

The Cruellest Lie of All

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The Cruellest Lie of All / Synopsis: A female FBI agent who has been disgraced for losing a prisoner, is secretly in love with him, and they run away together to begin a new life. Little does she know he intends to set her up for murder.



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A handsome man with black hair slicked back in an old fashioned style took it all away. He had the guileless face of a well scrubbed angel, clean shaven and inherently honorable. A pair of wide set, azure eyes concealed the truth of what he really was, nothing but darkness in his soul. He smiled as he stabbed her, whispered sweet honeyed nothings in her ear as frothy blood bubbled from a perforated lung. She felt only a brief moment of pain and then sweet velvet edged oblivion; the feeling of drowning followed her as she faded from this world. All thoughts of making it big in the FBI died that night, stolen away by a stranger who loved her so much he wanted to keep her to himself.

A long knife clattered onto the concrete as it fell, calling out as if recognizing its ninth victim. She picked it up, her fingers closing around a polished wood hilt by sheer will power. The sharp tongue of steel kissed his throat and rested there as sweat ran down a face that no longer seemed angelic. He looked like a trapped rat, suddenly aware that he was just a man and not a god after all. The mental aberration that led him to assume divinity abandoned him then, wailing into vacuum never to return.

Over the years, she had waited for this moment and thoughts of a bloodier vengeance filled in the eternity while everyday life went on without her.

Once again she awakes from the dream, and finds herself locked in her lonely embrace, both arms wrapped about her abdomen, hands resting restlessly between the curve of hip and waist. She crushes her solitude against her chest, a grotesque parody of a lover's hold rendered all the more pathetic by the fact that she is alone, and she is not alone. He is in her head, but her bed lays cold and barren. She squeezes herself tighter, her arms a poor substitute for his.

The quality of her bedding has improved. The threads her Egyptian cotton sheets number in the thousands now. Their silky softness mocks her, forming white dunes in the flat expanse of bed that lies empty beside her. There is something undeniably humiliating about a queen size bed for one. In a twin, perhaps, she would not feel his absence so keenly; But how can she deny the wrongness of her situation, gazing at the moonlight soaked bedside that taunts her?

She pulls a sleeping mask, black silk, over her sleep deprived eyes, and try to flee from him. How strangely ironic that she could imagine hiding from him in the darkness. She drifts back into sleep and like a mustang run into a box canyon, she doubles back and find herself face to face with her pursuer. Her breath hitches in her throat as the memory of those crimson orbs slice through her, dissecting the secret chambers of her aching heart, spilling the matching shade across the cold mortuary slab of her mind. A vision passes over her, and she shudders, as she sees his presence, painted on the back of her eyelids. With scalpel precision he makes another nick, another slice. She feels a tug—a burning sensation. And then her mind's eye becomes painfully focused. He holds her heart in his hand, soft blue flames licking down the oxidized veins that line its shiny, membranous surface. He cocks his head, and stares at her exposed heart, fascinated, enraptured. And then his eyes flick back to hers, and he lowers his hand. Trembling, obedient, she shudders as he presses the gore to her lips. She takes a deep breath and fights back a wave of nausea as she sinks her teeth into the rubbery flesh of her still beating-heart. Smiling down at her, he leans in very close, and nips softly at

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the opposite side. As the blood drips down over her chin, they devour her heart, feasting together.

She shudders awake, and rips the sleeping mask from her eyes. She flings it violently away from her, and gazes about the room with wildly darting eyes. She ventures a glance at her hands, and finds them clean and unsoiled. She half expects to find the bedside soaked in mahogany blood, but the white dunes of Egyptian cotton are all that peer back at her. She stares back at the empty bed with a mixture of relief and longing. She is alone, and she is not alone. He is in her head, but her bed lays cold and barren. And yet, when she dreams, he lies beside her.

She awakes late, climbing out of bed sluggishly, hits the showers first, needing desperately to wake up. It's not that she dreads her dreams, thinking of him, but with each passing day, with each new dream or nightmare she finds herself becoming more distant, more confused, and soon surely her job performance will begin to suffer. Her FBI job already gone, her private investigator service is all she has left, that and many unwanted memories of the days before she met him.

She checks her mailbox now, finding nothing but junk mail, then at the very bottom of the pile, a large, manila envelope, with a familiar scent and signature.

He's found her again.

~*~

The letter has been printed out in standard, eight by eleven format, ten point Palace Script font, having abandoned his signature hand-written style in favor of one that won't be as traceable.

She opens it slowly, carefully, as not to damage it in any way, and begins to read:

My dearest Jayne,

I imagine by now you have scoffed and turned your nose up at the very thought of any part of your thoughts or any part of your body ever belonging to me, such a horrible man, according to your peers. But we both know the true meaning behind that simple word, Jayne. It's a horrible truth that you try to so eagerly and unconvincingly hide from me and from the depths of your tired mind.

Your mind; I will always be there, and even if the thought is a negative one, you'll still want to see me again. I know you must despise me for so easily picking my way through your past and personality, that I so carelessly but successfully captured everything that you are, or will ever want to be.

As for the two of us, again, a term you do not wish to accompany yourself with when it comes to myself and my longing to know you on a more personal level still remaining within me.

Why do you evade me so, Jayne? Keep trying to avoid fate? Each time you've done this before, you paid so dearly, yet you continue to tempt fate on a regular basis, don't you, Jayne? Yes, I've been watching you, from afar, but I have been. I know your daily schedule which is always mundane at best. I know your every move, from daylight to dark, when the lights go out, and those dreams start in again. Do you still

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dream of me? Of the night my blade left a permanent scar above your heart?

Oh, and how terrible it must have been for you to have been looked down upon, fired by the FBI, for losing custody of me, one of the most wanted villains in history. Without the FBI, what do you have left to look forward to now? Your dreams, your memories, may be all you have left.

Have you found someone you can relate to, Jayne? You once told me that thinking of sexual relations with another man did not interest you, but what about the simple act of sexual compassion? Just a simple, loving one night stand between two old friends? Has this thought ever crossed your mind? If so, was I included in your thoughts? Be truthful now, Jayne. You know I know you better than you know yourself.

I still think about you often. Isn't it funny, how the human mind works? Such a short time spent together, yet we both cling to those memories as if they are a lifeline to our past and maybe even our future? We cling to the effect that the other person has on your brain and your heart, clinging to the decadent hope that should the two of you ever meet up again, the feeling will remain?

No, I don't answer that one yet. Maybe someday, when the time is right, you can answer that one in person.

Ta-Ta for now,

Marty

~*~

That night she did dream of him, the last night she'd seen him up close and personal.

His hands moved up her calves and over her knees. He stopped with the tips of his fingers just under the hem of her dress, and glanced up at her with a smile of pure devilry. She would remember that moment for the rest of her life. A small chuckle and he smoothed the fabric over top of her thighs, smoothly rising as he did so. His hands circled her waist, almost spanning it, before moving down to caress her hips and buttocks. He didn't linger, but stroked her bare back, bringing a wave of warmth after the cold of the metal door. She did nothing to stop him as his touch moved to circle her throat and then up into her hair.

He brought his palms back down to her cheeks to hold her head in place as he smiled into her eyes.

Sometimes, Jayne, silence is more telling than words, he informed her before his lips once again smothered hers. This time, however, the kiss was punishing, as if he were venting his disappointment in the situation. He forced her lips open and plundered the depths of her mouth with his tongue. When he finished and pulled back, her eyes were closed and he could tell that it was only because he was holding her that she remained upright. He waited till her eyes fluttered open, and he once again commanded her gaze with his, before he smiled again. He savored the resignation and disappointment in her eyes.

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“My sweet Jayne,” was all he said as he walked out the door.

~*~

That night seemed like it was long ago and far away now, and tonight, she sleeps. Her sleep isn't a fitful one this time, though, no demons disturbing her slumber. But outside, in the darkness the air was cold tonight. It blew softly against his warm skin and he roamed the empty street he knew so well. Lifting his head to look up at the distant stars, he let out a long breath which turned to steam as he exhaled. This was the only time he was sure he wouldn't be noticed. Scripps let his eyes follow all the constellations the stars made before turning his attention back to the darkened street.

He could live freely out of DC, but something held him here, like a heavy chain around his heart. He stopped and turned to look at a pale light escaping through a familiar window. He had been on this very same spot a thousand times before. The house was quiet. Was she there at all? Briefly he wondered what kept her occupied these days, sitting alone. He saw the image clearly in his mind; movement, shadows on the walls. She just came downstairs and sat down again. It was too dark in the room to tell what she was wearing, but subconsciously he knew it was something different. That was certainly a change. He regarded his view from the other side of the street for a moment.

A crisp sound of breaking glass rang through the stillness. Anyone else might have not heard it, but his sharp senses picked it up. He inhaled almost sharply and a part of him wished he could get just that bit closer. No, it was too soon for a fruitless risk.

It was getting colder by the days in November. He couldn't tour her neighborhood for hours. Scripps walked into a small café he found around the area. It was just barely his taste but they did make good tea. He settled back into his seat after getting himself a cup. Soon he would have to leave this spot as well. He didn't want the owners to see too much of him. Yet he didn't want to part with her presence so soon. She was so close now. So near. Curiosity enveloped his mind as he regarded the sound of breaking glass he heard earlier. Was it a bottle? She made no attempt to gather the sharp pieces. Thrown in anger then, sharp pieces. Sharp - Nobody saw him leave the café. The waitress recovered a \$20 bill on his table.

~*~

Her father had his own reasons for wanting her to stay and they were better left unspoken. Grow up, they all said. Grow up and smell the coffee, even if it is instant that comes from a jar. It is time you stopped living in a stupid fantasy and began acting your age. You are not a child anymore. Abandon your dreams and live in the real world. This is all there is. This is all you will ever be, a waitress in a second rate restaurant where tomato ketchup is a pasta sauce and the only cheese is processed. You will grow old in this town and die a bitter dried up woman who never achieved anything of any value. Your looks will quickly fade. If you do get married, it will be loveless where your husband says he respects you while he runs after anything in a short skirt. She ignored them all, took all the money she had saved from a dead end waitressing job and bought a ticket east.

To the FBI.

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Jayne did not hear her door open smoothly. Did not notice the soft glow of the candles around her extinguish one by one, did not wake from his presence as his eyes took in the delicious sight of her. It pleased him she had kept the dress, as he could guess that the decision tormented the back of her mind. Her skin looked beautifully pale in the dark moonlight and he had to hold himself from moving any closer, as his present position provided him with the whole view of her; relaxed and almost slumped in the corner of her sofa. He stood over her for a long moment listening to her soft breathing and letting his eyes roam her stillness, before he concentrated his attentions to the rest of the room.

Turning he took in the whole room at a glance. Everything looked wonderfully calm and dormant, save for her warm presence. Scripps ran his elegant hand over a small table in the corner and found no dust. She had indeed been spring-cleaning. Now he could almost pick out the smell of detergent in the still air. It was such a degrading job for her. Part of the floor was covered with the cold remains of her anger in shape of shattered glass. It was the only evidence of disturbance in the room. Leaving the broken pieces for now he looked up. Several books were piled on a cupboard. He soundlessly picked up the top one - *Dante's Inferno*, he smiled, pleased with her choice. It seemed she had tried to study his tastes. Other than that her living room looked quite innocent. He moved onto the kitchen, which felt rather abandoned, with almost everything in its place, untouched. Somehow he knew the pans and plates were hardly used at all. What a shame she almost never took the time to cook. He checked her near-empty cupboards and looked disapprovingly at the soups in powder form. She was certainly in need of food by his definition. From the look of her kitchen he was displeased she hadn't been eating right. Scripps opened the first drawer to find her cutlery, the second held her gun under a few kitchen towels. He did not hold back the slow light grin of amusement from spreading over his face. Walking past the living room he listened to her even breath before moving towards the stairs.

Upstairs, her bathroom revealed nothing unusual. He looked at the two nearly empty bottles of what he regarded as cheap shampoo. "Tsk, tsk, Jayne! still the old habits," he mused, thinking of what attention her coppery hair deserved, and reached into his pocket to retrieve a bottle of jasmine bath oil, placing it carefully on the towels and softly spreading any creases until he easily achieved perfection. He smiled slightly picturing her panic the next morning. It was most intriguing to see inside her house as it had some likeness to her complicated mind, his most prized obsession.

The door to her bedroom was slightly open as he approached it with his usual grace, carefully nudging it open with his hand before stepping inside. To his disappointment it only smelled of clean bed sheets and he knew Jayne did not spend much time in the room. Hardly any belongings were left on the dresser and the room somehow craved attention. Looking closer he found a single framed photograph and he picked it up to examine further. The man was dressed in his police uniform and the girl had Jayne's eyes, only difference was the happiness which filled them, a naïve innocent happiness of a child, before it was ripped away. He put it back down. Scripps stored the image into his memory palace to contemplate on further and saw Jayne look at this picture on many sleepless nights, remembering her brief childhood. Feeling needed and loved. Come to think of it, the room reeked of un-loved bitterness she felt late at night, her regret. She still longed for it, didn't she? Under her tough exterior, behind her steel weapon, she was still that young girl who wanted the same things. And he would give it to her.

Scripps stepped out into the small corridor and headed towards the last room of the house. The curtains were drawn and the room appeared unusually dark. He was not a man to be discomforted by the darkness; instead he found its soft stillness appealing to the eye. Scripps stepped deeper into the blackness and gently pulled back the curtains, letting the room bathe in the moon's soft glow; a paper-mâché of bloody scenes, crime scene photos, old pages from books, newspaper cuttings, along with small notes on yellow stickers, stared back at him from the entire wall. At the center was his own mug shot attached with three pins. He stood for a long time bend over the collection centered only around him, letting his eyes roam every corner, reveling in her obsession of him. "What would the bureau think?" he mused, "Jayne! Inwardly relishing at the idea of her guilt at the extensive collection locked away in her house. He could almost see her sitting

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in this dark room bent over papers and computer screensâ searching for a taste of him. He closed his eyes deeply inhaling her scent. Her skinâ hand creamâ pepperoni pizzaâ beerâ a tinge of sweatâ something sweetâ He turned back to the door, softly exhaling his breath. He saw a rose appearing a deep red in the light, with a large bud and a short stem, so that it fit perfectly into the water-filled glass which held it. He came closer bending down to inhale its sweet scent once again, before running his fingers up the smooth petals. Scripps wondered briefly how the flower, which was so evidently out of place, had found its way here. Jayne was still full of surprises.

He would come back to look at things more thoroughly but for now this would have to do. Scripps descended the stairs, his steps very slow, very measured and without a sound. He entered the room to be greeted with the sound of her almost melodic breathing as opposed to the empty silence of the house. This time Scripps did not stop himself from stepping closer to her sleeping form and with slow grace he got down onto his knees in front of her, hearing part of Danteâs sonnet in his mind, â He woke her then and trembling and obedient she ate the burning heart out of his hand.â

He did not wake her, but felt a stab of hunger still. He watched her closely, every curve and every hair on her body which the dress revealed, coveting her beauty. Jayneâs face was so very close to his, he could not stop himself from softly inhaling her scent. The rose would wilt in comparison to her. Part of him wished he could stay and watch her skin bathe in the moonlight longer, but all too well he knew he they had to part. Her eyes, though closed, looked like she could wake up at any moment. Reaching out, he stroked her hair with the softest touch savoring in the sensation it provided. He could not hold himself from bringing his hand near her arm until it almost came in contact and with a ghostly touch he hovered it over her bare skin letting his warmth send goose bumps over her and Jayne stirred softly in her sleep and he sat frozen. There was no denying the feelings which surrounded them. Her house revealed as much to him. Even the still sight of her brought his heart more longing than fulfillment. He wanted so much to touch her skin instead of the air around it. Her presence gave tranquility and he could not interrupt her peace. Not now. He smiled sadly to himself: the man she had looked for so long was inches from her and yet she did not wake to see him. Scripps briefly wished her eyes would flutter open and he would not have to leave her warmth so soon.

A poem heâd found in one of her dresser drawers, one sheâd surely written with him in mind, burned a hole in his pocket, and he pulled it out now, began reciting it in a whisper, as she lay so close:

I gave you all the love I've got

I gave you more than I could give...

I gave you love...

I gave you all that I have inside

And you took my love...

You took my love...

Didn't I tell you...

What I believe...?

Did somebody say that...

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A love like that won't last?

Didn't I give you...

All that I've got to...

Give, baby?

This is no ordinary love...

No ordinary love...

This is no ordinary love...

No ordinary love...

Softly not to make much sound he gathered the sharp pieces of glass from the bare floor of her room, then almost sadly he took the last sight of her and stored it deep within his memory to keep with him. "Weeping I saw her then depart from me," Dante's words echoed in his mind. All stories end the same.

With one last breath he began to quietly exit her bedroom, when her eyes suddenly shot open, her right hand reaching under her pillow and retrieving a Glock 9MM handgun, racking the slide, and pointing it at the semi-darkness, her eyes filled with fear, her adrenaline pumping now.

"Who's there!?" she said, waving the gun from side to side, up and down. "Identify yourself or I'll fire!"

An uncomfortable silence, then, "Good evening, Jayne," he said, moving closer now, his face bathed in the eerie glow of her night light. "No need to pull that gun, it's only me."

"Marty?" she said, her eyes transfixed on his face, lowering the gun. "Are you crazy? I could have killed you."

He smiles that trademark smile. "I wasn't concerned. Besides, what a bitter-sweet death I would have suffered, at the hands of my secret admirer." He held up the slip of paper with the poem.

"I should shoot you anyway," she said, rising up and sitting on the edge of her bed. "for almost giving me a heart attack."

He moved closer still, sitting down next to her, placing his hand on her thigh. She tensed up at first, then slowly relaxed as he rubbed her thigh gently, then said, "I apologize for the late night intrusion, Jayne, but as you well know, I have to move about under the cover of darkness to conduct any social calls. I am quite sure I am still on the FBI's ten most wanted list."

The sensation she was feeling from his touch was almost overpowering, as if she were going into some sort of trance, and she placed her hand gently on his to make him stop. "It would be safe to say that, yes. How long have you been watching me? Known where I live?"

"Not long, but long enough to know that your life is mundane at best; a private investigator? It's so beneath you, considering your talents with the FBI."

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“Please, Marty, not you too. I’ve already gotten the third degree from my family. I don’t need anymore.”

“And rightfully so.” He began rubbing her thigh again. “I don’t blame them for their disappointment. It’s beneath you.”

“And it’s not beneath you to be sneaking into my house at three o’clock in the morning? I do have a phone, you know.”

“A secure line isn’t always secure. I couldn’t take any chances.”

“True. Still, there might be people watching my house, Marty. I feel eyes on me everywhere I go, all the time. It’s as if they are doing it on purpose, to bug me, goad me into doing or saying something I’ll regret.”

“A trap, then?” he said, reaching out and turning on her bedside lamp.

“I think so, yes. I really disgraced them, in their eyes, for letting you escape.”

“Why did you let me get away, Jayne? Surely you knew what dire consequences you would pay for such behavior.”

“I’ll don’t know why, really. That’s a tough question to answer.”

“Did you enjoy my last letter?” he said, smiling, already knowing the answer.

“Don’t I always?”

“That’s not an answer, Jayne, please don’t be so redundant.”

“Sorry. Yes, I always enjoy your letters.”

“I do so enjoy your poetry too, Jayne. Was this one written with anyone particular in mind?”

“I think you already know who it was, Marty. Don’t you be redundant, either.”

He liked that. “I have a proposition for you, I think you will find very interesting.”

She looked apprehensive. “And that is?”

He sat in silence for a few moments, just gently squeezing her hand, looking deeply into her eyes, letting his eyes tell the story. He’d always believed that the eyes were the key to the soul, and especially her eyes, which had never been able to betray him, hide any secrets from him. He had looked much too deeply into her mind and heart, her very soul, for her to be able to deceive him, or at least not for very long.

“You want me to run away with you, don’t you?” she said, pulling her hand away.

“That’s my sweet Jayne.”

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“Marty, you should know by now, with all of the negative publicity we’ve both been exposed to, we could never just ‘run away’ together, and not be caught almost immediately. We’d stick out like a sore thumb.”

“That’s my sweet Jayne,” he repeated. “Always thinking of the worst scenarios possible, yet underneath it all, knowing that I could surely come up with a plan suited to our individual needs.”

“Such as?”

“Have you ever been to France?” he asked, gently squeezing her hand again. This time, she didn’t pull away from him.

“That’s a laugh. Until I joined the FBI, I had very rarely ever left Chicago.”

“I thought as much. Would you like to at least visit there, let me show you what kind of life we could live together?”

She sat in silence for a few moments, staring at the bedroom walls, those lonely, drab, bedroom walls she’d had so many empty conversations with over the last several years, but had never received an answer, unless it was from that little voice in her head, the one that kept telling her she was doomed for this type of life, the life of a lonely, disgraced spinster.

“I don’t know, Marty,” she said, her eyes clouded with tears now. “Do you really think we could make it work?”

“I’ve come all the way around the world, Jayne, to watch you run. Aren’t you tired of running? Running away from yourself, from me?”

“I’m not running from anything,” she said, then trailed off, her eyes still transfixed on the walls.

“Pardon?”

“Nothing, Marty,” she said, looking into his eyes again now. “Yes, I’d like to visit France, but on one condition.”

“Your wish is my command.”

“That this will only be a ‘probationary’ visit, to see how safe, secure I feel with my new surroundings, before we move forward?”

“Your wish is granted,” he said, giving her hand a gentle tug, pulling her to him.

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Two days later, she found herself walking toward him across the length of the terrace of a beautiful condo in the hills outside Paris.

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He had been gone most of the day, making certain arrangements for her new life here; expensive toiletries, new wardrobe, only the best French cuisine. He wanted her stay here to be a happy one, one sheâd never forget, one of love and bliss. Heâd feared she would become agitated, anxious, at the thought of the FBI trailing them here, even though heâd made all the necessary preparations to avoid such an incident. Heâd have to give her time, room, to breathe, feel comfortable before he carried on with this scenario any further.

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