

# Scorned

*By Carolyn Muniz*

The mouthwatering scent of Brussels sprouts and steak line the apartment building hallway.

Unlocking the door quietly, late as usual, the smell of dinner brushing his face, Brent stops at the mirror hanging in the walkway, wiping away the lipstick stain on his cheek. The table's set for only one, with blues-jazz playing on the radio. Lisa is standing at the bar on the patio, swaying in a sparkling gown, humming to herself as she hands her husband a glass.

"Bourbon?" asks Brent.

"But of course, with a twist. Come here." Lisa pulls him in close and kisses him. "I hope you enjoy dinner; I made it special, with you in mind."

"It smells great, where's yours? Am I eating alone?"

"Oh, you took so long I ate without you, but you're not alone, I'll be here too," she tugs on his hand, walking him over to the table.

"I'm glad you decided to spend some time alone with me." says Brent untying his tie and then gently stroking Lisa's cheek.

"It's been too long, you're always at work" she says as she leans her head on his shoulder.

"Someone has to bring home the bacon," he says, cutting into his steak. "My goodness Lisa, that's one mean steak!" he says with a mouthful.

“Glad you like it. Did you work late again today? It’s already dark out.” she says sliding his glass to him.

“Yeah, it’s been crazy at the office lately, you and I hardly ever get to talk anymore.” e rubs her hand.

“Having kids will do that to a marriage.”

“Where are the kids?”

Lisa downs the rest of her bourbon and giggles as she heads for a refill.

“Would you like another?”

“No, I'd like to know where my kids are!”

“Suddenly it matters. They’ve been gone for days, and you just now ask.”

Brent smacks his napkin down on the tabletop, scooting his chair out. Lisa begins to laugh as he storms from room to room searching for their toddlers. Brent storms back to the kitchen, “Where are my kids?” he yells, face nearly as red as his hair, he begins to breathe heavily, slowly falling to the ground.

“What did you do to me?” Barely able to talk, Brent mumbles “Where are my kids?”

“Oh, they’re fine, here, have another with me.” She giggles as she sits him upright against the counter. “You haven’t finished the first glass yet, let me help you.” Lisa pours the rest of his bourbon into his mouth and holds it shut until he swallows.

“Why can’t I move? What’d you do to me?”

Lisa lays on the couch and crosses her ankles. “Where’d you go today after work? Sheryl said you’d left when I called the office at seven.”

“Where are my kids?! So, help me God Lisa, what’d you do?!”

Sipping on her bourbon through a straw with a careless grin, “Now you care? Now! Family means something to you?” A sudden pounding on the door echoes through the apartment.

“Police! Open the door Lisa!” Brent's ears begin to ring as Lisa shoves a sock in his mouth and drags him into the closet behind the door. Trembling and paralyzed he can see the policeman's shoes underneath the door.

Lisa opens the door, “Can I help you? What's going on here?”

“Good evening, ma’am I’m Officer Bryant, this is Officer Colt, we received a phone call asking for a welfare check on the two children that reside here. Are they home Ma’am?”

“Come on in, my company just left but I have some leftover steaks I can give you gentlemen.

The kids are fishing with their father.”

“Do you mind if we take a look around? There were reports of screaming a few days ago, your neighbors seem concerned about the wellbeing of your kids.” Brent’s heart began to pound and then thud as he heard Officer Bryant’s words.

“Not at all, I’m all alone until they get back. Take your time. Should I pack these to go?”

“These are delicious, yes ma’am please.” Says Officer Colt as he chews on a mouthful.

Brent began rolling around giving off a muffled scream, Officer Colt hears him. Following the noises, he opens the closet door. He turns to Lisa

“Freeze! Put your hands above your head!

“Where are the kids?”

Lisa grins “Did you enjoy that steak officer?” Brent watches helplessly as they open the refrigerator. There they were, the remains of his dissected toddlers. His beloved babies are dead.