

# I Won't Miss

Isabelle Call

from a completed short story

***Some find out the hard way that a woman scorned can be the most dangerous thing in the world.***

I was layin' on that scratchy black mat of his old run down trampoline in the backyard o' his parents house. Lookin' up at the sky, the stars twinklin' down at me. That's when it all began, that night on the trampoline; when he reached over and gently brushed his hand over mine. The slight breeze blowin' that night brought the scent of the ocean and his cheap cologne to my nose, it wasn't the nicest smell in the world, but I breathed it in all the same, savourin' er'y last whiff of it. I can still smell it even now. As we lay there with our hands brushing against each other I remember havin' too blink a couple o' rain drops out of my eyes, then the next thing I knew he was kissin' me.

Well like I said that's when it all began, and the next time he was kissin' me like that was ten months later at our wedding. I s'pose that it might seem silly only waitin' ten months but we were so in love in, and in those days it didn't matter so much. And if it did we didn't care what people thought cause those first ten months were the best of my life and I believe the best of his too. We had been driven' an old van up and down the coast, and it felt like we were experiencin' all of life at once, and none of it was bad. Then one day we decided to ring his parents, his father said he had a job for him at the office in New York, so we went home and we got married, happy as clams. I guess maybe that's really when this all began, cause I don't think nothin' would've changed if we had stayed in that van. Truly I don't. It was that job, that damned job that changed him so bad.

Well anyways we went back, and he started his fancy new office job. It wasn't all bad at first, sure things got a little boring, cause it turned out without the van that he was pretty borin'. But it wasn't too bad. Then I got pregnant and things got a bit better, less borin'. That didn't last too long though. He started hittin' me the day after our daughter was born; this was about two years into things. Yuh see I guess

he wanted a son real bad, I knew he wanted one but what I didn't know was he'd blame me so darn bad. I don't even know if it was so much of blame as it was just a real excuse to actually raise his hand to me.

He of course could be mean and I knew that, he was mean that first night when we were finally hitched. We were both good Christian's yuh see so it was both ours first time. He was mean with it, not physically no, just with his words, called me all sorts of mean nasty things, things you should never say to a woman, not ever. I thought maybe he just liked that sort of thing, it never even crossed my mind to nip it in the butt right then and there, but he was the love of my life. Anyways that night and for the first couple of weeks he was just mean in bed, then he started getting mean out of bed. I'd put on a bit of weight from bein' a house wife and not waitressin' anymore down at the cafe on 12th street.

## **REVIEWS**

### **TSW Sharman**

Thanks for submitting Isabelle, and I hope you find these critiques useful – I look forward to a compendium of short stories from you!

What I liked about this are three things: your very direct and painful approach to domestic violence (“Anyways that night and for the first couple of weeks he was just mean in bed, then he started getting mean out of bed.”) It's a bold choice, gritty and realistic, painful. I believe fiction exists to help us to better understand real people in the real world, and to empathize. There's some real pain and honest reflection in “I don't even know if it was so much of blame as it was just a real excuse to actually raise his hand to me.” Secondly, the narrator really does come into focus for me as a whole person, telling a genuine story, with an authentic voice – I can almost see her in my mind. Lastly, I'll add that I found it easy to read despite the narrator's voice and grammar.

Where I'd consider a little work is in a couple of areas. The tagline of “Some find out the hard way that a woman scorned can be the most dangerous thing in the world”

gives rather too much away – unless you promise a twist at the end (I do hope so)!

I got a little confused by this: you write “the next time he was kissin’ me like that was ten months later at our wedding” – really? Or are you trying to suggest it was particularly tender that first time and only again the day they were married (I note you also write later “none of it was bad” during that period. Maybe you could be a little more explicit in the foreshadowing if that’s what you’re intending.

And then: “It was that job, that damned job that changed him so bad” – I’m a little doubtful any job could change anyone that much, so I feel like there’s room for a little elaboration about that “fancy new office job” and why it changed him so much – did he start drinking with the guys after work? Stress? Gambling? Other women? Money troubles?

I have some minor editing quibbles. Single space after a period, parents/parent’s house (may well be deliberate on your part), Too/To (may be deliberate), no/so, Butt/Bud (also may be deliberate, I can imagine this narrator getting the words mixed up). However, I would rather avoid what might make a reader concerned they’re actually errors.

You’ll get the most reaction from readers with your style choice for the direct address narrator. I’m fine with it for a short story, would be tedious for me for a longer piece of work. It also came across as rural South in my mind, and then I was a little confused about the presence of the Ocean and driving “up and down the coast” which made me think California.

Yes, I’d keep reading, and I’d love to see more authentic and tough work like this. I’ll add that it’s not exactly YA, but accept that a YA reader might well find this a salutary story about the real world and its myriad challenges.

### **Jeanette**

The tag-line caught my attention from the beginning of something I would personally pick up as a 37 year old woman but would possibly suggest to a younger audience as well. Once reading the story, the tag-line could use a little fine tuning as I wouldn’t always put domestic violence in the “woman scorned” category because this brings to mind vengeance for a different level of slight. The total word

count does seem a little short, unless this is only planned to be published in a magazine, though based on the first section I would recommend allowing the story to unfold in more detail for a much longer version. At first, I was thrown off by the shortening of words, realizing it is the voice of the narrator, I would suggest somehow setting the scene of where this takes place to explain the dialect choice would be helpful. Overall, I would pick up this story and read it. I think it's important to tell stories like this one - stories of abuse and (hopefully) survival. Keep delving, tell more of the original love story, the time in the van and build to the abuse, there is a great concept here.