

# In the Safe of the Night

*Part of the Scene Stealer Series*

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a work of fiction

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###

What's important?

Where to start?

###

I am taking a shower. I want to be clean. This story started in a walk, coalesced for a week, took a turn with the passing of events, and here we are.

But it started on the street, sweating hot walk... and I wanted to be clean.

###

I am taking a shower: first person, singular.

###

The water is hot, not too hot, but more than warm, lots of soaps, and shampoos, and conditioners...

There's that place in a shower, when you're clean, but you're not yet bored, still enjoying the water, letting it run over you, eyes closed, fully lathered, head under the spray... of water, drowning out the sounds, the sights, the concerns of the day... in it's warm, all encompassing embrace.

###

And then, it turns cold... ice cold.  
The water cannot get cold enough for me.  
I used to take showers in a waterfall, little spring of a thing, but buckets at a time of freezing cold water. It was quite invigorating, got the blood to pumping...

###

Standing in the sun.  
This is where this story really starts. I am in the desert... on a ledge... overlooking a pool. The water is ice cold. What a contrast to the sun... the dust... the wind...

###

I've been camping out, living here.  
Take the shower, walk to the edge of the ledge, just stand there, overlooking the pond below, almost a lake, nice and deep, safe to dive into, not too far... but far enough down that it would be fun.

Just sort of stand there.  
Can you feel the sun? On your face? In your eyes? Behind closed lids? Squinting?

###

And take the plunge.

###

I can't remember much about falling, being in the air, diving, off high boards. Some folks got a thrill. It's just something I did... to prove. Yeah, you have something to prove.

###

So, splash!

Into the water, but no time for splashies, no swimming about, the heat and the dust of the desert washed away, it's time to put on your clothes... newly washed... draped over a rock, big boulder.

So, they're mostly clean.

###

Back at the shower, split scene, confusing flashbacks, flash forwards, drying off in the fluffy towels, pink fluffy towels, perfumed, a girls touch, and a short naked walk to the washer-dryer, in house, apartment, condo in the sky, someone else's, your girlfriend's, away at work, Friday night... almost.

###

There is a long ride from the desert to the city... a different sort of desert... one can go all day without talking to someone there, meeting anyone, no birds, no lizards, no rocks, no cactus, or small shrub trees... even the sun has a name out in the desert... it will speak, if you stare at it long enough... and each and every passing cloud is a mystery, a storyboard in creation, is it shaped like a cowboy... a clown... can you see the next line in the verse?

###

After the shower, when I was walking around, putting together the notes, outlining in my mind the scenes I wanted to touch on, the story I wished to create, I felt like riding a bike... a motorcycle... nothing but a Harley will do.

###

Is it strange that I wish to go barefooted... sandaled. As a point, a little bit, a nugget of gold in the story of schlock... the man's... my...

###

We are on the bike, you and I, as one... just one.

It's a nice bike. It's a nice body: tall, muscular, lean, long hair, slightly unkempt, but, you know, better than what the wind would really do, running along at a good clip now, over rocks, the slow dance around and over boulders, the acrobatic display in the past...

###

Are you, dear reader, familiar with dressage? It's a type of horseback riding wherein the rider has complete and utter control of the motions of the horse... can make the horse dance.

###

The motorbike dances for us, walking across streams on stepping stones, pop-a-wheelies front wheels to back, not like a bike is usually used, don't touch those feet to the ground...

###

And then, the toe, that touch, that bit of realism, that injury, branches hitting just the toe as you go racing by... way too fast now, faster than I could go, would go, just holding the handlebars ever so lightly, like the reins to a horse, giving it free rein, to do as it will, vibrate and dance... till we hit the highway, and the city, and all that traffic, and there is a different sort of dance... until we stop in front of the building, charm the doorman, and leave the motorcycle right there in front... right there in front.

###

She is livid!

###

Rest on that... pause...

###

She is *livid*...

###

What a word. What meaning. She is livid, alive, in the moment, storming into the apartment...

###

I was at the mall a few weeks back... never know how these thoughts are going to come together... how are they going to come together...

###

It was a mannequin. I like looking at mannequins... heck, almost as much as I like looking at girls, can get right in there, stare, deconstruct them, the scene, what's going on...

###

She, the mannequin, but she...

###

It's Friday night, a little late, autumn (they're selling the winter line-up in the stores), so maybe a bit breezy outside, cool, not cold, it's maybe six, maybe seven, probably not eight, it was a hard week at the office, but they got the job done, her team, it's her team now, just took over, first real project, first real deadline, and they got it done, on time... oh, some schmuck (maybe an author) might go on about how it's six, maybe seven, probably not eight, and how she was supposed to have it done by five thirty, what an odd time, but it's close enough, before Monday, they had all weekend... and now they've got the weekend!

###

First drink's on me!

###

And then, she's outside, maybe hailing a cab, but no, deciding she'd like the walk, be nice, the walk, tonight, down the miracle mile, the shopping district, next to the financial district, could blow a week's wages (even her wages) on one of those dresses, outfits in the window.

###

Is it important that her blouse is slightly undone?

I suppose it is to me... was to me... the way she looked, that mannequin, full business dress, only not formal, dressy, not casual, but the type of outfit you might wear for casual Friday, if you wanted to be one of the team, one of the boys, but only if your heart wasn't really in it...

###

Casual?

Not dressy enough.

###

So, the top few buttons undone on her blouse, very sexy, caught my eye, that mannequin, she did, waiting in that storefront window, perpetual Friday night, work over, weekend begins, and to make the transition, all you have to do is loosen your tie... you know, the top few buttons on the blouse, then you're good to go... to the pub, 'First one's on me! Good job, team!'

###

And to herself, *They're really my team.*

###

The internal synopsis that I really could not give a rat's ass about, her mentally cataloging the members of her team, this one and that, the good points and bad, making a list, checking it twice, this week is over, getting a jump on the next, and then, it's time to go...

###

Does she buy the next round? Is it appropriate? I suppose she palms a single large bill into the hand of her second. Yeah, he's a good man, he can take over, he'll know what to do...

###

"I got this one!" as she's out the door, pausing to hail a cab, and then changing her mind, taking the short walk... home.

###

Is it midnight when she gets there?

###

Maybe only ten?

###

It doesn't matter. His motorcycle is in front. No, I said that wrong. *His...* His... **His...**

Still, not right.

Read it how you will.

###

When she gets home, his motorcycle is in front... doorman asking her questions, what to do with it, he's her guest, so she's responsible... and turning, she just lays into the man, all that frustration cutting loose, the long hours, and yes, there were problems, her team, it will take some doing, so into the man, laying loose, asking, questioning, demanding, who exactly let the man in...

###



I'm staying, I live, I am a guest... or something or another of that ilk at a condo. I don't really live here, but I do, long story, it doesn't matter.

It's a limited access building, key fob sensors on the doors, and he had forgot his fob, had a key, I walked him up, to the apartment, told him I would, let him in, as long as he could prove he should be there, had a key... and he did, second try, second one, probably on vacation, looked like he'd been enjoying a walk...

###

And since he had a key and he'd been there with her so many times before... should he call the police?

###

'No! I'll handle this!'

###

And when she walks in the door, she is livid, just livid, and he's sitting on the couch, lazily draped, watching TV, reading a book, standing outside on the balcony, enjoying the view, champagne on ice, glass in hand, already started, how late does she work anyway, not really caring, going through records, putting on tapes, making a light snack, never bothering to clean up... anything, but the clothes that he wore... in the dryer, so wrapped in a towel, nice body, hunk, pouring a glass, popping the cork, smiling, charming, like he owns her, this place, the world, everything in it, shall we toast, drink to the weekend...

###

Only, she's having none of it...

###

That's not how the story goes...

###

Swatting the glass out of the way... or he just drops it, both, his hers, her yelling, screaming, no demanding, just demanding, I'm in control here, this is my apartment, my life, my place...

###

And his hands around her small neck... it's always a small neck... getting smaller by the second, hands grasping, slapping away, eyes penetrating deep, watching her die, her dying struggles, does he even love her... hate... is this hate...

###

And the scene fades...

###

And the scene reawakens...

###

And they are lying in bed, cuddled on the couch, out on the balcony, enjoying the view, and she's being a bitch, trying to assert control, stay on top, hopeless cause, something about good luck getting in next week, getting past that schmuck of a doorman, her dangling the fob as an offering, his taking the fob, an invitation, a demand, but he doesn't need a fob, slapping it away...

###

“I’m not worried about next week. What are we going to do this week?”

###

And she’s tired, stay in, fat chance, the night is young, but in the end, that is for them to decide...

###

I let the man in... even in the moment, I took care to memorize his features. I should have taken a picture... but they have security cameras, so what good would it have done, lots of pictures, photographic evidence of me letting him in, riding in the elevator together... and later, him going down alone, that man, all alone...

###

And then, ever later still, the police came, oh, yes, the police, they did come, in force... with an ambulance, fire truck, all sorts of squad cars... and the county coroner to examine the dead.

###

I went by the apartment that I’d let him into, because, well, because that’s the type of guy I am, the type of imagination I have.

###

No cops on that floor.

###

So, I wonder if that just means what they do, when they do it,  
they do all alone, behind closed doors...