

The Secretary

by C. T. Martin



The clerk at the car rental desk was bored to say the least.

“That will be thirty-five dollars and sixty five cents per day. If you do not return the vehicle with a full tank of gas, your credit card will be charged the market rate to refill it again. Would you like to add protection?”

Wide-eyed and puzzled, she looked at the young man across the counter, barely in his twenties.

“Maim?” he repeated.

“What is that?” she finally questioned.

The man said with a sigh, “If anything happens to the vehicle, and statistics show that it probably will, you can bring it back to us and walk away without worrying about the damage.”

“No, that won’t be necessary.”

She walked out with the keys to the 2008 Pontiac and drove off to take a much needed getaway. It was a road trip to nowhere and she didn’t care where she landed, as long as it was away from him.

At Britain Inc., Jeff the mail clerk had more than once stated that he was fed up with him. Fed up with the jerk, the boss, the office asshole, whom everyone hated. He respected no one. He demanded everything from everyone without any regard for their personal feelings.

It was four fifty-nine in the afternoon that same day. The boss dumped three large work orders on Jeff's desk and turned to walk away.

"I expect this out today," he said with ease.

"I'm not going to be your bitch any more!" Jeff exploded.

"Jeff, the tan lines from your bra are showing," the boss condescended as he stopped mid-step and turned around to face him. "Why don't you take three days off without pay, go down to the beach and take care of that! I expect you to be back here at work Monday morning if you expect to have a job."

Livid, Jeff turned away walked off. "Asshole," he said under his breath.

"And forget about your merit raise!" the boss added. The door slammed heavily behind Jeff.

Jeff stormed off to the nearest bar to try and forget his frustration, but today he needed more than beer. Marjorie was his best friend, from work anyway. Their co-workers said if Jeff had to marry someone from work it would be Marjorie. The two fought and made up like two married people.

He dialed her number.

"Hi! This is Marjorie, you know what to do!" the voice mail on the cell phone stated.

If he couldn't commiserate with his best workmate, at least he'd have revenge.

He had talked about this with her many times. The pills were cheap and the effects virtually untraceable. The boss was prone to ulcers and a dire episode of internal bleeding would not be unexpected. His chemist brother had told him it would only take five pills dissolved in coffee to do the trick. Death would ensue almost immediately. Jeff decided that when he returned to work Monday morning, that would be the day. He only wished that Marjorie could be a part of it.

His death was near instantaneous. The doctor told his wife that no one could have survived the bleeding and to take some comfort since he probably didn't know what hit him.

However, in fact he had.

The murderer had plotted a long time for this. The address on the envelope had been deliberately mis-addressed so that it would take slightly longer for the envelope to arrive. Being incredibly shy worked in the murderer's favor. After questioning the neighbors and workmates, everyone confirmed that the accused was never one to invite confrontation. Mailing the resignation

therefore, was not out of character, nor was failing to ask the boss if he had received the correspondence and if so why he didn't accept the resignation.

But the letter, what was in the letter?

It simply said, "I may be your secretary, executive assistant, or whatever you want to call it, but to everyone else I am a human being. I no longer require any salary from you and will therefore not be fulfilling any more of your requests. Signed, Marjorie."

She worked late that day before she left town in the rented 2008 Pontiac. The boss stayed around to be sure she completed the work left over from Jeff. A few pills in his afternoon coffee did the trick. Her only regret was that she had to steal the pills from Jeff's work locker.