



REVENGE

A Short Story

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[Ilya](#)

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Revenge, A Short Story

Mo ran after the girl down a cobblestone street wet with the morning rain. God, how he loved Paris. So beautiful, especially in the fall. So many tourists, so much prey...

The sun did its level best to pierce the thinning clouds, but it was still too weak. The girl was fast, probably played varsity in college. He had to hurry, or she'd escape.

Les banlieux — the suburbs of Paris: So close to the touristy downtown and yet — a world apart. He smiled. Why had she come all the way out here? An innocent American tourist had no business in the Algerian slums. No matter, she'd soon be his and he'd ask her. All in good time.

Mo had given the girl about a 200 feet head-start. When he saw her cross the street under a shimmering street lamp, he knew he had her. He owned these streets like the back of his hand. There was only one place she could have gone. So he followed as she ran through a tiny square between two concrete buildings. Sheikh Omar would be happy with that one. She seemed nimble and in excellent health. It was the sheikh that had taught him all there was to know about the place: the secret alleys, all the ins and outs, the twists and turns. The locals knew not to bother him — he was a lion and *les banlieux* — his savannah.

He usually relied on an arrangement with a select group of cabbies.

His spotter at the airport would choose the girl — usually American, probably blonde, always pretty. Then the cabby would drive her to some remote place out in the suburbs. Mo would take over from there.

But this one had just materialized out of nowhere. A cute brunette number. Hardly five feet tall, still had that lost teen look. Probably came here to party. Now she was lost and disoriented. And the real party was about to start soon enough...

In the past eight years that he'd been working for the Saudis, Mo had "acquired" dozens of little things like her. He particularly loved the chase. First he'd let them think they had succeeded; they had lost him — the creepy man, probably a homeless bum. They were young and full of energy, he was old and slow.

But he knew better and he never missed his prey.

Something splashed up ahead. Yup — a matter of time, as always. He saw her, across the street, running down a sidewalk, leaning on a graffiti-

littered wall.

"Hey, American girl," he yelled out in mock concern. "Are you lost? Let me help you."

He spoke English.

"Fuck you, trash!" he heard her scream back at him. "If you're gonna try and rape me, you'll need to catch me first," And she turned around the wall, down a blind alley he knew only too well.

He liked her spirit — a fighter. She would be fun to break. He felt his body relax as the adrenaline of the hunt began to ebb. He knocked back the grey hood of his sweater. She had her back to him. He could see her frantically looking for an escape. He knew there was none. It was futile. It was way too early in the day for anyone to work up the courage to crack open a door or open a window in this stale neighborhood.

"I want to help you, come on," this time he allowed his flawless American accent to show, "I won't hurt you, promise. Just one lonely guy helping a chick in need."

"Bullshit, creep," she shot back.

Mo's heart accelerated — it was almost time to savor the fruits of the chase. He tossed back the strands of blond hair that stuck to his forehead.

"Look, girl. You look lost, and I just want to help. There's no telling what these Arabs," he motioned to the buildings lining the street, "would do to a pretty little American like yourself. They're animals..."

That at least was true — he despised everything about them — their culture, their religion, even the way they looked. Indeed, Mo had once fought against them. Back in the old glory days of the War on Terror, he had been a foot soldier for one of the alphabet agencies that had sprung up like mushrooms after Nine-Eleven. He had cut his teeth with the US Army Special Forces. Then, after the attacks on the World Trade Center, they transferred him to "The Company", an outfit that gobbled up his expertise like fresh donuts at a working lunch.

But they didn't keep him. They used him for half a dozen "wet jobs" but apparently his zeal was too much for their small bureaucratic hearts. They didn't appreciate his "methods in the field", they told him at his exit interview. As if he was an archeologist or a plumber or something. He smiled to himself. It was *their* loss, not his.

Attempts to reason with his bosses at the alphabet agency proved embarrassingly unsuccessful.

Then Mo had done the only logical thing he could — he offered his skill-set to the enemy. It wasn't his fault his homies didn't want him. That would teach them to appreciate talent.

The jihadis took him.

Then they debriefed him for more than a month until he was sure they had to know more about him and his old life than he did himself. After that, they sent him to travel the world. He was assigned to a fat oil sheikh as a personal bodyguard and head of intelligence. The sheikh turned out to be smarter than his jowly demeanor initially let on. The man realized fast that Mo's true calling was to be a hunter, not a guard. So he let him loose amid the lambs with orders to capture as many pretty ones as he could. The sheikh's second family business, other than oil, was white slavery and so Mo made sure business was good.

Up ahead the girl spun on her heels and leveled her gaze.

"Really?" she asked, "you won't hurt me?". She sounded hopeful.

"Of course not, if you're nice to me, I'll be nice to you," he lied and stepped closer.

He moved slowly. He half expected her to try and hit him, to run. They all did that, until he showed them his blade. Then they would burst into tears, beg for mercy, offer him whatever he wanted, just to let them live. As he narrowed the distance between them, however, he noticed this particular sheep wasn't tense — her shoulders were relaxed, her sky-blue eyes appeared almost analytical as they swept across his face. For an instant he thought he recognized the look — he saw it every morning when he shaved — the look of a hunter. *How weird.*

She had to be late teens, with cute auburn hair cut in that paige-boy style, it contrasted so well with her naturally pale complexion.

He was inches from her now, his hand closed around the hilt of his knife.

"My name is Ilya," she whispered. "I thought I should tell you that."

Mo chuckled, "Fine, little girl," he said and pulled out his blade. "My name is..."

"Michael Oakley," she finished for him. He stopped and looked at her.

Later, that same day he would curse himself for just standing there, staring at her pale-blue eyes, not even attempting to escape. Later still, he would decide it wasn't his fault. He *couldn't* have done anything. Her eyes — they were so beautiful, calm, mesmerizing — he was hypnotized, like a rabbit

before a snake. He could have stayed there, in the alley, just gazing at those pools of aquamarine until the end of time.

She tazed him. One moment he was looming over her, the next — he was writhing and puking his insides out on the concrete at her feet.

When he woke up, he was naked, strapped to what felt like an old barber chair. Halogens burned into his face making his world an agony of blazing white.

Out of the corner of his eye he saw rapid movement, something glinted in a small hand gloved in blue nitrile.

"Ouch, aiy!" he screamed.

"Just a pinprick, Michael," came her voice from somewhere close. "Or would you rather I called you Mo?" she breathed into his ear.

"Hmph..?" duct tape covered his lips.

"Fine then," she giggled. "Don't worry, Mo, I didn't cut you too bad. There is a small nerve that slides down a human neck right... here," she put her finger where he had felt the cut. "Not terribly important — it only controls the responses and movement of your neck muscles. we can't have you jerking your head willy-nilly now, can we? Not with what I have planned for you..."

"Hmphh...!"

"Shh...., it is better that way," she cooed, and his head flipped liked a wet noodle to the side.

"HMMPFFFFFF!!!..." he screamed into his duct tape.

"I will remove the duct tape," she whispered, "but first I need you to promise me something, okay? Can you do that?"

"Hmphh..."

"I want you to promise me you'll be quiet; you won't scream, at least — not too loudly. You see, we're not too far from where *I. Caught. You.*," she stressed every word relishing the power. "We don't want to disturb the peaceful folk who live here, right? You'll promise me that?"

He felt her put her ear to his taped mouth.

"Hmphhhh..."

"Good," she ripped the tape off suddenly and viciously. There!" she stepped away and he could hear her dragging a chair. Somewhere in the faint background the muezzin of the neighborhood mosque was calling the citizens of this Algerian suburb of Paris to early-morning prayer.

She sat in front of him and clicked off one of the halogens. His head was

drooping off to one side but he could see her smile at him as she sat and crossed her legs.

In one hand she had a syringe, and in the other — an apple.

He tried to look around the room. He couldn't hear or see anyone else besides the girl. She put the syringe to one side and started eating the apple.

"Yup, its just little ol' me," she said between bites. "You got owned by an eighteen-year old girl, Mo; all ninety-three pounds of her."

"God," he moaned. "Why are you doing this to me? Who are you?"

"Hmm," she passed her tongue across her teeth and worked to dislodge an appleseed from between. They were so white, they blinded him in the reflected halogen glare.

"Oh, come on, Mr. Oakley. Surely you know who I am, or who I'm *with* at least? Yeeees..., yes you do, I can see it in your eyes."

She moved her chair closer, "So here is the deal, Big Boy..." she angled her head sideways so she could look him directly in the eyes.

"You know who I am, I know who you are. I've been looking for you for a long, long — loooong time. I really wish I had found you earlier, you piece of rotten stinking shit. Because now you're going to die. Yes, don't look at me like that, as if you have no clue," she jumped out of her seat and Mo heard paper shuffling in the background.

"Do you recognize her?" Ilya held up a four-by-six inch photo of a girl with rich brown hair tied in a high ponytail. She was pretty. He thought he remembered her name — *Monique*.

"How about her? You ass-licking scumbag!" she flipped to another picture that showed a petite blonde in running shorts grinning at the camera: *Jessica*.

"This one? Do you think you can recall her, Mr. Oakley?" she kept flipping one photo, after another, tossing them to the floor, until a small heap of pictures covered his bare feet. She stopped at the last one and held it up to his face.

"She is the reason that it all become personal to me," she said. The photo was of a black girl in her twenties, her skin smooth like chocolate milk, her smile bringing out tiny dimples at the corners of her lips. "You see, Mo, I would have hunted you down and killed you anyway — it is what I'm paid to do. And I *always* fulfill my contracts. But because of what you did to her, I will now take my sweet time and make it slow..."

"Her name was Jessica, by the way. And I knew her. She's the reason

I'm alive today," a tear trickled down Ilya's cheek. "She saved me... From myself, drugs and other bad things."

His eyes grew wide, "It wasn't me," he whined but she slapped him so hard and fast that his head rocked to one side.

"I know it was you. And now you know that I know. So spare us both your bullshit. We found her, in Morocco, at least we found what was left of her in that old brothel your boss sold her to."

"By the way, I didn't tell you about the sheikh, did I..." She pulled out an iPhone and selected a photo. When he saw it Mo threw up violently.

"Yeah, I see you get the picture. Alright. But I got off topic. So, here is what we shall do with you."

She picked up the syringe and flicked it across her delicate long fingers.

"Me and you, we will both go down memory lane. You will re-live every single abduction and torture you did to these girls. You will tell me exactly how you grabbed them, how it all started, what you did to them, and where they are right now."

She moved closer to him and lifted his head and wiped off the strings of saliva that were hanging from his chin.

"And yes — you WILL tell me everything, and *no* — I will not have to do anything as quaint as water-board you."

"Have you heard of a drug called QH23?" she asked. "No? Well, let me tell you: It's the latest and greatest to come out of our endless quest for the ultimate truth serum. But today I will be using it in a slightly different manner. I will not follow the instructions on the label, so to speak."

"Somebody, somewhere, somehow discovered, a bizarre side-effect. It sickens even me to imagine *how* they came across this tidbit, but anyhow. If, rather than shooting it up into the bloodstream, one injected it directly into the brain, say through the eye, for example — well, the effect is very interesting indeed," a thin smile crossed Ilya's full lips. "The subject not only forgets all about trying to lie, but also starts hallucinating from all possible points-of-view. They start picturing themselves in the shoes of the people involved in whatever they are talking about."

"You can see why I think this would make the best punishment for you, right? Now, you will not only remember what you did to all these people, but you will also know how they felt. The full enchilada. You scumbag."

"Here," she grabbed him by the hair and angled his head sideways as if

she was a vampire about to sink her fangs into his neck. "Move if you want — you'll go blind if you do."

The needle was so thin, for a moment he couldn't even see it at the end of the syringe. He didn't feel it until a second after it had already pierced his eyeball and traversed all the way back to his optical nerve. He realized he wasn't breathing, all his muscles stood on edge literally petrified by the horror of what was happening to him.

"There. Now you'll know what I'm talking about." He saw her walk back and resume her seat as she picked up her apple. There was no pain really, just a pinprick and a small itch in his eye as if he had allergies.

A couple of moments later, by the time Ilya was almost done with her apple, Mo was no longer there. Instead, it was like as if he had been whisked off to a parallel universe. His imagination had ballooned out of his head and exploded into his reality.

"Let us start at the beginning: who was it you sold out first?" she asked as, without getting out of her chair, she tossed the apple into a bin at the far side of the room.

"I'm James," Mo said "I'm Mo's CIA handler. I'm older and although my work is risky, I'm in bad shape, my body is weak..."

"Go on, don't stop, until I tell you to. Describe to me what happened," she said.

"The last day of my life, I kissed my wife goodbye as I always do and I walked to the subway. Mo must have followed me down the back alleyway. He used a pipe and broke my skull from the back. I didn't know who or what hit me at the time..." Mo felt a trickle of hot piss run down his naked leg as he sat tied to the chair. He felt the pain of the blow, the gooey wetness where his skull tore open, the sadness of the realization that he would never see his wife again. Trapped in James's head he found himself wondering why, why him, why now?

Mo started crying. He felt sorry for the wife he never had, that he would never see again.

"You felt proud. You did exactly as your new masters had ordered — you killed the man who had helped you all these years. Your mentor. He was your fiend, Mo! You didn't need him anymore. You killed many more after that. And then you were promoted." Mo was faintly aware of Ilya's dark stare

as it bore into his features.

"Let's continue, tell me about your first prey, your first girl," Mo shifted his eyes and gazed at Ilya. It was as if the shadows of the room had suddenly grown longer. He could no longer see her eyes — just a silhouette as the halogens shone around her.

"My name is Jessica," he whispered. Tears poured down his face. "I'm twenty-six years old. I live in Philadelphia. I'm on my way to check on a girl I recently took in from the streets. She's only twelve, I found her in the gutter the other night when I was coming home from work. I thought she was going to OD. I didn't know whom to call. My landlord would surely evict me if I called 911 on his property. She's so broken, so precious. She said her name is Ilya. I'm so worried about her..."

"Go on," Ilya said, stifling a sob.

"I'm riding the bus down Walnut Avenue. There is a man staring at me. I've seen him before. Looks like an art student. He's kind of cute; very athletic. I can see his strong forearms. He looks up at me and smiles. I feel myself blush with hope that he might talk to me..."

"Keep going. I want to know everything..." Ilya said.

Thirty minutes later Mo's sobs became a full-on wail as his mind grabbed him and dropped him into Jessica's body as she was that last night, years ago. He heard himself plead for mercy, just as she had. She had something rough tied around her eyes. She couldn't see but she could hear the gravely sound of boots as he dragged her out of the trunk of the car, across a parking lot to a limousine, its engine purring. She heard foreign voices and then a pinprick in her arm.

She woke up in a grey cell. The blindfold was off. She was surrounded by serious men. And him — the young man from the bus. There were seven of them. She was naked. They never spoke to her. Neither of them, not even the American man from the bus. After the rape, they let her sleep. Then they came again. And again. And again...

"I'm saw..., saw...", he stammered.

"What's that?" she knelt by him, and looked into his half opened eyes. They had rolled back into their sockets, only the whites staring back at her, unseeing.

"I'm sorry..." he gasped.

"I'm sure you are...." she stood up and pulled out her iPhone. She

pressed and held a speed dial command.

"Identifier?" came the metallic voice.

"Five-oh-six," Ilya replied. She moved her cell to her left ear and fished out her Gerber switchblade.

"Status?"

"Mission complete. Target down," Ilya said as she made the blade do its thing across his throat.

The End.

I hope you enjoyed reading this short story as much as I enjoyed writing it.

Your reviews are greatly appreciated! I can only imagine how valuable your time is, however, if you write even a couple of lines in a review, you will not only inform me of your opinion, but also inspire me to keep writing for your enjoyment. I love reading your thoughts, feedback, questions, comments and even concerns.

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Thank you!