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Sisters

by Martin Bourne

She parked her black Renault Clio by the grass verge and approached the house across the driveway then knocked on the door.

“What do you want?”

“We’ve got things to sort out. Can I come in? Don’t know why I’m asking your permission it’s not your house.”

“And it’s not yours either. You’ve seen the will. It’s all very clear. I’ve got nothing to say to you so.... Just fuck off.”

“Claire, we have to talk, and I’m going to stand here till you let me in.”

“Janice, I said to myself after dad died that if I saw you again, I’d hit you.”

“Don’t be stupid. We are sisters, let me come in please. We will be selling Mums house soon. It’ll be the last time I will see inside.”

“Oh alright, come in, but no smoking, and there’s no booze in here.”

“Shall we sit in the lounge?”

“No, we’ll sit in the kitchen. Now what do you want?”

“Claire, I want to clear the air.”

“Clear the air, Huh, is that what you want. Well OK let’s start with when Dad died and I was here with mum and we had all his papers to sort out. Checking what insurance he had, informing the bank, DVLC, arranging what was going to happen and what did you say? I’ll tell you what you said. You said you couldn’t help as you had to go and have your hair done. Your hair done! You left me with it all to sort out. You know mum had no idea how to organise her bank account, how to pay bills. I had to do it all and where were you. Having your sodding hair done.”

“Yeah well, I just couldn’t face it. Dad died and I just couldn’t face it.”

“No and neither could I but I had to. They had so many bank accounts and it was left to me to arrange so she could pay her bills from the account her pension went into.”

“I bet you helped yourself to a bit of her money as well.”

“God, I knocked you out when you were fifteen to silence that mouth and I’ll do it again. Yeah, she gave me some money, but she needed constant attention. Every letter she received I had to deal with. There is no way I could have worked. Not like you. What was it you said? You were glad you had your job so that you had something to take your mind off it.”

“Well, it’s not like I had a husband.”

“You did have but you ditched him, then you made a play for my ex.”

“I loved him.”

“You bloody fool, he was a wife beater. Why do you think I left him? You’re sitting there fidgeting aren’t you. Yes, remembering is a chair that is hard to sit still in, isn’t it?”

“You know it was Mum and Dad that set us against each other don’t you”

“What do you mean?”

“First, they favoured me, then they preferred you. You have to admit it’s true. They couldn’t handle us being friends. We would have been too powerful for them.”

“I think you’re right. Tell you what, there’s an old bottle of scotch in Dad’s office. Shall we?”