

An Appointment with Mr. Vield / Jennifer Foreman

"Let me in Ellen!" The man stood like a rat in the dark. Eyes the cold blue of a cadaver's lips peered through the window at my mother. My forest green eyes watched from a spot in an armchair, my painted fingernails digging into it. My mother moved frantically around the room, her dark chestnut hair flying about. She turned to me unsure of what to say or do, and our eyes locked for a moment. The usual warm brown of her eyes turned into bottomless pools of despair.

"Go away Jake!" She then threw a few crumpled dollars out the window to appease him. He slipped his hands around them and spoke softly through the window saying,

"Woe to you, sinners, on the day of strong anguish, ye who afflict the righteous and burn them with fire. Ye shall be requited according to your works." With that he turned and slinked away into the night. He would return again, I knew it. A few measly dollars was like giving a lock of hair to the devil when he asked for your soul. It wasn't enough and he'd be back for the rest later. My insides seemed to alight in flame scorching me. A need unlike any other attached itself to my very being. I would have to kill Jakob Vield.

As I drove home to my dad's house that night I thought of Jakob. Charming, a politician in torn jeans and a grungy T-shirt, he spoke with soft syllables and a Cheshire cat smile. He loved to quote the *Book of Enoch* from the Old Testament to anyone who would listen. Jakob's seeming faith cloaked him in sheep's clothing, hiding his true form from others. My mother met him when I was eleven. Her marriage to my father disintegrating and the beginnings of a Home Shopping Network debt overwhelming her, she longed for an escape. Jakob handed it to her in the form of tan powder. Methamphetamine, a dragon among drugs, could

consume a person in one confrontation. My mother succumbed to the monster, entering his lair unaware of the chaos that would ensue. Jakob lured her deeper into the caverns, playing on her weakness and her need to escape from problems that plagued her. She blindly followed him, stealing and prostituting herself for their drug money.

"You need it, Ellen. We need it. Without it we can't escape anymore and you wouldn't want that would you?" He would ask. In the end, after seven years of abuse to her body and family, my mom made the decision all those addicted must make. To choose between leaving the lair and monster behind and live, or let the dragon consume her with his fiery breath and die. She chose to live and tried to get her life back on track. My mother missed seven years of my growth into adulthood. In a made-for-television film, she and I would have explosive fights and a huge reconciliation after her bout with some fatal disease or another. But in life you just move on. I didn't have the time to waste thinking about the hurt. I put the past out of my mind and supported my mother in her fight to stay sober. We built the foundations for a new relationship and day after day she became more like the mother I remembered as a child. Things began to go so well, until that night Jakob showed up at her window. After that, he plagued her at every step knowing she could do nothing to stop him. Because her years with him brought about more than a few warrants for her arrest, he knew she wouldn't go to the authorities. Thus my appointment with Mr. Vield became necessary.

Harvey Danger's "Underground" began to play on my stereo, the notes echoing off the pale walls. As I sat in my bedroom, a mosquito buzzing somewhere to my left, I pictured Jakob huddling in a corner, shaking like a little mouse. The lead singer's voice erupted from the speakers. I pictured all the possibilities of his demise in my head. Exterminating him in an instant with a bullet, straight through his head. The sip from a beer laced with poison, watching him collapse in a heap like clothing. Or a knife across the throat, the life slipping from him as I watch. Burying him somewhere would also cause complications. But

an image of my family's property in Ridgedale, a forested area about an hour or so away gave me some hope. There were trails that held miles of empty dirt roads and landscape. Like a speck of dust he would disappear, an insignificant passing. The song hit its climax the singer letting pain drip from his words like droplets of acid.

Using poison would cause the least amount of cleaning up and would finish him quickly. I would ensnare him with promises of my teen-aged girlfriends looking to cook meth. Helpless girls ready and waiting for his expertise would ensure him he would be solely in charge. On the drive to Ridgedale I would hand him a beer sprinkled with arsenic. He would die and I could drive to the campsite and bury him deep in the woods. The song was now coming to a chaotic and crashing end, the final lyrics flying out of the stereo. A mosquito now sat on my arm, sucking the blood from it. I crushed it in an instant with my hand.

The day of my appointment I filled my car with gas and took two bottles from my dad's fridge. One contained root beer for myself, and the other Budweiser that would contain Jakob's death. I also knew my dad bought arsenic a few years before when we had rats. He lost the grocery bag and instead called an exterminator. The luck of life is you always find what you want when you aren't looking for it. And as it goes, months after the rats were eradicated my dad found the arsenic in his car. It slipped out of its bag and under his seat. Placing it in a small junk drawer in our kitchen it was forgotten once more. At 9 p.m. that night I sat down in my room with the arsenic and the beer and dialed the number Jakob left on my mom's caller I.D. when he last called. It rang once, my heart standing still, it rang twice, the fingers on my right hand crossed with the hope of luck, three times and a shuffle of sound as someone picked up.

"Hello?" Jakob's slippery and smooth voice like the purr of a hyena came to me.

"Jakob? This is Samantha, Ellen's daughter."

"Yo, what's up?"

"My girlfriends and I were looking to do some cooking. But we

need someone with your knowledge to help us," I said as I pulled out the Budweiser and untwisted the top.

"Do you already have the stuff?" He asked. I poured the arsenic into the bottle of beer.

"Yes, we looked on the internet for it." Putting the top back on I swished the beer around to let the arsenic spread.

"Good. Sounds like it'll be fun. Where are we doing it," he said, his excitement barely contained.

"At my friend Danielle's property in Ridgedale, there's lots of open space and forests so no one will find us." Jakob laughed quietly at me and said,

"Smart girl. Where'd you like to meet?" I shuddered at the thought of him and me alone together. But I would see it through to the end because no one else could.

"Meet me at my mom's garage outside. I don't want her knowing about this."

"Sure, yeah, don't want her keeping you from the excitement she had." He chuckled, the sound chilling my ears like frostbite.

"I'll be waiting," I said.

"K, later," he said. Putting the phone back on its cradle I moved to my car and hopped in. Driving to my mother's apartment I went through the plans one more time in my head. I sat outside her garage for thirty minutes before he showed. Coming out of the dark like a bat he seemed to practically glide on the air. I plastered a smile on my face, too glossy to be a real smile, but hopefully not too much that he would notice.

"Let's go then." I unlocked the car and sat down; in a trance I started it and drove out of the apartments.

"Where is this place anyway?" Jakob stared out the window his arms in his lap, covered in the sores of his drug use like deadly freckles.

"It's about an hour or so north of here, just past Borden. It's at my friend Danielle's property. Her parents are out of town this weekend."

"Can't wait. How many of your girlfriends will be there?" I barely

kept my revulsion from showing in my countenance. Poker face once more intact I glanced at him.

"Oh, about six or seven of my friends will be there." He smiled slowly, the grin seeming to etch into his face like a Jack-O-Lantern. I could not even begin to fathom his fantasies involving young women high on methamphetamines for the first time. Ready to be rid of him, I pulled out my root beer and popped it open. Turning to him nonchalantly I asked,

"Want a beer? We've still got a bit of a drive." He nodded so I pulled out his death and handed it to him. Popping off the top he took a few sips.

"Hey Samantha, this beer tastes kind of flat." My heart took off beating wildly against my rib cage. Did he know what I had done? Was it all over? I hurriedly thought of an excuse saying,

"Sorry, I must have grabbed an old bottle." He laughed and shook his head replying,

"Doesn't matter, a beer's a beer. You really do need my expertise don't you? Ellen used to tell me what an innocent and pure child you were. Glad I could help in your corruption." Jakob turned to look out the window and I watched him wondering how long it would take before the drug took effect. He took another tiny sip from the bottle. If I knew he was going to treat it like a tea party I would have just shot him. Hopefully he'd suck it down soon.

"Samantha! Watch out!" I turned my attention back to the road just in time to see a truck stopped in front of me. My foot crushed down onto the brake to stop my car from rear-ending the other driver's. I watched in horror as the tainted beer flew out of Jakob's hand slowly turning in the air, the liquid spilling everywhere. Both Jakob and I reached out for it, he unaware of all I had at stake in losing it. But it fell to the floor of the car emptying the rest of its contents onto the mat.

"Shit! Shit! Shit!" I shouted. I couldn't believe my plan was ruined. My mind raced ahead like a greyhound as I began once more to drive.

"It's alright, we just lost the beer." Jakob picked up the empty Budweiser and threw it in the back seat. Grabbing some napkins from the side panel he wiped up as much as he could. With no actual party to take him to and the arsenic all over my car floor, my appointment would have to be changed. Could I think of any other way to end his life? Unrealistically my mind grasped onto the idea of abandoning him in the woods. But the likelihood of him finding a house was completely possible.

"Wherefore fear not, ye that have suffered; for healing shall be your portion, and a bright light shall enlighten you, and the voice of rest ye shall hear from heaven." Startled I turned to Jakob, his dead eyes watching me like a shark examines prey.

"Let me guess, Enoch?" I asked. Smiling widely he nodded, "Your mother tell you I like quoting it?"

"Yes, more than once." I said.

I recalled the night I made the decision to kill him how he had spoken a passage of Enoch through the window. The sanctified words flowing out of his mouth more a frightful incantation to stop your breath than the words of God to bring hope into your heart.

"Give me another one," I said quickly, intrigued to hear the demon before me speak of faith.

"Woe to you sinners, for ye persecute the righteous; for ye shall be delivered up and persecuted because of injustice, and heavy shall its yoke be upon you." The holy words stung like stones thrown by a mob onto a martyr's already broken body. He spoke of persecution and injustice, the very things that he used as weapons to wound the innocent. It was obvious I could not turn back now without an explanation, he would become suspicious. My foot pressed harder on the gas, my body making the decision for me and carrying me to my destination. Jakob Vield would die tonight, one way or another.

"We're almost to Borden Jake. We'll be at Danielle's campground in a little less than a half an hour."

"Sounds good to me." He leaned back in the seat, stretching and

readjusting like a lion ready to let out its claws and sink into dinner. His long grimy blond hair sat around his face like chunks of badly cut grass. Mouth open, hungry for his drug like a starving man. I arrived at our land in Ridgedale, pulling into the woods, hiding my car from the outside world. I pulled a flashlight out of my side compartment and told Jakob it was time to get out.

"We have to walk a bit before we actually meet up with my friends. But it isn't too far from here." The moon shone upon me through the trees, an ethereal light blessing me, and the appointment I must carry out. Trudging through the trails Jakob and I did not say a word. After fifteen minutes his breathing became heavy and quick.

"Are you sure we have the right place Samantha? I don't see anyone out here."

"Just a little further now, we're almost there." But we soon reached a broad expanse of land and I knew I had stalled too long.

"Samantha, there isn't anything here at all. What the fuck is going on?" Angrily he pulled the flashlight from me and shined it straight on my face. There was nothing to be done now. Where at first I hunted him, now I became the rabbit in the trap.

"I don't know what you're talking about Jakob. Danielle and my other friends should be really close by."

"You're a lying bitch, you know that? Now I don't know why you brought me here, but it's time to go." He pulled out a knife pointing it at me with conviction. At the sight of the blade I ran as fast as my legs could carry me.

"Samantha! Where do you think you're going?" I heard his footsteps coming closer and closer behind me but I couldn't see anything without the flashlight. I jumped behind a tree, breathing like an asthmatic child. I must stay quiet, must not let him find me. Covering my mouth with a hand I tried to slow my breathing. Silence filled the forest and I shook with fear.

"Come on out, Samantha. I won't hurt you." His voice soothing,

calling me out in melodious tones to try and pull me from my hiding place.

"We can make a little party out here. You can be my drug." His words seized me with their quiet threat, like being suffocated slowly in the night. If he caught me, it would be the end. My appointment with Mr. Vield changed from his execution, to mine. The glowing light from the flashlight came closer to my hiding place, illuminating the tip of my shoe. I tried to back away from the tree, and move myself deeper into the woods. But I lost my footing in a patch of mud and fell over, crashing to the forest floor.

"Hello, Samantha." Jakob stared down at me as a vulture from his perch, anticipating my death.

"It's time for this party to get started." His laughter grated on my ears, echoing through the woods for all manners of dark creatures to hear. He edged closer and closer to me, like a villain in a brainless horror movie. Reaching me, he shined the light into my face, blinding me.

"And sin shall perish in darkness forever, and shall no more be seen from that day for ever more." Cackling in his newfound power over me he took a moment to revel. I took that second to kick him, my final chance at survival. My foot struck him at the center of his masculinity, and he howled falling into the dirt. The flashlight flew out of his hand and shattered on the hard earth. Hurriedly I grabbed a sizeable rock and with one swift motion, came down upon his head with it. The howling stopped instantly, like closing the top of a music box. Jakob's eyes stared up at me dumbfounded, his tongue stolen away by surprise.

"It's like you said Jakob. Sin shall perish in darkness forever, and shall no more be seen." Tearing the knife out of his hand I raised it above my head. He became the sacrificial lamb, although his wolf coat was easily seen. I brought the knife down, straight into his heart, instantly killing him. But it wasn't enough. My heart cried out in the pain he caused in my life, the mother he stole from me. A guttural scream erupted from me, a banshee in the night. Stabbing him repeatedly, I let the years of regret

and loss pour out onto his body in the form of stab wounds. Nothing could bring back those years, but the balance had been paid. His life for my lost childhood, a fair-trade in my eyes. Moonlight shone on me once more, bathing me in a comforting white light. I buried Jakob that night in the woods, the radiance of the moon surrounding me in a halo, like a saint.