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## Revenge... Remorse... Renewal

by Lorraine Gailey

She wasn't by nature a malicious or vindictive person. So she was astonished to find herself boiling with hurt and anger when her friend, someone she considered her BEST friend, casually mentioned that he'd just booked a couple of seats at a concert for himself and his brother ... He hadn't even thought of asking whether she'd like to join them.

It hurt that he would be so thoughtless. It was her favourite singer, and she'd love to have gone. In fact, she decided, she WOULD go – and she'd show him just how bad it felt to be sidelined. She gathered three or four mates and booked the tickets. She didn't tell him; let it ruin his evening when he realised what he'd done.

As she arrived at the theatre with her mates, she found it impossible to be interested in their conversations, her attention fully taken by scanning the crowd to find the person who'd hurt her so badly. There he was! But he and his brother were so deep in conversation that there was no chance to catch his eye. No matter – she'd catch him at the interval.

The interval arrived. She hadn't heard a note of the performance, she was so focused on locating his seat so she could intercept him on his way to the bar. But to her dismay he and his brother remained in their seats, talking. She dithered while her mates went off to the bar and was still dithering when they came back laughing and chatting. Then the second half was over, which again she didn't really hear. After a standing ovation, the theatre began to empty. Her friend and his brother were lost among the crowd, and the chance was gone.

She returned home empty, distraught, impotent. She'd spent a fortune on the tickets, she knew she'd irritated her mates, she'd missed the performance of a lifetime, and she hadn't even had the satisfaction of ruining his evening which had been the whole point after all. What a waste, what a maddening, sickening waste.

She slept badly, and the following day was still feeling hollow when she came face-to-face with him in the supermarket. He rushed over and hugged her, so emotionally that he didn't register her wooden response. 'I went to hear your favourite singer last night. He was my mum's favourite too, and as you know she died just a year ago. My brother and I went together as a way of celebrating her memory. It was a wonderful performance; I wish you'd been there, you would have loved it.'

She couldn't bring herself to confess that she'd been there, and had not only not enjoyed it but hadn't actually even heard it. On reflection later, however, she realised it wasn't entirely a waste of time because she had learned something valuable. She would never again make a mistake like that, narrowly focussing on her own little world. She would never again ruin life for herself in a misguided attempt to take revenge on someone else. Her world had just become a little bigger, and her heart a little warmer. It felt good.