

Revenge

by Victoria Cooper

Her hot breath warmed my neck and distracted me from the intense pain that followed as she dug a knife below the ribs, close to my appendix scar.

“That’s for the Rose & Crown on Valentines Day”, she growled in to my ear.

We were locked in a lover’s embrace and it seemed we even waltzed a little but I was just losing consciousness. My Fred Astaire feet drifted upwards, as she grunted with the force of the second stab to my abdomen.

“That’s for the Blue Lagoon on my birthday”, she spat. Stars dazzled around me and once again she drew the knife.

I left the gutter and joined the stars, looking at my slumped body in the old railway tunnel. I watched the kidney shape of blood form into a glossy viscous pool.

I had definitely been on better first dates.

I should have known at that first greeting in the doorway of the Horse and Groom; she had smiled warmly, and we had kissed cheeks, but as I moved to kiss the other, she turned sharply from me and as a tortoise stretches from its shell I was left puckered up and waiting. I could still feel that heat of rejection rising to the tips of my ears. How could I get something so simple so wrong?

She now leaned over my cadaverous heap and gave it a swift kick to the groin, superfluous I thought and winced. I puzzled over her attractive profile description compared to this real-life violent assassin studying me now.

I kicked him with my new red heels and he moaned as the last breath left his body. I stared hard and willed myself to feel something. As my hand jerked the blade away, the dawning came; disappointment. Nothing but disappointment. Killing someone, it turned out, felt just like a one-night stand but with more groaning and less shame.

I focussed on his pale face against the ground and remembered I did not know him. Who was he? I vaguely recalled him gushing over Judy Garland and making self-mocking jokes afterwards. But despite this endearment I knew he was like all the rest. Initially charming, funny and entertaining but then dismissive, uninterested and rude. Checking his phone out and any other woman that walked in the door. He was just

like the rest: looking for the exit. He would leave me standing in the pouring rain waiting like all the other times.

Waiting in my car on dark lonesome nights listening to over jocular radio programmes on how to cook the perfect curry when I was really trying to block out the inevitable gnawing rejection inside. I knew better than anyone that human beings do not need to talk to be cruel.

At least the bad dates were honest. You might go home alone with a bag of chips and a lousy sinking feeling but at least you were only left with grease on your fingers.