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“A Stranger’s Revenge”

by Meaghan Bradshaw

Doctors and nurses were rushing wildly from room to room as Connor paced from one end of the waiting room to the other. “Shit,” he muttered to himself as Bea’s parents held each other crying. “Shit,” he muttered again as he finally let his body fall into one of the chairs. Unwanted, angry, shameful tears rolled down his cheeks. He lifted his head and his eyes found Sammy’s. Connor shook his head furiously as he walked out of the room disgusted by everything that had happened in the last twenty-four hours.

“Are you sure your dad won’t let you take off early today?” Bea said smiling from ear to ear. “We never really get to hang out together anymore...” but Connor didn’t let her finish. “No, Babe, I can’t take off early.” He gave her a quick kiss on the cheek and was out the door. “Love you too, Connor,” Bea whispered to herself as she cleaned off the table. Connor had hardly touched his food. The first few months of their marriage had been great, but something in Connor had changed. He was becoming distant and he just wasn’t the man Beatrice had married that cool September morning.

Bea let out a sigh and then smiled. “Work,” she laughed to herself. “He’s stressed out at work. His mother had warned me that the men in their family were famous workaholics.” Another sigh escaped as she threw up her hands, “I don’t know how much more of this I can take.” Quiet tears skipped down her cheeks as she forced herself to smile. She grabbed her car keys and started her rounds hoping to finish all her errands by lunch time.

Sammy woke up feeling wonderful as she stretched her legs. The satin felt good underneath her bare body. “God, that boy drives me wild,” she said in a sultry voice smiling. She rolled over to her side and found his letter. He had left during the middle of the night, but it never made her feel like a slut or a whore to wake up alone after a long night of wild passionate sex. “He *loves* me...” she stopped in mid sentence as she held his letter close to her chest. “My dearest lover I shall see you this afternoon and tonight, my lovely little tigress. Until then, yours truly, *Romeo*,” *Sammy* read aloud. “What a silly boy, he has a new name every other day. I guess today he’s calling himself *Romeo*.”

She rolled out of bed letting her covers drape across her body as she listened to the couple in the next apartment scream at one another. “Oh how a marriage will destroy even the happiest of relationships. Note to the wise, never get married,” she said laughing, all too absorbed in her own affairs to feel any kind of compassion for others. *Sammy* danced around her kitchen as she glanced through her fridge for something to eat. Finding nothing she slammed the door shut as a picture fell off. *Sammy* quickly grabbed at it before it could slip underneath the fridge. She smiled, but it quickly faded as she traced the outline of her best friend’s face. “My sweet *Beatrice*...”

A stranger smoked a cigarette watching a young golden haired woman get out of her red Ford Focus. He’d been watching her for months; ever since he had seen her at *Carrington and Sons Law firm*, she was the pretty little wife of Connor Carrington, the man that was supposed to represent his brother, the man that was supposed to help his brother stay out of jail. Instead, Carrington did a half ass job and now his older brother was rotting away in jail for a crime he didn’t commit. He gave a low raspy laugh to himself as he threw down his cigarette and

stomped it out with his boot. He entered the grocery store keeping his focus on Carrington's wife. He knew that she knew he was watching her, and he got a sick kick out of all it. He could almost taste her fear.

He could see her hands grip the handle bar of the cart so tight that they turned from a pinky tan color to white. He could hear her deep breaths and hear her whisper to herself as she counted to ten. "Counting to ten won't make me disappear, sweetheart," he whispered to himself.

Connor started getting his things ready for lunch as Parker, the newest member of the team, came knocking on his door. "Sorry to bother you Connor, but there's a pretty little woman here to see you and it looks like she's brought your favorite, Chinese food," Parker smiled. "Do you want me to tell her to meet you in the lounge?" Connor was smiling until he realized that he and Parker weren't thinking of the same little woman. "Oh, God, no...listen Parker can you distract her for me?" "What," Parker laughed until he realized Connor wasn't joking. "Wha...don't you want to have lunch with...?" But Connor interrupted him. "I have a meeting with a client and I'm running late as it is, and if Bea sees me then she's just going to give me those big puppy dog eyes and I don't have time for that, so just do this for me Parker, ok?"

With that Connor snuck out down the back stairs to the first floor. He kept muttering, "shit, why would you come today Beatrice? You never have lunch with me, and you know I don't like you bothering me at work." Of course, he was talking to thin air, and in his heart of hearts he knew he was wrong. He knew what he was doing was wrong, but somehow every time he saw Sammy he forgot about Beatrice and being her husband. Sammy was different from Beatrice; she didn't hound him about being late or worried him about how they'd pay the bills.

“All the fun of being in a relationship without really being in a relationship...sex, that’s all it’s about with Sammy and me. I’m not hurting Bea...I’m not,” he said to himself as she climbed the stairs to Sammy’s apartment. “It means nothing,” he whispered to himself as he knocked on her door. “Hello sunshine,” he said smiling. “I see you’re still wearing what you did last night.” He grabbed her and let the cover that had been draped around her naked body fall to the floor as he swung her over his shoulder. All the while Sammy laughed and said, “Romeo, Romeo, where for art thou Romeo...”

Beatrice smiled as she watched Parker come around the corner. She was a little confused when Connor wasn’t behind him. “Where’s my husband?” Parker let out a sigh and said, “I’m sorry Mrs. Carrington, Connor had a meeting with a client. I guess I just forgot, he just left five minutes ago.” “Oh,” *Beatrice* said still puzzled. “I was just down there, and if he just left then...it’s ok, I just have all this extra food and I just wanted to surprise him. Here,” *Beatrice* said handing Parker the sacks of food. “Please put this in the lounge and tell everyone to help themselves. I don’t want it to go to waste.” *Beatrice* turned to walk away, but Parker stopped her. “Why don’t you stay and have lunch with me? I could use the company?” She turned and found his warm smile to be comforting, but she didn’t want to have lunch with Parker, she wanted to have lunch with her husband. “No thank you.”

She had been holding back tears, but once she was inside her little red car she was able to let it all out. “He couldn’t have just left five minutes ago, because I would have seen him walking down the street. But...it doesn’t matter,” *Beatrice* wiped away her tears and tried to call Sammy, but there was no answer. “Figures,” she laughed. “Sammy doesn’t wake up until the

moon comes out. She's like an owl." Beatrice threw her phone in the passenger's seat and headed to her parents house.

Sammy moaned as she bit Connor's ear. "You're too good to me, Connor." Connor didn't say anything he just smiled. *Sammy* could sense that something was wrong and she hoped that it wasn't something that she did that was causing him to act a little different. "What's wrong, Connor?" She sat up and watched his eyes that seemed zombie like. "Are you...did I do something wrong?" He shook his head no and sat up too. "Then what is it?" Connor opened his mouth as if to say something, but nothing came out. "Is it about Rex?" Finally, there were some emotions out of Connor as he threw up his hands and said, "Who the hell is Rex?" "My ex-boyfriend, the one who..." *Sammy* started to cry as she rested her head on Connor's shoulder. "Oh yeah," Connor said wrapping his arms around her waist. "He's the one that hit you or something like that," he muttered to himself as *Sammy* wrapped her arms around his neck and kissed his cheek. "You're more of a man than he ever was..."

Beatrice had tried to call Connor from her parent's house, but she could never get a hold of him. She had gotten a hold of Parker, and he had told her that Connor would have to stay late that there was a break in one of their cases. Parker said, "He's just really stressed right now Mrs. Carrington. Connor wishes he could come to the phone right now, but he's just swamped with a ton of paper work." *Beatrice* had been nice to Parker on the phone, but what she really wanted to tell him more than anything was "Please stop lying for my husband and tell him to pick up the damn phone." Of course, being mean wasn't in her nature. "He's working late again isn't he sweetie?" her mother said frowning. "It's ok," *Beatrice* lied as her father kissed her on the cheek

and wrapped his arm around her. “You’ve got us Bea,” her father said smiling. “You’ve always got us.” “Thank you Daddy,” Beatrice said as the three of them sat in the kitchen.

The Stranger watched as Beatrice laughed inside the big colonel style house. Her smile was big and it made him wonder what her face would look like with a knife pressed against her bare neck. She had become his obsession, and it had become something much more than revenge. “I’m going to make that little dipshit’s life turn upside down,” he coughed and choked on his own spit as he laughed. “Poor little fawn, part of me does feel sorry for you, but only a very small part. I’m going to enjoy this...”

His eyes never left the house and as Beatrice waved at her parents he knew that the time had come. He followed her down the suburban roads as big houses laughed at him. A privilege lifestyle, a world that he had never gotten a chance to know, this made the stranger angry and the only thing that made him happy was the fact that he’d get to run his fingers through Carrington’s pretty little wife’s hair.

Connor lay in bed with Sammy and he tried to fall back asleep, but Sammy began to snore like a dog. The sound of her snoring along with the screeching tire sounds of the city outside started to gnaw at him, irritating. He started to feel smothered, and suddenly he longed to be home with Beatrice. She was safe, and sometimes safe can be boring, but it’s safe. It’s comfortable. In his heart of hearts he loved Beatrice more than anything else in the world. He’d just forgotten. As he put on his pants and shirt he promised himself that he’d never do this again. He’d be faithful to Beatrice and he’s never let her go again, because when he was with Beatrice he was safe.

Beatrice lingered in the kitchen as the house started to make its usual creeks and noises. It's funny how houses can hiss and talk in such a strange and scary way. She let out a sigh as she wished Connor were here with her. A slow wind started to tap on the windows and doors. To some the sound would be frightening, but for *Beatrice* it made her feel a little better. In a way it soothed her. As she ran her fingers up the rail of the staircase she saw two bright lights pull into the driveway. Her heart skipped a beat and gave a joyful jump. She listened as Connor's footsteps came to the front door. She couldn't wait any longer she threw open the door only to find darkness greeting her.

Her blood ran cold as she silently shut the door. The wind started to howl and suddenly the house shook. Her breathing quickened and she raced for the comfort of her room, but as she ran upstairs the lights went out. She tripped on the last stair falling to her knees as she began crawling to her door. Soft fearful tears crept down her cheeks as her hands found the roundness of a boot. She screamed, but the stranger quickly covered her mouth, before anyone could save her...

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Images of *Beatrice's* bloody body haunted his every thought. He had started walking and found himself in the parking garage. How and why his feet had led him there, he didn't know. But his train of thought had been interrupted by a low and raspy laugh. "It's a sick feeling

knowing that the one you love is hurting and there's nothing you can do about it...isn't it," the voice said. But Connor didn't know where the voice was coming from. "Yeah," Connor shouted. "Feels pretty shitty..." The voice just laughed at Connor. "Who are you?" But the voice still didn't answer him. "Did you do this? Did you hurt my wife?"

The voice didn't speak. "Show yourself...come out from hiding and let me see your face?" The parking garage was empty. Still. Silent. Until finally the voice said, "You. You're the reason you're wife is bleeding. You're the reason why you're wife is dying Who am I? Why,, don't you know me? I am you...maybe next time you'll focus on your work instead of fucking your wife's best friend."

With those last words Connor knew that the voice was gone. A policeman found Connor in the parking garage and frowned as he said, "Mr. Carrington, your wife didn't make it...she's dead. We're going to need to bring you down to the station for some questioning..."

The Stranger faded into the shadows as he listened to the police officer give Carrington to the news. He smiled as he quietly got into his car and made his way home. He'd stay in town for a couple of days and watch the local news for the inevitable fate of Connor Carrington. "Connor Carrington," he coughed. "Found guilty of murdering his sweet little wife, Beatrice Carrington. His finger prints were found all over the crime scene. And, before the sweet fawn could pass into the great beyond she had named her killer to be, *Connor Carrington*, her own beloved husband. "And this," he said with a sinister smile. "Is why you should never split up a pair of twins, there's always a good twin and a bad twin. And, if you're going to split them up, then let the bad twin live in luxury...make the good twin suffer."