the sole *Examiner's* soft jelly-brain that only one minute earlier was leaning over Stevey, as his son was the one lying nude on the alien table.

In super-fast movements, Kelvin began removing the probes and the needles from Stevey's back. Trying to wake Stevey seemed fruitless as the boy was dead to the world from the sleeping substance he had been administered. Kelvin lifted his naked son and threw him over his shoulder – it was time to go home!

Kelvin felt all around another blank wall praying he wasn't going to open into an army of warriors but instead of a doorway opening, an operating table appeared from the floor seemingly to rise out of nowhere, behind him. Kelvin removed his hand from the wall and the table stopped, he replaced his hand and once again it rose, he pressed the wall twice and the table returned to the floor and disappeared. Just at that moment a doorway opened and it was another one of them and it was armed!

The alien moved alarming fast and stabbed Kelvin with the incisor in his right side as the pain took him and Stevey down. Quickly regaining his stance, Kelvin grabbed the weaker and smaller alien by the leg and tripped him up to force the male down on his own back. Kelvin had dropped his incisor when he was stabbed so he reached out, regained it and thrust it deep and straight through the alien's leg, impaling the blade at least 4 inches deep within the aqua, suddenly the floor surrounded itself around the blade and was like super-set concrete; the aqua had its own in-built self-protection. Kelvin took the advantage to think quickly! The Alien male squealed as Kelvin hit the wall and the table rose again from nowhere and lifted the impaled alien attacker on top of it. This time Kelvin didn't release his touch and kept the table rising. The alien squealed and thrashed fruitlessly as the table reached the targeted ceiling, squashing and popping him like a bug on a windscreen. Black blood splattered and Kelvin turned from it to shield himself but the hot liquid still hit his back and splattered Stevey's still limp body. His wound was bleeding so he scooped the aqua from the floor and it soothed the pain immediately, like it was some sort of antiseptic mixed pain-killer.

Kelvin moved quickly lifting Stevey to the shoulder position and searched for the warm exit until he found it! The next room was equipped with a dozen or so alien medical tables and fair-skinned children, all nude and they were lying face down with

those medical needles in their backs. He lowered Stevey to the aqua as he went to check on the other children. The closest to him were two girls both about Stevey's age, he looked at their faces and they looked the same; they were twins and his heart raced as they looked a little too much like Stevey as well! He felt for a pulse: they were alive! Kelvin ripped out the alien examination equipment as fast as he could and moved over the other side of the examination room where there were two boys facing away from him. Kelvin stopped immediately when he recognised the circular birthmark on the back of the first male, he turned to see Stevey's back as he lay amongst the moving aqua where he had placed him – he did not have one! Turning the boy on the table over it was Stevey's face then he could see the face of the next male – it was Stevey's face as well ... yet it wasn't; there were no freckles.

“You Freddo Frog-faced Fucks! What the fuck are you doing?” Kelvin yelled out in anger as he stood amongst the sleeping children, “What the fuck is going on here?”

The opening appeared as the crippling sound took Kelvin down, forcing him to drop and cower in pain. The last thing he remembered was the hair grab and the drag up the ship's corridor from the spotted warriors, just before one of the warriors threw him into the holding cell and punched him to unconscious land.

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## 26 - The bait

The *Operator* was the first vision Kelvin filtered as he returned from the grogginess.

This time he was restrained to the table and fully dressed, but why? Then it occurred to him, they were taking him home ... possibly? He was trouble! Kelvin could see that the two females were here as the warriors so he assumed they had dressed him while he was out.

"What the fuck are you doing to them? They're just fucking children!" yelled Kelvin to the *Operator* but he just stood and blinked as always. Then he turned and mentally instructed the warriors to leave before he did the same to the females and they were alone after the opening closed. Kelvin was biting his lip and doing his best to break free from the silver wall restraints but they would not budge as the alien walked around the table just shaking his enlarged skull - emotionless.

"You fucking freak, what are you fucking doing to my son? Why are there copies of him and the girls?" demanded Kelvin for answers. The opening appeared and the warriors brought in one of the Steveys and he was dressed too!

"Dad! Dad!" A freckled Stevey was awake.

"Stevey! Let him go you fucking pieces of shit!" yelled Kelvin at the warriors who were restraining Stevey from his run to his father, "Are you all right mate?"

"Yes Dad ... I'm scared! What are they gonna do?" The boy was crying now and Kelvin cried as well as he couldn't get to Stevey to just hold and cover his obvious pain.

"Sending us home mate ... I think they're sending us home!"

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## 27 - Son of Surrealism

Roy had ordered Jamee to take Tyler and Mr T to her mother's house for the night, so she did. On her return Roy unveiled his plan of attack.

"Jamee ... I need you to listen to me ... listen before any questions please, for what I am about to tell you and about to show you ... will seem surreal ... but it is the truth!" Roy finger-pointed for her to sit, so she obeyed.

"What are you talking abo..." but Roy interrupted her.

"Sssshh! Listen first!" he sat beside her and held her hand as he started.

"I lost Kylie exactly 13 years ago today and when I was only thirty three." He paused and sipped his coffee before continuing, "I was strong just like Kelvin is now," Jamee sat silently as she listened with intent. "Something else happened on that night, I haven't revealed to you." Roy paused again as if for her to take in and process every word before unveiling the next piece of the jigsaw. "I didn't just lose Kylie ..." he went to speak and he coughed a little to clear his throat, "I – I ... I returned with someone!"

"You what?" Jamee had been silent but it was a natural instinctual retort!

"I saved someone ... on the ship! A child! A boy ... " then he floored her, "his name is Steven!"

Just as she was listening there was a knock from the frontdoor and as the screen door opened, she saw him! The young man walked in, not smiling and with his eyes downwards, then he looked up at her and their gaze met, it was him – Stevey ... and he spoke,

"Mum."

Whether it was anxiety or shock but the blood rushed from Jamee's head way too quick and as she stood up from her stool, she fell to the ground.

"Mum ... it is me, Mum." Stevey patted her hand as she regained her composure and she looked up at the grown man with Stevey's eyes and stubble upon his face. He continued, "Mum we have been waiting for today ... your contact ... I couldn't remember." Steven started to cry.

"Impossible!" Only one word exited his mother's mouth as she changed her questioning view to Roy's eyes. "How is this possible?"

So Roy did his best to explain,

"It' some sort of time fluctuation they have ... a blackhole or possibly simply a glitch? I only remember pieces Jamee. But I do remember Kelvin now!" and Roy pointed to the family portrait hanging above the LCD in the lounge room. He added,

"I couldn't remember his name ... it's like memories get scattered in the tunnel somehow."

"No!" Jamee sat on the floor in a huddled ball crying. Steven spoke,

"I couldn't remember my last name or where I came from ... only your fleeting images of all your faces ... Dad's, yours and my brother's and Roy explained to me I was taken ... from the future, the year 2013! But Roy told me it was only 2000 when we returned ... I was lost in my own birth year! And because of this we had to wait as nothing had happened yet, no history of any Steven's being taken. Roy and I have searched and waited patiently ... and here you are ... only five hours from our home. But you found us! Thank God!"

Jamee reached out and grabbed Stevey's hand as any mother would.

"Jamee ... we believe they will be back tonight, we both believe that ... and that my Kylie is still up there alive. Somehow time for us is that – time, but for them ... they can come and go, back and forth in blink of an Alien eye." Then Stevey added,

"It is something to do with 13 ... the number 13? Like a cycle maybe? Mum, Roy is a good man ... he saved me, cared for me," he hesitated, "trained me ... and he thinks he knows where Dad is! He's still alive!" Roy handed Jamee a glass of water as she sat on the floor with the two kneeling beside her and as she sipped Roy spoke,

"Somehow I remember inside the ship and of all things ... the tunnel! I have waited for today for 13 years! Kelvin knows where Kylie is and I need to get on that ship to find her! I owe it to her ... to find her and bring her home!"

Jamee sat in silence as her nightmare had truly begun and the questions that exploded within her mind such as; would she ever see her teenage Stevey again or was this fully grown man now her son and be moving in? Her thoughts were random and sporadic but it was all she could grasp on to at that particular moment.

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## 28 - Not alone

The *Operator* touched the walls and the ship's metal restraints removed themselves from Kelvin as the warriors let go of Stevey and he ran to his father. They embraced and held each other as Kelvin raised his eyes to the leader and frowned his eyebrows before threatening,

"I will kill you ... you fucking monster!"

Touching the adjacent wall, The *Operator* opened what appeared to be another sort of holding cell and the warriors grabbed Stevey from Kelvin's grip and handed him to the *Operator* before they both grabbed Kelvin and threw him into the cell, before pushing Stevey in as well. The opening closed and they were alone.

"Are you okay Stevey? Turn around mate," ordered Kelvin.

"Why Dad?" Kelvin lifted up Stevey's shirt to find the birthmark ... it was the real him ... so he believed. Just as he was tucking Stevey's shirt back in another opening appeared from the opposite wall and a human was thrown in before the opening closed.

"Holy fuck ... I'm not alone, Shit sorry." stated the human as he apologised for swearing, "Roy, Roy Buckingham." And he outstretched his hand as the human fathers shook.

"Kelvin and my son Stevey." Kelvin nodded while shaking as Stevey just clutched on to his father. Roy's eyes widened as he knelt to look at Stevey's face which was a male photocopy of Kylie's; he didn't understand. He looked up at Kelvin and his eyes confirmed Roy's confusion.

"Kill any of those monsters?" asked Roy.

"Yeh three ... doctors I think? Only the smaller ones ... and you?" replied and asked Kelvin.

"One of the big spotted fuckers ... their brains are soft as melons! Then they took my daughter ... haven't seen her since." Roy's tone changed and his confidence disappeared and he was chokey, "Fucking animals!"

"Does she have blonde hair ... shoulder length?" asked Kelvin.

"Yes ... have you seen her?" Now Roy's eyes were fully open.

"Five rooms from here ... but," Kelvin hesitated and then said out aloud what he didn't want to believe himself, "but I think they have cloned or somehow are copying her! I saw girls ... exactly the same!" There he had said it! "My son was copied too!"

"What the fuck! So is that your real son?" A direct question had to be asked.

“Look for birthmarks ... I think the copies don’t have birthmarks or freckles!” Roy looked down at Stevey as his eye’s swore angrily as this was the first he knew any of this.

“Kylie has a birthmark under her left shoulder-blade ... it is mooned shaped.” Stated Roy as Kelvin curiously asked,

“What, like this?” And he lifted Stevey’s shirt to reveal the exact same birthmark in the exact same place?”

“What the f...?” Roy’s eyes glared back at Kelvin’s, “Do you think they did this somehow?” Kelvin shrugged his shoulders and held Stevey tight before he nodded and spoke,

“My wife and I were told we could never have children ... we thought we were blessed – a gift from God. We gotta get the fuck off this ship ... before they kill us! At first I thought they were sending us home but I’m sensing that’s not true – a mind game! I’m sure they’ll kill us all when they’re finished with us.”

\*\*\*

## **29 - Ready, Set,**

The Sun had long gone as the three ate and went over and over the plan for they knew they only would get one chance. Jamee was first to rest as she lay on the couch with her head on her grown son's lap while Roy wrapped the guns, ammo, with the container of industrial earplugs in plastic. He taped them to water tight before he placed the box knife in his trouser pocket. It was just crazy that her son was only eight years younger than her but it was his smell that had finally made her accept him and she lay there with her eyes closed as she held his manly hand tight.

Roy was nervous and it was obvious, as Stevey just sat beside his mother with whom he had missed for too long. To her it was yesterday but to him it was half his lifetime, yet he could never forget the events of that night? It had been his only nightmare that had reoccurred over and over for the last 13 years. And so he sat and relived for what he prayed would be played for the last time within his mind as tonight history will be rewritten.

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### 30 - Go!

"Dad I don't want to go? Don't make me?" Stevey pleaded as the now full-bearded Roy grabbed the boy. A month or so had passed since he had arrived in this jail cell without Kylie and it was now or never.

"Stevey ... listen to me! Roy has a way to get out of here ... take you back to Mum!" Kelvin pleaded with his son to accept his words and instructions as it was the only way for now. Roy spoke,

"We will come back and get your Dad ... and Kylie ... I promise mate ... but we gotta get you home."

Stevey nodded and then cried as the two exited the opening while Kelvin lay bleeding from the puncture wounds in his chest from the dead alien's talons. The opening started to close as the two men of similar age silently nodded goodbye and wished each other good luck before Kelvin jokingly yelled,

"May the Force be with you!"

Roy ran down the empty corridor as Stevey was close behind and holding his hand,

"This way mate!" and he placed his hand sideways on the silver wall just as Kelvin had described as the opening appeared and the bright light streamed in, "Don't be scared Steven, your dad said this is the way!"

Roy started to count in the ribs as they ran by, Kelvin had instructed him in his 13 memory layout:  $13 \times 2 + 13 \text{ minus } 2$  and it would be the portal room. Why 13's? Roy had asked and Kelvin could not answer it was like the 13 maths table sat at the top of his mind (but only since he was on this ship) above all else, like riding a bike.

They both stopped and Roy placed his hand where he hoped the lock would be but nothing happened, nothing at all! The sound filled the ship and Roy's ears could hardly let his body function anything but pain but Kelvin's earplugs had at least softened the pain to bearable. Stevey was in a crouch position and holding his ears. They were coming so Roy continued to search for the warm area of the lock randomly but their luck was now running thin. The warrior aliens were now running down the ship's ever-so-long corridor and Roy could see there was at least a dozen or so and they were all holding spear-like weapons high in the air. He needed a plan so what would he do but he couldn't think? He had to save the boy! With one last try he placed his hand a lot gentler on the original area that Kelvin had described and he felt the warmth, this time the opening appeared.

Kelvin could never forget this room and its whereabouts and described it perfectly to Roy which matched his own. And as they stepped onto the red waves (that was this room's floor), they fell straight through it. It seemed like they fell for

minutes, through the winding waterslide type tunnel, winding and spinning out of control but Roy held Stevey's hand as if it was Kylie's. The tunnel abruptly ended and they felt the cold splash of the pool's cold water.

The water was red and they were both on the bottom of the pool, they had made an entrance from the bottom not the top. Now their lungs reminded them that they required oxygen to breathe in this world, so they would make their way through the redness and through the aqua water to reach the air. Even with their disorientation they both sensed to head towards the bright light. As they swam upwards they both saw the two men diving down towards the red and they looked at each other as passing and recognised the faces, it was them! But they were both so much older!

The air filled their lungs as they both coughed and spluttered but they were both alive, as Jamee grabbed teenage Stevey and dragged him from the pool. Roy pulled himself out of the water as the aqua and bright lights disappeared.

"Hi Roy ... I'm Jamee." Jamee outstretched her hand to offer a handshake as she knelt on one knee holding her wet 13 year old son, who was still coughing, as Roy answered her,

"Jamee ... your husband ... he's hurt but he's alive!"

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### 31 - Crossover

After a change into dry clothes, Jamee made them both some toasted ham and cheese sandwiches and a fresh pot of coffee and a hot tottie for young Stevey who was stuck to her leg like supaglua. Stevey was quiet and both adults would understand and not speak about the events until he was resting.

Stevey fell asleep on the couch through exhaustion, with his head upon his mother's lap holding her hand just as she had down just a few hours before.

The boy was in a deep sleep when the two made their way to the backyard for a cigarette and a stiff drink, but it was Roy that started.

"That was us in the pool wasn't it?" He asked but he already knew the answer.

"Yes it was," Jamee started to cry as she kept going, "you brought back Stevey 13 years ago ... you both have been waiting ... for tonight to return."

"They're going to get Kelvin and Kylie ... I mean we are!" It sounded absurd but this was all insane anyway, so he asked, "This is 2013 isn't it? He was right ... Kelvin was right!" He slammed his closed fist on the verandah rail as he dragged on his ciggie, "Goddam it! The fucker was spot on!"

Jamee nodded before she turned her head towards him breaking her frozen stare at tonight's full moon,

"You told me this was going to happen ... today Roy." Jamee blew out the smoke and clicked her scotch glass against Roy's, as they both returned their eyes to the glowing moon before Roy asked,

"So what the fuck happens now?"

\*\*\*

### 32 - No time to explain

"This way!" Roy ran down the ship's corridor with Steven close behind. Their hearts pumped adrenaline as they unwrapped the guns from the plastic and placed the earplugs in.

"She's dry!" stated Steven as a doorway opened and they came face to face with two armed warriors as he threw Roy the loaded revolver.

"Fuck!" screamed Roy. The first warrior raised his spiked weapon into a throwing position when Steven aimed and pulled the trigger exploding its brain into a black bloodied mess covering the face of his warrior partner, temporally blinding him. Roy now aimed and took number 2 down as he was regaining his composure from the surprise shooting.

"Quick the fuckers will send an army now! I think we might have their attention?" Roy smiled at Steven as they ran and jumped over the dead aliens and Roy pointed to the blank wall ... I remember it was here, he was sure.

After counting the 13 layout, Roy placed his hand sideways and the doorway appeared revealing the fresh body of the alien that Kelvin had killed a mere 13 years prior when they both had waited patiently to act out their plan.

It was so important to wait for the day he would come alone, so they had waited for nearly three months together ... but he eventually did ... and it was the *Operator*.

There was Kelvin slumped in a corner with the wound still weeping badly as if it was moments ago.

Roy remembered it was he who had moved first from sitting position and grabbed the alien as Kelvin used the torn strip of his shirt to strangle the lifeblood from this demon. The *Operator* had managed to get a good swing into Kelvin, tearing his ribcage wide open but it was done and the sound wailed – death!

"Holy Shit! What happened to you? You're fucking ancient!" smirked Kelvin as he couldn't stop staring at Roy's now greyed hair ... then he saw Stevey's grown face, "What the fuck?"

"No time to explain mate but it's time to go home!" The two helped Kelvin to his feet and exited the holding room.

"You said Kylie was in here close by?" Roy's eyes stared into Kelvin's as he pointed to the wall where he had seen them. Roy opened the room and it was the alien library.

"That wall!" pointed Kelvin.

They placed Kelvin in a sitting position against the wall as the other two entered the second room. Roy took off his back-pack and found Kylie's dress he had saved for 13 years to dress her in for her return. Stevey turned the other way to keep guard as Roy examined the naked girls one by one until he found her birthmark ... this was her. He went to wake her and dress her but it would never be ... they were here!

It was all over as the many warriors took them all down.

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### 33 - Take 2

Just as the two were finishing their smokes in the backyard, the moon started its descent as the very first sunrays filtered over the horizon and they heard voices coming from seemingly nowhere.

"Look," whispered Jamee, "... this can't be good!" The two stood and watched as the sky brightened and the pool glowed red again. The portal had been opened and two beings were climbing out of the pool so Jamie uneasily joked,

"Mulder and Scully maybe?"

Roy just looked at her and questioned,

"Who are they?"

Jamee forgot Roy was fresh out of 1990 and had no idea who she was talking about or that the world was about to be exposed to the conspiracy files of the letter X. He had quite a bit of catching up in TV land and the whole world in fact.

"Hide!" ordered Roy as the both took their place behind two large palm trees.

The first climbing out was definitely an older, long grey haired, bearded human (not alien – thank God!) followed by a buxom young woman with very long wet tussled hair, they were both dripping wet and near naked, wearing what was only shreds of ripped and torn clothing, mainly covering their privates. *'Not Scully and Mulder more like Tarzan and Jane!'* thought Jamee now. As the light was only starting to filter in, they watched as the two made their way towards them as it too hard to see them clearly as the sensor light refused to work now.

Roy stood in striking position holding Kelvin's golf club that had been left in the backyard hiding behind a tree.

"Jamee ... I'm home!" yelled the older man as Jamee waved her hidden arm from her hiding tree for Roy to lower his strike just as the woman clearly in her thirties spoke from behind,

"Dad, are you here? ..." She was looking around the yard for Roy, "Dad ... it's Kylie, I'm home too!"

Both Jamee and Roy stepped into their vision from behind the backyard trees with their mouths aghast. Kylie turned and unveiled her birthmark to them then said,

"You did it! You both did it!"

"Kelvin?" Jamee grasped her mouth as it was her husband but he was in his early fifties and his hair was long but so much thinner and his body was scarred from several battles, he answered,

“Yes Sweetie ... it’s me ... I’m so sorry I took so long.” Jamee grabbed him.

“What the fucking be-Jesus?” Roy was still in shock as his daughter steps to hug her father. He hugs her so tight it was her ... but with full-sized breasts and an hour glass figure! Roy then turns to look Kelvin eye to eye as Jamee was squeezing the shit out of him.

“Nice to see you old friend,” Kelvin reaches out and grabs Roy’s now out-stretched hand and speaks, “only took us twenty six years to get it right ... but we did mate.” Roy was shaking his friend’s hand but he was in shock as Jamee, so Roy asked,

“But, but how?”

“Timeshifts ... simple timeshifts! It’s how they travel. To them it’s minutes but to us it’s 13 year cycles ... you already knew that but they always return ... for more twins ... we have learnt, it is their cycle. We have learnt a lot in our time. Since the original *Operator*’s death they are lost and frightened with no real leadership. Many have tried from the warriors to the smaller ones to take on the *Operator* role but they all fail ... they are not as smart as the world makes out ... so now it’s simply about survival! You returned 13 years ago and started the cycle but tonight it all becomes real – the windows are open!” Kelvin paused and cough a little, “Are you gonna make an old man stand here cold and near naked ... with his arthritis’n’l? I’d kill an alien fuck for one of them!” and he pointed to the scotch bottle that stood half full (awaiting to be emptied) between the deck chairs.

Jamee kissed her aged husband and raced inside and upstairs before returning with dressing gowns for them both as Roy just held tight his very near same aged daughter.

They all went to the kitchen (with the bottle) where they passed a sleeping Stevey on the couch. Elderly Kelvin went straight to him and kissed his forehead as he whispered,

“We did it mate ... we fucking did it!”

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### 34 - Earth Survivors

“So you’re telling me in 13 years’ time someone else will contact us and this could all change again? It could be any of us from a different time?” questioned Roy.

“Yeh weird isn’t it! But ...” as Kelvin looked into his wife’s eyes he said, “it has too ... it will be my only chance to go back and get back to today ... younger me!” He looked at Jamee whom teared as Kylie spoke,

“But Dad, between you and Kelvin the more you experience the more you pass on to which-ever one of you that is up there! It ricochets and suddenly we are where we are ... and we are here ... home. There are many of us now and we call ourselves – *Earth Survivors*. We have started the war against them we call - *Twinnners*. We have found many of their weaknesses and continue to learn day by day about the complexity and the wonders of the living ship and the powers of the force of 13,” Kylie nods to Kelvin before continuing, “they are scared of us and we know this. We control the whole back section while the *Twinnners* – the front! We are not the only ones that escaped ... many others have as well but they are from other entry points, other times and hopefully they are fine too? But some of us will stay as leaders, trainers and carers of the *Earth Survivors* to free more children ... and there is many, many more until it is their time to fight for their own freedom.” Kelvin was nodding in agreement as he sipped his scotch on the rocks – a taste he had forgotten so long ago.

Jamee had to ask as the tears rolled down her face,

“What about my Stevey, I mean Steven?” It was Kelvin who answered,

“Sweetheart, he is okay and a fine warrior but he believes (as he points to teenage Stevey sleeping) he belongs here and he belongs there (as he points to the sky). He loves us and it is the one thing that will never fade ... and the reason he fights for all twins. He refound his lost memories of early childhood, us and the love we shared and he believes that was his blessing.” Kelvin hugged Jamee as she wept like a baby.

“So what do the aliens want with the twins ... children ... and the experiments?” begged Roy for the answers. Kylie answered,

“They created us - twins! We are all from them ... they made us ... somehow ... brought us here and planted us ... searched for us sonically – the phone squeals! And some are to be reclaimed ... the first twins ... to make more.” She turned and raised her blouse again to expose her birthmark on her back, “It is only us ... the birthmarked ones that are reclaimed ... one day we will know exactly why. But we believe we are the chosen ones, the mostly alien twin, to help them as they have DNA flaws and the reason for their medical research.”



Jamee looked at her husband and remembered the feeling of the miracle pregnancy and the tiny fingernail circular scar in her left side that had appeared from nowhere. Kelvin nodded his understanding.

“They are our children ... not theirs!”

Stevey awoke from all the commotion and ventured into the kitchen rubbing his sleepy eyes,

“Dad ... is that you? Why are you so old? And you need a haircut and a shave ... you look like Grandpa!” Kelvin ruffled his son’s hair, then cuddled the shit out of him as he raised him to leave his feet dangle in the air.

“I missed you buddy ... been a long time for me.” Kelvin then leaned over and whispered in Jamee’s ear, “You would be proud, Steven is a fine man ... a good son ... a good warrior!”

Kylie joined into the 3 way hug to make it 4 way, as she hugged little Stevey especially before she said just two words,

“Thank you.”

Then the 4 way became 5 way as the group hugged the next minute in silence.

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### 35 - Love at first fight

Life for now would never be the same but they did have another 13 years to prepare for the next visit and hopefully her name would be a very pretty Candy-Rose, whom had been on the run in the visitor's ship since she was a mere fourteen years old, way back when after awaking alone and unassisted. And yes! She was a *Stealth Warrior*! She had killed many over the next few years.

A twenty something year old Candy-Rose met her soon-to-be partner - adult Stevey when she freed him from the clutches of the warriors on his return with Elder Roy. It was love at first sight and something neither had ever considered to find amongst a life full of anger and survival but their life was here and love always carves its way through blood and death. They were the ones that freed child Kylie, after they beheaded the alien warrior that killed middle-aged Roy. Candy-Rose and Steven had become 13 year old Kylie's surrogate parents and the first teachers of the *Earth Survivors*.

The *Earth Survivors* on the ship had grown over time and now consisted of over 100 (including copies), but Kylie and Kelvin were now back on Earth where they both at least could plan the next phase of defense against the *Twinner's* next return (and possibly theirs). The teachings would continue without them as there were more than enough that had aged quickly and learnt the human way already.

Kylie knew her ship-mother (Candy-Rose) would return to her one day, if she could only survive and Kylie sensed she would.

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### 36 - Here we go!

“God you’re looking fucking ancient!” stated Bob as he stood beside the fibreglass pool.

“And how does go get fucked sound?” answered Kelvin, “See what an alien probe up the clacker can do? I wouldn’t advise it!”

Bob just flicked his hand at Kelvin but he surely wasn’t buying into that alien bullshit, but whatever drugs he was taking were surely working way too good! Jamee now looked like his fucking daughter and his kids now had two grandfathers ... he was so skinny, it must be cancer he thought, as Kelvin had aged ridiculously quick, seemingly overnight actually and still seemed to be ageing. It was private, none of his business, but no matter what, you couldn’t deny that it was still Kelvin and his wicked tongue - so *fuck it!*

The new guy (Jamee’s cousin) - Roy had learnt a lot about the business in the last year and was soon ready to take over from Kelvin on the management side of things, with only a few weeks to go before Kelvin’s premature retirement started. Bob understood that Kelvin wanted to spend this time with his family while he still was able.

“So England eh? Will be fucking cold!” stated Bob.

“Yeh I know! It’s called snow!” Kelvin laughed as Roy overheard and finished marking the grass for Phil to start the dig just as the news headlines came over the radio.

The Jacob’s Mariner missing twin daughter believed kidnapped and murdered had been miraculously found floating in the bay near where their boat had been moored, exactly 13 months after her disappearance! No one seemed to know where or how she had got there yet she was unharmed. Somehow she was a little older than the fourteen years she should have been, possibly sixteen or seventeen possibly eighteen? But it was her, it had to be. The authorities were claiming the kidnappers had returned her and they were hailing the police work. She was found naked, scared, scarred but very alive. Candy-Rose Rivers was now safe and in her family’s loving care. Roy stared at Kelvin and mouthed words silently as he shook his head,

“*Not 13 years ... only 13 months?*” Kelvin placed his shovel he was holding against the excavator’s tracks and looked straight at Roy before asking,

“Do you wanna tell Kylie her Mum’s here ... or me?”

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# ***Hiding in the Shadows***

*Gravity pulls me downwards while he fights against its will  
Sunshine turns to darkness as the wind becomes the still*

*The answer has just surfaced and I'm scared to face this demon  
His potion takes me to the edge, balancing a life of treason*

*I'm shaking from inside myself and I cannot fully understand  
I've turned myself inside out, sick of feeling like I'm damned*

*I try with all my good intentions to turn around this feeling bad  
No longer will I let him survive in between my sanity and mad*

***Hiding in the shadows  
I see you Mr. Hyde  
Hiding in the shadows  
Time for your very last goodbye  
Hiding in the shadows  
Goodbye to Mr. Hyde***

\*\*\*

# Miss Fortune

## 1 - The fog lifts

The darkness lifts once again as I find myself lying at the base of the old oak tree amongst the frosty fog. It was early morning so I reached and extracted my mobile from my handbag; it was 5:55am as the Sun's first rays beamed their way into the new day.

My husband would be worried yet again and I started to text him immediately after seeing there were at least twenty missed calls and texts from him.

**'Hi hon all ok don't worry be home soon xox.'**

Glen would be pissed but would accept my disappearance just as he always had. He had tried many a time to stop me drinking but he knew I never would ... or should I say never could. Alcohol was my downfall. If I could've deleted that broken ingredient of my DNA then even I would admit ... I would've been the perfect catch. But the error has always been there since it surfaced as a teenaged girl and I discovered that alcohol was the one thing that quelled it. Having Glen in my life and loving me unconditionally was my savior towards my affliction. For Heaven's sake it was how we met, Glen finding me lost and awakening in his parent's front yard from a drunken binge. Sometimes things are just meant to be and one look into his baby blues and I was his - forever.

Life was extremely good for the first two years together especially being married after only a mere 13 months (lucky for me) together. I no longer had to be Miss Raquel Waters but Mrs Glen Jackson.

His parents weren't that keen on me at first re our drunken introduction but they soon saw I was a nice person and the love we shared together, so accepted us as us – the perfect couple (especially as the alcohol had taken a hiatus).

My drinking problem resurfaced after my Mother died ... not that I was ever that close to her but something seemed to snap inside re her death and here was my emptiness, back engulfing everything inside to fill again.

Glen left me after three terrible years of a downward spiral into the bottom of a bottle but it did us both no good. I just drank more to exit the world and he lost the spark of life without love. Apart we were already dead! Five months passed and we refound each other and the 'unconditional' vow became real for us both. Unfortunately for my husband the 'unconditional' leaned heavier on his side. The

blanks were sporadic at first, years which turned into months but lately the months are now weeks. And I bet you question if I have tried to do anything about this? Of course I/we have – everything from A.A. to being together always, starting various new activities such as fitness training but they all eventually fail as it's quite simple and we both admit – I am an alcoholic!

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## **2 - Home sweet home**

“Thank fuck!” Glen hugged me as I closed the front door behind me, “You gotta stop this Honey ... you gotta stop ...” But it was Glen who stopped – stopped lecturing me. My eyes had demanded it.

“Lost another bloody shoe!” I pointed to my one remaining red stiletto that I was carrying not wearing. “I loved these ones!” I kissed Glen as he hugged me and he removed a twig from my ruffled blonde hair.

“The oak tree inn again huh? Coffee’s made ... the usual?” he asked.

The usual was always a strong coffee, two Nurofen, a Vitamin B followed by bacon and eggs on toast just before four hours catch up in my warm bed after I’d showered and Glen would roger or lick me silly to my Saturday morning sleep.

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### **3 - Trust**

Life always returns to normal. We continue until the next blank spot would arise but the good always outweighs the bad by far. Glen trusted my heart with all of his, for it was the one thing that he was sure he could count on ... I would NEVER cheat on him, as he on me.

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#### 4 - George

“Hi! Nice shoes!” It was a pick-up line and not a very original one but it was the truth! Charlotte Olympia red four inch stilettos Raquel got for a song at only \$675 euro online.

“Thanks, I love them.” I smiled at him as I studied his face and general look and could easily tell he was going for the ‘George Clooney’ ... I did say going for but not quite reaching.

“Can I buy you a drink?” George asked as he pointed to my nearly finished glass of Vodka.

“Thanks but I’m here with my friend,” I pointed to the *ladies*, “we’ll be leaving after this one.” It was bullshit but he kept pushing.

“Please let me buy a round ... so what’s your poison ... and your friend’s?”

*If only he knew!*

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## 5 - Home James

Thank God I was back! The George look-a-like named Tyrone opened the cab door in a gentlemanly way.

"Your chariot my lady." Yes I smiled; he was funny. "So Pamela ... my place or yours?" Tyrone shuffled in the backseat after me and instantly reached for my freshly shaven pussy as the cabbie requested an address as I whispered,

"Yours."

"Drop us off on the corner of Bentley," ordered Tyrone as he played with my clit as I had half expected. So taking off my panties before we left, wasn't a complete waste of time. I grabbed his hand and removed his finger and placed it within my freshly lip-sticked mouth. I sucked off my own sweet nectar as I placed my left hand on his penis and even through his suit pants, it was throbbing.

The sex was good, not great but good. I only came once before I used my special trick and sucked his cock dry. Did we fuck? No! I never fuck! Sex yes! But no man sticks his dick in me! Only one man ever has and that was my step-father when I was only twelve years old, the same year I got my first period. The blood always reminds me of this – always!

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## 6 - Showtime

I left his place around 1:30am on Saturday morning – the deed was done! It was time to get a drink after walking the streets for a while, I hailed a cab and sat in the back reliving the last hours of my life.

His body wasn't the worst or the best but for his age (middle forties I guessed) he looked good. My body on the other hand was tight for my age and my breasts were as perky as they were when I was a younger woman in my twenties (a bonus of having smaller ones and no kids, I suppose). I loved to parade it in front of them and you know that's just what they love too – their cocks never lie when you do your best stripper moves!

"Fuck! Suck it Baby! Suck it!" Tyrone lay back as I worked my magic upon him. It always made me feel like I was in control when they laid back and my teeth slightly clamped upon their manhood, the feel of their warm cock in my mouth thrilled me and my juices flowed. It is always about timing and I would make them wait impatiently and hold off as long as they could, until their male hormones overtake all and as they are just about to explode, I reach downwards to my strategically placed handbag (at the end of the bed) and as the female praying mantis does – strike! I once again, revenge my anger towards my lover at the moment of ejaculation. One adrenalin filled slice across the throat and a final thrust in the heart, to bury the knife deep, deep towards their bloodied end. It was always the same – quick, messy and very satisfying.

Showering the fresh blood from my dark hair and body straight afterwards, was my cleansing, cleansing of the soul. Washing away guilt has never had a place within me as I wash away only revenge, for it was a disgusting man that did this to me in my innocence in the first place.

I knew within my heart it is the anger towards my step-father's year of raping me that I take out on all these so-called innocent males but something inside is empty and this always seems to fill that hole. It is imperative as my only survival.

The taxi pulled up outside 'Everstone' and I paid the driver with a fifty and tipped him the change. I really needed a drink as I straightened my mini skirt over my G-string and waved the cabbie a thank you farewell as he left. I walked up to the bouncer at the club's entrance, straight by the queue of waiting would-be patrons.

"Miss Pamela ... looking good." Ralphie the oversized bouncer unclipped the chain to let me in.

"Ralphie ... if only you weren't a married man!" I pecked him on the cheek as I passed to the sounds of complaining would-be's.

"You smell nice Miss Pamela ... what perfume is that?"

*Essence of dead lover Ralphie* but instead of saying the obvious, I pointed to my pussy. Ralphie smiled in his big black usual way and re-clipped the chain as he opened the door to reveal the pounding beats from inside.

“Have a great night Miss Pamela.”

I ran my fingers through my long Darkened mane and pouted my lips as I entered –

*SHOWTIME!*

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## 7 - Light's out

It was time to sleep; I was dead tired. The vodkas had done their job – I was smashed! The club was still pounding but so was my head it was time to leave. I had danced, flirted and drank the night to its death – it soon would be morning. I bid Ralphie his drunken goodbye just as the last time and staggered my way to *Ashgrove Park*. It was hard to walk in these stupid fucking shoes so I stopped and slipped them off and it felt good. Why did I subject myself to this pain, just for cosmetics of looking sexy? I raised the left one to my face and spoke to it,

“Fuck you! I hate you ... you stupid fucking shoe you!” I threw the shoe as far as I could into the lake which scared a floating duck into flight. “Goodbye Shoe! Duck duck!”

I fell to the grass laughing and it was wet from the early morning dew and I laughed hard and oblivious to the world. I felt good and then I vomited. I wiped the spew from my mouth and I needed to rest even for just minute and I could see my old favourite old tree – ahh bed!

I knew soon it would be time, I was much better at this than before. I knew it wouldn't be long before I kill again, though if I slept, at first she would return, the one I detest! She was weak and soft and she loved him! A man of all things! But I am so tired and exhausted, so as I lean against the old oak tree I close my eyes and say goodbye to – me for now.

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## 8 - Take me

It has been three whole months and I haven't had a need to drink. It is like something inside is fulfilled? Glen and I are going away for an impromptu dirty weekend in *Riverston National Park* as my reward, yet somehow I believe it'll be his reward! A couple of nights alone in the country will be perfect, a nearly always secluded camp site, toasting marshmallows as we cuddle by a campfire and a whole park to fuck in!

"Have you packed enough?" Glen scratched and shook his head and questioned why there were two bags so I explained,

"You know me – be prepared! What if it's cold? What if it's hot? What if?" I smirked as he raised his eyebrows in a surrender glance.

"How long you gonna be?" He asked and I could see he was itching to leave and get this five hour road-trip on its way.

"Just gotta pack the food ... you take these," as I zipped the out-stretched bag, "to the car and don't forget the portable barbie ... got enough gas?"

"Yes Boss ... on it!" Glen saluted me at attention and I playfully kicked him.

I went to the kitchen where I already had started packing the groceries to take. My brain was thinking, '*C'mon Raquel think baby, think!*' so I went through my mind's check list and then it dawned on me, beans with no opener was a problem! I opened the drawer and shuffled through until I found the can opener but next to it was another opener ... the corkscrew bottle opener. I packed the can opener but something twinged inside. I had been good and my drinking was well under control again so I turned and knelt down and opened the under-sink cupboard door. Reaching in, I found what I had hidden in there a long, long time ago, just in case – emergency ... a bottle of Shiraz and a bottle of Stolichnaya vodka. I hesitated and nearly put them back but if there was ever a time to have a toast it would be tonight – alone and away from the cares of the real world. So I packed them both in the groceries box we were to take.

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## 9 - Silence is golden

My stomach was in pain, I couldn't take it anymore! Glen's out-of-tune unison singing along to Elvis on the car's cd player was painful. The tears were streaming down my face from laughter.

"Stop! Stop! Please Honey!" I knew he was doing it on purpose but it was hilarious and he sounded wrong, all wrong especially with the gay eye movements!

I loved him deeply, he was my soul mate that made me laugh, cry and just love. I had no doubt about it, as my darkest blank was when he was out of my life for those months. I just escaped the real world and replaced it with oblivion. To have a second chance meant I would never leave him ever ... if I did, I would die inside ... he was my true heart.

We reached the *Riverston* campsite at about 4:00 in the arvo and it was only us – it was empty. The first thing you notice is the silence. To hear total silence is the most wonderful experience and then only to have it broken by the sound of a singing bird in the distance before the silence returns. We both just leaned against the car for the next ten minutes holding each other without breaking it.

By 6:00pm the campfire was lit and the tent was pitched. Taking the bean bags was an awesome idea Glen had thought of as we snuggled (me across his lap on his) toasting our very first marshmallows of the weekend.

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## 10 - The door to home

"I brought these Honey." I held the alcohol towards him and cocked my head into '*only if you want to?*' way. Glen's eyes immediately reacted as I assumed they would. "It's only us honey ... out here ... just us!"

"I'm n-no..." And as usual Glen accepted my word and gave in his fight. I uncorked the Shiraz and poured two plastic cups of red.

"Here's to us Honey." I toasted as the first sip was down before Glen's had even reached his mouth. The warmth crossed my tongue and the familiar taste of my alcoholic home opened the door. I sipped three more times before mouthfuls were swallowed to empty the cup and I tingled. I reached over and grabbed the bottom of Glen's plastic cup for him to catch up ... he responded by downing the half full cup in one gulp. I kissed his cheek and picked up the bottle and poured us both another ... just one more.

My head spun from the vodka, well I had drank most of it straight and double of what Glen had and I was home, not just walking through the door but home!

We fucked hard in front of the fire. Glen doggy-styled me and shoved his cock as deep into me as he possibly could! We rarely ever get rough, but tonight was one of those nights, like two animals in the wilderness so he pulled my hair and bit my shoulder, as I dug my nails into his thighs before he whipped his cock from my dripping pussy and stuck it where the sun don't shine!

I was excited being butt-fucked for the very first time as he took me or I took him in between pleasure and pain! I was in control not him as the forcefulness escalated and I fucked harder and he fucked harder! I made him come inside me ... I loved that! I felt him shoot his warm load as I backed hard and took him as far as his pressed balls possibly could.

We both were drunkenly exhausted and fell asleep naked together in front of the fire to the smell of fresh sex but as I drifted downwards to sleep, I saw what I hadn't seen in such a long time ... she was here watching and waiting!

\*\*\*



## 11 - Wake up

"Wake up!" I held the knife at his balls as he stirred, "Wake up!"

At last little Miss Fortune was gone and she had taken me away for way too long but not anymore!

"What th-fuck!!" Her man opened his eyes from his drunken sleep state in the midnight moonlight, to the realisation that he was now restrained by the tent rope - hands and feet.

"You're tied up!" Now he knew!

"Honey, Raquel what?" He was confused.

"My name is Pamela ... not your sweet little helpless Raquel." Now he knew even more!

"Raquel, please stop this!" Begging wasn't going to fix this.

"Raquel has gone ... I am here ... Pamela!" And to reiterate the situation, I nicked his abdomen right above his right testicle.

"AAAHH! I don't understand ... please don't? You haven't used your first name ... ever! You've always been Raquel!" I loved hearing him/them beg, confused and lost, just like little boys and sometimes I did it just for the control need.

"I am Pamela and I am your wife's emptiness ... I am the blank!" I finally had said it out aloud and told someone the actual truth that had been suppressed for too long. I pulled the knife away and stood up as he lay back naked in the middle of the bean bag, tied and helpless as the fire danced to Lucifer's flame. And the words had made me real ... alive and kicking!

"She never told you about me ... did she?" He shook his head silently. "You know nothing of her childhood pain do you?"

I started my little stripper dance around the fire with the knife like a slow motion banshee.

"Remember your little Raquel never drank until Mummy died?" This time he nodded. "Mummy knew ... she knew what her husband did to me! Father knows best ... Well Mummy knew all! The fucking Cunt!"

"What do you mean ..." he asked, "was she ... you abused?"

"Men ... fucking men and their dangly dicks!" I angered and my teeth grit and my dance ended.

"You are no better! Didn't you abuse your wife's body tonight ... as well as mine!" I pointed to the bite mark that had bled on my shoulder then I leant over and

placed the knife at his throat as I touched my burning arsehole, “Y-You disgust me!” I withdrew the knife as her man teared up and whimpered,

“I didn’t know? I’m sorry.”

I felt empowered in my nakedness and stood behind the flames for him to see the real me ... and what he had abused!

“You fucking raped me ... filthy animal ... just like he did!”

“I never did ... I made love to you ... to her ... my wife! You’re fucking crazy ... I think you’re sick Raquel ... Pamela!”

The court was now in session.

“It’s Pamela ... Fucker! What gives you the right to think that was making love? I was there ... you hurt her and me!”

“I want to speak to Raquel ... where is she?”

“She has gone, that is all you need to know ... you have a bigger problem now ... me!”

I held the blade to my neck as I drew it slowly left to right in the cut-your-throat movement.

“It was you, wasn’t it ... that killed those men ... after sex? The one in the papers ... and on the news!”

Now the boy was thinking! Putting 2 and 2 together as both suppression and denial finally surface from the depths.

“I knew the times were too coincidental ... but Raq ... could never ... she could never hurt a fly!”

“Maybe it was ... maybe it wasn’t me?” I chuckled and walked around the fire before I stopped directly in front of him on the bean bag, crouched over and pissed on his feet. Her man wriggled like my piss was acid. “How does abuse feel pervert?” I wiped my vagina with my hand and then wiped his face with it. His face cringed, reacting by thrashing side to side. “Ahh Poor baby, don’t like wee-wee on his face!” I found the Vodka bottle and drained the last few drops from it.

“Your teenie-weenie looks a little limp.” I said as I bent over and lifted the tiny shriveled todger upwards with my left pointer finger and my thumb. He went to break my grip with his bound hands and the knife returned to his nicely shaved balls ... he settled. I knelt down on the dirt and began to suck his cock, as it was time to work my magic.

I could taste Raquel's juices on him and it repelled me as well as making my body tingle in excited disgust. He cried as his cock got hard against his will and I was in control. I have sucked a lot of cock to be this good and club *Evertson's* unisex toilets had been a great practice ground. I knew he was close, I could feel it, but it was not his time just yet, so I stopped. I took his cock out from my mouth and stated, "You come when I say come ... Pig!"

I stood up and walked around to his face as he lay across the beanie bag with his hands and feet still tied by the tent rope. I squatted down on his face and my wet pussy covered his nose and mouth as the blade's tip touched his neck.

"Lick it! If you want to live? Then lick me ... make me come!" He did, deep and hard, as if his life depended upon it! His tightened body language loosened and he wasn't scared of me now - just horny! I came quickly as I was already halfway there from the adrenalin rush. I screamed into the wilderness as I relived my step-father doing this disgusting act when I was only a scared little girl. I reached down and pulled his cock like dear Daddy had taught me too. At this age there was no shame or fear to deal with (not like back then), only the torture of disgust that followed but I had accustomed myself to that long ago and now enhance that repulsion. It was time to suck. Leaning over him I sucked him as he continued to lick me. He blew into my mouth and for the first time we swallowed the seed, it nauseated and thrilled me and I could taste him – he was Raquel's. I had saved this treat especially for her man ... and before her. She never gave oral ... how could she after what had happened to us?

"So did you like that Pamela? Do you wanna go again?"

*Was he sounding just a little too cocky?* I stood up and pointed the knife into his jugular.

"Does Raquel ever give head ... she doesn't ever, does she?" Her man's eyes widened and he shook his head ... she always refused.

"Of course not! But you fucking love it ... right?" He nodded this time. "As all you filthy men do!" I hesitated as I felt Raquel's single tear leave my left eye and so I withdrew the knife. I paced back and forth as I quelled her sadness before screaming,

"Fuck!"

I had had enough of this pointless game ... it was time for him to die.

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## 12 - Dead silence

The pain streamed into my eyes *Oh shit!* I thought, *I'd done it again!*

But why was there dried blood on my hands and up my arms? I screamed as I remembered seeing Pamela ... no-no please not her! I remembered she was with Glen. Even with my drunken disorientation I managed to sit up from the back of the Land Cruiser where I had been sleeping. The Sun's rays were strong and it must've been close to 10:00 o'clock – had I been out that long?

Panic replaced pain as I realised I was covered in dried blood and not just on my hands but my whole body – *oh no Glen!* So I screamed,

“Glen – Glen please no! Not Glen.” But there was only silence ... nothing else ... just dead silence.

I ran to the campfire as I pulled on my t-shirt and fell to my knees as Glen's bloodied naked body was lifeless on the bean bag. My head was exploding as my hands shook uncontrollably and my stomach expelled the remains of any alcohol. Pamela had cut Glen's throat and then stabbed him in the heart, leaving the murder weapon (our kitchen knife) protruding from his chest. She had let him die naked and scared; I vomited again – this time dry reaching.

Why? Why? She left me alone and I left her to do the horrible things she does, it was the unspoken rule! I knew she killed her step-father on her 13<sup>th</sup> birthday and spent years back and forth in mental institutions for it! It was where I was born from – the good side and she hid in the shadows – away from life! So why now ... after all these years of separation? And it dawned on me – she wanted her life back! I have spent the last fifteen years with her locked away from my soul but now I feel her grinning and laughing at me, making me feel weak and pathetic just because I have the ability to love! I have always let her take her time within my blanks and she caused absolute havoc (killing three men) in Glen and my break-up period but I accepted it, locked away from me for years. I never harmed anyone and the only the thing I am guilty of is blanking her out. And now I am faced with her memories and retribution as my beautiful husband's dead body rots in the Sun, as flies dance in and out of his open mouth and over his open dry eyes.

The silence was unbearable! My tears flowed as I dragged my dead husband towards the bushes. His body was heavy but I had to be quick as if someone would come, then I – not her would be arrested. My life sentence had already begun and I refused to be indicted for her crimes, as her memories invaded mine and her cruel sex killings became a part of me and she was now reaching double figures. I could feel she carried no guilt and laughed from the depths about it all and laughed at mine.

I dug a shallow grave while I cried amongst the silence. Rolling Glen's unclothed body in, so he landed face first. After replacing the dirt, I did my best to

cover the grave with foliage and debris, rocks and anything I could find. I took off my wedding ring, kissed it and placed it down on the ground as his headstone. Yes if it was ever found it possibly would lead the authorities straight to me (and her) but I have had time to think now. Another hole was dug further away where I buried all the bloodied clothes and quilt from the car.

I packed up the tent site and dust-brushed away as much blood as I could, spreading the camp-fire ashes amongst the dirt as the sorrow inside escalated.

As I drove away covered in dust and Glen's dried blood, the sadness seemed to click upwards as the kilo-mileage meter did the same ... I knew it was time to end this - forever!

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### 13 - Goodbye

One thing I am not is – stupid! My previous visits were always limited but I made the most of them, no matter how short they were, (i.e. withdrawing a nest egg from their funds, stealing and hiding her passport, stashing clothes, knives etc) and by always having a get-away plan ready, locker key well hidden and a suitcase of a brand new life if ever need be - but this was like winning the lottery. I may not be stupid but Raquel certainly was! She was always dogged by her demons – alcohol and love ... and now they were her downfall. It was the two things that finally took her down ... but not me! Love is simply impossible when you refuse to believe and alcohol just thrives and rebirths me, I control it and never IT me – it is only fuel! After returning home Raquel drank herself to oblivion for the last time. Two bottles of O.P. rum straight she had bought at the drive-through on her return.

Her plan of choking on her own vomit as she strategically placed her body between the pillows on the bed nearly worked ... but I had heard her inner voice cry beforehand.

So now I shower and wash down the drain - her pathetic soul and the ghost of her husband's blood, mixed amongst her final hang-over.

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## 14 - Warning

Today I awaken from my first full night's sleep to leave this God forsaken shit-hole of a city (and country) with my passport intact, as I am finally ready to start my revenge against the rest of the world's (males only) sexual pigs that created me and I do NOT discriminate ... just choose!

I will be in Australia – *Mate!* Before anyone even realises Glen is dead or that Raquel is even gone. My bloody adventure is about to begin. I am the control and I am the power! So when you offer to buy that next pretty girl with that cute accent a drink at the bar - Pamela or maybe Tracy, what about Sexy Suzy or even ... Raquel? Please BEWARE ... as if it's a one night stand you're looking for, then it might just be me with her lipstick lips around your precious penis' misfortune?

Don't ever say - you hadn't been warned!

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# ***13 Emerald Drive***

“13 Emerald Drive ... we’re on our way.” Sidney put the Ambulance into drive and Sharon hopped in the passenger seat, shut the door and loaded the address into the GPS.

“It’s a full moon tonight.” Sharon pointed to the moon that was glowing red behind a small cloud, “Is that a blood moon?”

Sid looked up and nodded as he pulled out of the Emergency driveway and onto Waterford Road,

“I think so, did you hear anything about one ... as I didn’t?”

“N-u-u...nothing.” Sharon just shrugged her shoulders and thought nothing more of it as she refocused on the details of the call. “Sounds like a stroke, they said the caller wasn’t clear and very garbled.”

“We’ll be there in three.” stated Sid as he checked the rear vision mirrors as the traffic moved to the left to let him through.

The Ambulance pulled up outside and Sid cut the sirens but left the lights flashing. The house was dark and silent except the rustle of the front yard trees in the breeze.

“Gotta funny feeling about this one Shaz ... something’s just not right.”

“I think you’re getting old and senile.” And Sharon grabbed the torch from its place whacked him with it before she flicked it on and began shining it at the darkened house.

She opened the ambulance door, exited and made her way to the back of the Ambo and grabbed the paramedic first aid kit,

“Are you coming Mr Scardee Cat ... or are you gonna stay here and make me go by myself.”



“Well-I-I-I! Maybe we should get the cops to check it out first? I’ll call ‘em now!” As soon as he spoke he knew it sounded even more pathetic out loud than it did in his mind. “Okay ... wait up.”

After the fourth loud knock and no answer Sidney turned to Sharon, “I’m telling you something’s wrong with this one!”

“You’re losing it Big Boy!” Sharon was already at the window and shining the torch in when the ginger cat sprung out of nowhere and was in the window sill hissing at her; she jumped ... but not as high as Sid.

“Fuck off!” yelled Sidney and they looked at each other and started laughing through their fear. Sharon regained her composure and redirected her torch past the now settled cat.

“There’s someone in there ... on the floor ... looks male!” Now her heart was racing as her adrenalin kicked into paramedic mode. “We need to get in Sid! NOW!”

Without hesitation he did and the door swung open as it was ajar and he thought to himself, *‘that was way too easy!’* His alarm bells were ringing and he knew inside something was really very wrong.

“Shaz, we have to call the cops ... something’s just not fucking right here ... believe me ... I’m telling you!”

“Fuck Sid! Ring them then!” Sharon screamed in frustration as she gritted her teeth and pushed him aside to make her way in. “Hello is anyone here?”

The world seem to cave in on Sidney as he turned and sat down on the front step with his face in his hands ... he just couldn’t walk inside ... and it was freaking him out! The light flickered on and then he heard anguished cry of Sharon’s voice.

“Oh no-no - No!” followed by her sobbing. She was soon outside and throwing up beside Sid who was still frozen with fear before he could even speak but her eyes told it all ... the Devil was here today ... the Devil had been here!

“f-f-four dead ... I think murder suicide ... and fucking kids!” Sharon was doing her best to spit it out to Sid before he rang and the cops turned up.

The police entered and exited pretty quickly so Sid knew it was no pretty picture inside, just when the last cop ran out screaming,

“He’s alive... he’s fucking well alive!”

Sid jumped to his feet and like a reflex movement the kit was in his hand and he was following the officer in. But the hairs on his neck raised as the vomit seemed to arise from nowhere and then he saw the two butchered boys lying on the floor in living room as their presumed mother swung lifeless from the rope around the ceiling fan.

Sid doubled over and vomited as the cat seemed to appear magically from the depths of Hell, hissed at him before running off and disappearing into the darkness.

"Holy Fucken' Mother of Jesus!" yelled the cop who was startled by the cat as well. He pointed through the doorway to the father who was lying on his side with his dead mobile in front of him. "This way ... in the kitchen!" then he waved '*coast is clear*' for Sid to follow.

It was obvious the male in his forties had had a stroke and a bad one but he was alive! The man's eyes were blurry but barely alive as he glared at Sid and if to plead to him. Sid regained his composure as he forced himself to glance around the open door-way at the boy's hand-tied torsos and it was like the smell of rotting flesh was a part of this gruesome image and he guessed they had been there for at least three days.

Sid had seen many a dead body before but this was haunting – kids? Both boys' eyes were open and cadaver but as if they were reaching out to him to help them. Their necks had been torn open and the bloodied box blade was there in front of them. The female was blonde and in her late thirties and way to pretty for this, he thought. She had hung herself as the chair was kicked over. She had blood on her arms and torso, it was the boy's blood – she had killed them!

Sid regained himself again and knelt beside the presumed father in his forties. His pulse was weak and Sid did his usual response checks but the man was at his end as the ginger cat returned and sat beside him and meowed. The cat's name was 'Wilbur'; it was engraved on his collar's tag.

"What happened here Wilbur?" Sid asked as if the cat would reply.

"Is he gonna live?" The black cop whose name was already forgotten by Sidney was standing well back as if something was going to change in here real quick. Sid rested his hand on the male's head and spoke,

"I know you can hear me ... blink if you can." The man blinked or half blinked his blue eyes ... he was weak. "What happened here mate? You saw ALL this?" The man's eyes shifted to the left twice and Sid looked over his shoulder and a letter was lying in front of him. And with a final breath the man was gone as if he had waited for Sid's question.

The smell of death and feces was overpowering and Sid had reached his limit so he grabbed the letter and ran outside where Officer Black Cop was already.

Tampering with a crime scene was the furthest thing from his mind ... he just wanted to know *Why?* So he sat on the front step where Sharon was still crying and being asked rapid-fire questions by Officer White Cop as the Detectives and Forensics turned up.

Sid unfolded the scrunched letter that contained a small torn-in-half photo of the father and some buxom redhead kissing him in an obvious affair-type way, as Wilbur came and rubbed up against his back.

It read – No Love then just DEATH! WE ARE ALL DEAD NOW!

It was written in dried blood! He guessed the family blood. What did that mean? That made no fucking sense! He looked across at Sharon ... his wife ... his best friend ... his lover ... his co-worker ... his everything and then he got it ... well sort of ... but why the kids? Why always the fucking kids? Then Sgt Hard-Arse reefed the letter from Sid's hands before giving him his new name!

"Idiot!"

Wilbur meowed and jumped on his Sid's lap. As the Detective turned and walked off bagging the evidence. Sid stroked Wilbur as the cat lifted to every stroke as if to say –

*'Stroke me!'*

"What the fuck did you see buddy?" and as he looked at Wilbur's face he could've sworn the bugger was smirking like a Devil's Cheshire, but that was just fucking ridiculous! Wasn't it?

\*\*\*\*\*

The End

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# *Thirteen*

By

Jonny Newell

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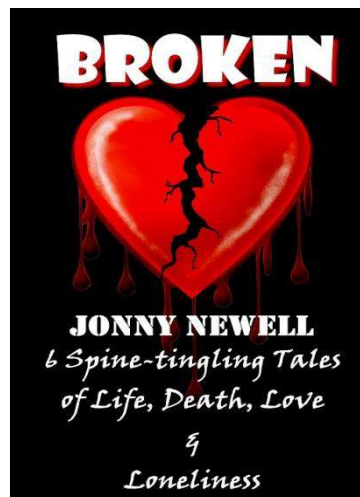
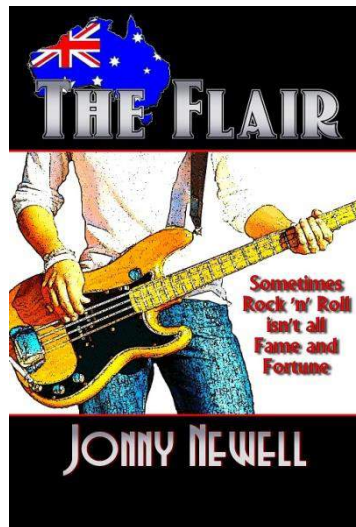
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## About the author

*Jonny Newell has always had a love of the dark and mysterious which inspired him to write this 2<sup>nd</sup> anthology of short horror series. A musician for over 30 years, Jonny lives in Queensland Australia with his wife Vickie and sons. When Jonny's not playing or writing or recording music you'll most probably find him either renovating around the house or simply lying by the pool with a drink in hand or just maybe ... he's swirling something deep within his mixed-up little mind for his next story.*



Other books by Jonny Newell



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