

The Devil Always Sings the Best Tunes

by Stuart Finegan

Now listen if the phone rings answer it, but don't say a word.

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Tara Rowan gazed into the bathroom mirror.

Gently placing her blood soaked hands under the hot tap she couldn't look down at the flow of blood disappearing down the plughole. Breathless from the unexpected events that unfolded downstairs, without warning she screamed at the top of her voice. Rubbing her hands over her face within seconds it was covered in blood. Her reflection in the mirror wasn't pretty. Taking the yellow handled scissors from the side-cupboard she hacked at her hair in a fit of rage. Within minutes the bathroom floor was covered in locks of black hair and Michael's blood.

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The high street was packed with late afternoon shoppers. The last of the summer sales had brought unexpected crowds to the town. Nobody paid attention to the young skinny girl with her black hood pulled down over her face.

Walking as fast as she could with hands buried deep in her pockets, Ciara frantically re-ran through what had just happened inside No 5 Fuller Crescent. Voices, hurtful words, a violence she had never seen before blurred her concentration. Walking on the outside of the pavement to avoid bumping into the oncoming crowd she suddenly realised she had left her phone in the house. Caught between two minds, return to the house or carry on as Tara instructed, Ciara chose to slump to the floor of the derelict shop doorway by the bus stop.

Resting her forehead on her knees, the tears started to flow. Shaking violently with fear she asked herself repeatedly why. "Why didn't I tell Michael? Why didn't I stop Tara?"

“Why did I let a lie that at the time was innocent develop into something that was uncontrollable?”

Ciara didn't notice the old lady place the cup of tea at her feet or hear the kind words that followed. Jumping to her feet, she gripped the lady's hand, looked lovingly into her eyes and whispered, “its got nothing to do with me.”

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John phone your dad,,, make sure he's not running late.

What time is dinner?

Tell him to stop at the off-licence and pick up a bottle

He's not answering he's probably driving, I'll text him.

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What had started out as a simple task quickly turned into something more sinister. Michael stepped off the bus and waited until it had moved on to get a clear view of No 5.

The windows were open. Tara was home.

She greeted Michael with a loving embrace and before he could get a word in, started planning the forthcoming weekend away. It was then Michael broke the news. The hum of the traffic outside drowned out Tara's emotionally charged, enraged voice. She'd stopped listening to his reasoning.

You promised

I know

How could you?

Neither of them noticed that Ciara had walked into the kitchen. It didn't take her long to know that she was in the middle of something before something was about to begin. Two minutes earlier she had been upstairs minding her own business, now she was witnessing a situation not of her making.

What started out as a loving greeting quickly turned into an unnecessary situation that would change their life's forever. Ciara quickly noticed her best friends' eyes had the look of evil embedded in them. Michael desperately tried to explain himself.

Everything he had told her was a lie. Without warning and to the surprise of her best friend, Ciara inflicted the first blow.

“You used me, bastard!” Tara screamed like a wild banshee and joined her best friend.

Desperately trying to defend himself from the numerous objects that came flying in his direction, Michael screamed his innocence. He hadn't meant to hurt her.

The speed of the blade in Ciara's hand took her by surprise.

The calmness of her reaction surprised her friend.

The sinister smile that accompanied her reaction pleased her. As Michael's story unfolded Ciara stepped back from the unfolding frenzy attack. Michael fell backwards into the kitchen cupboards.

Tara seized her opportunity. Grabbing the knife from her friend's hand what unfolded took both them both by surprise. Like a wild animal ravaging on its victim, she was out of control.

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Their loving embrace wasn't unexpected. Crouched on the kitchen floor scared with death the two friends had no words to say. Emotions were running high. Tears flowed. With the little remaining strength they had they held onto each other with a love he denied them.

After what felt like an age, Tara stood up walked to the kitchen sink and filled the kettle.

You need to leave now. I'll phone you.

What about?

I'll sort this out, Now listen if the phone rings answer it, but don't say a word.