

Avengement: Is this the ultimate payback?

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I.

The townsfolk gathered, in anticipation and despair. I listened carefully to what Arch Druid Nile was saying; he would either make my life complete and give me eternal happiness or shatter it to tiny pieces.

I fell to my knees, 'Please, let me! I can provide for her, you must give me a chance.'

'You know of our devotion to mother earth and what she provides...My daughter is her most precious gift, you have to prove to us you're worthy of her hand in marriage. How will you do this?'

'Give me six weeks, I will go into the forest and I will create something to prove my worth and honest intentions, please give me one chance.'

Never before had I been more set on committing to a life with a woman; she was so beautiful, there was never a day that passed where I didn't think about her radiating smile or her long black hair.

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I had first met Skye on my way to worship; she was calling outside her house, kicking the door and disturbing the tranquillity that usually surrounded her cottage.

'Is something wrong?' I was nervous to approach her, but if she were locked out, perhaps I could have been of some assistance.

'Who are you? Go away!' She turned, her eyes skimmed across my body with an air insulting scrutiny. She gave a snort of contempt and continued pummelling the door.

'Do you need help? I work a mere ten minutes away, I'm a carpenter, if your door is jammed I could...' She abruptly cut me off as though I were a child pleading for attention.

'I don't need your help! I would appreciate it if you left me alone now...Thankyou but goodbye.'

She was so distressed; I didn't want to bother her anymore. I arrived at my destination after taking the scenic tour of the forest to give me time to cool down my racing mind. My life seemed cyclical, everything was recurring and nothing ever changed. I had been alone for the entirety of my life and all I ever longed for was a companion. After my encounter with Skye, I was drawn to her through all mysterious avenues. There was something different yet fascinating about her that I couldn't quite pinpoint. I took the same route to work every morning but that was the first time I had seen her. In the past I had admired her house, a little cottage hugged by trees, bark and leaves littered across the ground. Who was this fiery, feisty, fickle creature?

Early next morning on my way to work I approached her cottage with caution and intrigue. I crept by quietly, hoping to avoid an altercation and further embarrassment, so when I heard a sharp whistle I leapt in shock, not expecting the noise. A figure ran towards me with a golden smile, holding her long draping gown around her ankles so as to not dirty her hems.

'Good-day, I'm Skye. I'm ever so sorry about the way we met yesterday. I was locked out of my cottage; my brother can be so very immature at times. It was uncalled for,' she spoke with such rapidity; I could almost reach out and touch her thoughts, she sincerely felt guilty about her behaviour.

'I understand and please don't feel bad,' I grinned feeling a boost of confidence; this lady was astoundingly mysterious.

'If you like, one night you could come around for a pot of tea, the offer is always there. I best be off. I'm sorry once again, take care' She started running back home; I gathered she was in a rush.

I stood there, with a heavy axe sitting on my shoulder, shocked once again at her changing attitudes. The sky was blue, not a single cloud in sight. Today was a good day; every day from today would be a good day. I laboured all day until the sun started to set over the eastern horizon, and when it was time to leave I passed by Skye's for some tea. As I approached her cottage I became nervous, I wasn't sure of what to expect. I knocked on the cottage door and a sweet voice called from within

'Who is it?'

'Cocidius... You invited me for tea earlier today.'

I heard the heavy latch unlock the door and it swung open.

'Come in, what a pleasant surprise,' she smiled and greeted me.

I scanned over the cottage; it was so cosy and sweet. There was a sunburnt wooden table and chairs aligned directly in front of the kitchen. The kitchen window overlooked the small backyard filled with plants and green grass. Skye poured me a cup of hot water infused with lemon and honey, just as I asked. We sat at the table, the night grew old and I left the cottage. I hoped one day it would be my home.

Months passed and Skye and I became closer. We spent more time together and we soon fell in love. She had an older brother, Alaunus who was a very eloquent and respected doctor. When he wasn't occupied with work he came to visit Skye. He was, besides me the only male who had a profound significance in Skye's life, even though his childish mannerism fuelled anger and hast with Skye she never took notice of a person's imperfections we both had so much in common, we believed strongly in our faith and we most certainly respected nature and valued all life forms. Approximately every five kilometres between the towns there were hectares of land which supplied fresh, thriving food and crops along with animals that were used for sacrifice. Skye lived on the out skirts of town, which enabled her to look after the

farm her brother, had bought for the family. It was Skye's respected job to supply food to farmers, harvest crops and send meals to churches nearby.

After six months of our love flourishing, I wanted to marry Skye. In order for this matrimony to take place I had to talk to Arch Druid Nile. Every Sunday morning I went to the chapel for early morning mass, I repented my sins on a regular basis but to get married all my good will meant nothing. There were strict procedures around marriage in our community. You had to prove you could provide using only nature and what was around us. And Skye was no commoner – she was the daughter of the Arch Druid. Sunday morning after mass I would speak with him.

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An omnipresent being followed me for six weeks, almost like a guardian angel; well at least I hoped it was. During the first week, I rounded up all the livestock and their productions; I attempted to cook meals to send to the chapels, I was charitable. Arch Druid watched my work but it just 'wasn't enough'. I felt the next two weeks slip away and time was running out. I felt pressured and compelled to create something. All my designs were a mere fabrication of what I wanted to make, they didn't justify my love for Skye boldly enough for my own liking.

There was always a tree which I admired, its roots firmly implanted within the earth. I believed it would be suitable for my creation. I had heard no rumours of its scared meaning so I automatically assumed it would be suitable to use. As the darkness reigned over me that night I decided to venture out into the forest and collect the

braches and stubs which would help make my project. A small trail gave light into the centre of the forest which guided me to the spot I needed to be. I stood next to the tree, it peered over me almost three times my height. I started cutting down branches with the heavy axe that had been strapped to my aching back all day.

I could barely see my equipment, my hands felt the rough bark on the floor and I found my long piece of rope. I dragged the unmanageable weight over my shoulders until my foot got caught between the branches. I felt my body trapped and suddenly I was face first onto the sharp branches of trees. My blood was warm with the fury and anger of my clumsiness, scratches marked my face, and this would be a clear indication of my adventures.

I didn't want to be judged, especially by Skye. I thought it would be best to explain my injury as a cause of an accidental fall whilst preparing the animals. I worked consistently, time was slipping through my fingers and my due date was approaching. I created something that would prove my long term admiration for Skye.

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Morning greeted me with sunlight beaming in through my bedroom windows. I longed for this day although on its arrival all I endured were stomach clenching knots filled with nothing but anxiety. I was ordered to meet Arch Druid Nile by the river; it was here that the worshipping of my goods would take place. I arrived early to show my enthusiasm, I had wrapped my wooden making with white cloth, it could not be

tormented by wind or rain on my venture here, and I took precautions to make sure it was secure. I waited for his arrival, minutes seemed like hours but eventually I captured a glimpse of Arch Druid Nile approaching closer to our meeting point.

His mouth stretched into a mottled and strained half smile, 'I believe you have something of high importance to present to me?'

I remained silent and handed over the carved block of wood. He removed the cloth and my eyes were glued to his facial expression. Shocked? Confused? I couldn't interpret his emotions.

With a questioning tone I gained the courage to speak.

'Are you pleased...?'

'Very much so...But I must ask, why a baby's cradle?'

'It shows a sense of companionship, the need to bring a child into the world is precious'

This time his smile was genuine. He was pleased.

'This wood is beautiful, you are a talented.'

I felt overwhelming relief once I knew he approved of my creation. I marched proudly back into town and finished my day at work.



I spent the night at Skye's as a celebration of my achievement. As time passed I built the courage to ask Skye to spend every living and eternal moment with me. After her father's approval, I convinced myself I was worthy of her. During the summer asked for us to begin a new life together. She blissfully agreed and we eloped. We kept the cradle in our room as a reminder of the hard work and determination I sacrificed for our everlasting love. Often we used it to store threads, which had no spot around the cottage; they were commonly used to create rugs.

Months passed quickly and soon after we tried to create new life. Our first attempt was unsuccessful; we lost our child during the early months of being embedded in Skye's womb. This tragedy was the first of a series of unfortunate events. Her misconception was a sign from the Gods that I had committed a felony. Time continued to pass but only slow motion, we were bound to the same environment and we began to express ourselves in unsteady manners.

'Look Cocidius, Look at the crops. They are failing!'

We looked over toward the farm only to notice shrivelling, lifeless, black crops which had deteriorated over night. It was impossible. Nothing had happened which could have eradicated the crops. We were deeply stunned. After this second tragedy Skye became distant and cold to me. We no longer attempted to have children until one dark, raining night. It was by luck and chance of the Gods that we were blessed once again, and Skye was pregnant. Her stomach became almost like a balloon, we were careful with what she ate. The crops continued to fail.

One day while I was at work Skye had to help clean the farm from all the dried crops. It began to rain heavily and as Skye ran inside she slipped. She slipped and we lost the child once again. Our hearts shattered into tiny pieces as we fell back into the same miserable state of mind that we were in a mere three months ago. Life became nothing but a dark, deceiving, haunting cloud. Skye escaped into another world, full of secrecy and art, her mind found a haven in the depths of creating woven rugs and cloths to sell at markets to substitute the failure of the crops. I was helpless, nothing I did or said made it better... it only got worse. The only successful aspect of Skye's life was her art but everything that involved me was humiliating and not to mention disappointing.

On my arrival at work I was met with Arch Druid Nile,  
'It has come to my attention that your work has not been up to standard. My daughter is becoming almost mute; this is very foreign to her nature. You no longer have a place here; your talents are no longer needed.'

I was speechless. Thoughts ran through my head at the pace of lightening, the loss of my job meant that Skye and I were only surviving on the small income she provided with her artistic measures. I needed to find work, something to do so that Skye and I would be able to survive. I began to think this was my karma, I wasn't sure what I had behaved wrongfully but there was no other explanation for Skye's behaviour or the series of fateful events. My heart raced as I approached home, I had to tell Skye of my bad news. As I arrived at our cottage she was firmly placed in the living room, sitting in her favourite chair.

'Skye... I have bad news. I've lost my work. I'm so sorry!'

'MY LIFE HAS BEEN CURSED SINCE YOU PROVED TO MY FATHER HOW MUCH YOU LOVED ME. I'm sorry but I can't take it anymore. I'm leaving!'

'Please.... Please don't go! Don't leave me! Wherever will you stay? I'll come with you.'

'I'm sorry; I don't want you anywhere near me. Don't look for me.'

Tears streamed down her face as calmly wandered through the halls and picked up her previously packed bags. I begged for her to stay by my side but she wasn't convinced we could make it better. I didn't know what to do. I had let the woman of my life slip through my fingers like grains of rice.

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Two miles out from the town was a stable that loaned horses to those wishing to approach other sides of town. The only information I gathered led me to believe Skye would be at her mother's house. I had to be with her, just to tell her I was sorry. I arrived at the stables.

'Good day sir, how may I assist you?' A very tall man with a long black moustache addressed me.

'A horse please, two days,' my brief and short sentences ran with fuel and fire just like my arguments with Skye. I walked over to the stable where stacks of hay gave life to a radiating black horse that stood strong.

'We call him lucky, sir,' announced another, this time in dirty overalls. I wondered what made this horse lucky.

My feet were secured, my right leg slapped Lucky and he jolted like lightening through the forest that brought dusk near. It seemed like hours had passed, wind slashed by us like knives pointing towards my build, robust body. I finally arrived at a large cottage surrounded by fresh crops and animals, a flourishing town unlike the dooming town I had left. I felt my heart in my feet as I knocked on the door.

'Hello, who's there?'

I immediately knew it was Skye. She wouldn't open the door if she knew it was me. I could feel my body heating up once again. I began to scratch at my skin and at the blisters that appeared all over my body as they recently had.

'Quick, it's cold, open up.'

I mimicked the voice of Alaunus in hope he was due for a visit.

The door swung open and Skye stood with a radiating grin, as soon as she knew it was me the smile was quickly wiped of her face.

'What are you doing here? How did you know where I was? And what's wrong with you!'

'I assumed this was the only place you would come, it's nothing it will go away'

I skimmed the outskirts of her body and noticed a bump...

'You're pregnant?'

'You need to leave, you're sick. STAY AWAY FROM ME.' She went to close the door; I pushed with all my might, 'Just let me talk to you please?'

'I have nothing to say, if you must know the baby is yours. I found out I was pregnant almost immediately after I left. You need to leave, you're cursed and you will curse me again!'

I was thrilled with the everlasting joy of being a father but I was crushed with emotions of rejection as Skye made it obvious she didn't want me around her or the baby. I stood there dumbstruck, a nervous wreck.

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I stared at him in shock. I was vulnerable, I really did think it was Alaunus; he was so conniving to trick me like that. I wanted nothing to do with him. I had no idea how he found me, maybe my mother's was a give away? I don't know, but what I do know is that he has to be dead. I can't raise a baby whilst living in fear. The house lit up with the loudest strike of thunder and lightning. I could hear the rain getting stronger and louder as it crashed on our thatched roof. We would have so many leaks tonight, but first we had an issue to take care of. The easiest place I could think of was the cliff. I could barely hear my own thoughts with the heavy rain.

'ALAUNUS, DRAG HIM OUT SIDE. BUT TIE HIM UP SO HE CAN'T GET AWAY,' I tried to scream over the deafening rain. I opened the big front door and a gush of

wind ran through the house. Alaunus struggled to carry Cocidius the whole way as he struggled to get out of his death. Walking through the knee-deep mud, each step made my slippers more absorbent and wet. My favourite light blue gown was being destroyed by the destructive winds. I glanced at my skin; I had goose bumps all over my body. We could barely see where we were going but the crashing waves on the cliff gave us an indication of how close we were. I couldn't stop crying. I didn't know whether I was in shock or fear. Alaunus lifted Cocidius up and began to push him over the edge.

'WAIT, WAIT!' I screamed.

'WHY? WHAT'S WRONG?' Alaunus was puzzled at why I didn't want him instantly removed off the face of this earth. I looked deep into Cocidius' eyes:

'YOU'RE CURSED. MAY YOUR SOUL DIE AND EVER LIVE AGAIN.'

I stood so close to him as Alaunus held him upright like an animal being prepared for sacrifice. I was screaming so loud, as the wind and rain became louder. Alaunus brought him right to the edge of the cliff and moved to the side. With all my strength I hit him, I punched him, and I scratched and abused him. Then I pushed him. I pushed him off the cliff. I killed him. I watched his body fall into the crashing waves, landing awkwardly on a jagged rocky ledge. I fell to the floor in tears.

II.

'In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen'

The ceremony was over. My eyes glanced around; bowed heads filled the candle lit church. I stood in front of the altar where my father's coffin was once positioned. It was one year since my father's death, yet it felt like yesterday that I ran out the front door after hearing the screeching crash. I can still hear myself screaming as the car left him there... dead. My body was shaking when I called for help, but I knew there was no chance. The person that killed him was roaming around somewhere, in hiding? That vulgar creature should be serving gaol time; instead it walks the city, free with no law or order.

'Are you okay?'

I felt a gentle pat on my back. It was Brad, he tucked the strands of hair that hid my weeping face behind my ears and exposed me. He wrapped his arms around me and the memories were unbearable, I sobbed and wished to turn back time but it never happened. The day I longed for never came, to have my father back with me, to laugh and joke with him. This was the cycle of life, you lived to die. Dying was the only certain thing in life. Strangers came up to me, 'I'm so sorry for your loss,' but I always wondered. Were they really sorry? Did they really know how it felt to lose someone so close to you? I was so naive and wouldn't receive help from those  
around me.

Everyone left and there was Brad and I left to pick up the shattered pieces of my life. Everyone walked out of church as they had walked out of my life. Except for Brad, he was exceptional! We headed back to our apartment which was located on the outskirts of the North Shore. This apartment resinated with me closely; it was our wedding gift from my father. It was ideal – it overlooked the changing ocean and we were so central to the city. We retired for the night, in hope that today's shadow wouldn't cast on tomorrow's sunlight, but it never turned out the way we imagined it.

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On my return to work I was overwhelmed with cards and flowers, but one envelope caught my attention the most. Real estate agents? For my father's house? I ripped open the envelope and vigorously read the jumbled words. They wanted to repossess the house. I was on the phone immediately to the agent.

'Are you fucking joking? You have no right to take that house.'

'Mrs Chamberlin, I understand the grief you're experiencing but the house wasn't left in your name. It was left to a Rose Cavendish, but according to our documents she's deceased.'

'That was my aunty...'

I hung up on the moron that was taking away the house I grew up in my entire life. He was pathetic; the head office will be receiving a well written complaint about the mannerism in which their staff handles delicate situations. My patience was running on thin ice, I took my daily break and called Brad from work. He helped calm me down. I took the rest of the day off; I couldn't bear the thought of staying in an office filled with materialistic women who had problems no greater than the realms than a



chipped nail, I would have been forced to socialise with a facade of happiness imprinted on my face, that was a task that I wouldn't be able to endure. I decided to drive past Dad's house. Even though it brought back the most horrific memories of my life, it made me feel complete. It gave me warmth and serenity. I parked the car on the opposite side of the street.

I sat there with visions of the accident and the horrific scenery and the expressions on the neighbours face when they walked outside their north shore mansion to find a crime scene within five metres.

I unlocked my front door and pushed it open; I found Brad had cooked dinner to take the pressure off my day. My favourite! Stir fry was served on a large white plate with complimentary rice and wine. Dinner was followed by a relaxing night of watching television. I began at work several weeks later; my desk was immersed in paper work and bills. I began filing the work when I noticed another envelope tucked in amongst papers from the real estate agent. My heart began to race as I ripped open the top of the envelope. The letter explained I needed to remove all items from the house so it could be put up for sale. I was infuriated with situation, I asked Brad to assist me with this painful task; I knew I was incapable of doing it on my own. We organised a time to pick up the key from the agent. It was broad day light when I unlocked the door to the mansion for the first time in three months. A shivering sense of emptiness escaped my body as I entered the dark, gloomy atmosphere. We invited family and friends to take garments and furniture that they found pleasing to the eye. I was reluctant to keep any of his belongings but there was a lot of storage

which needed to be cleaned out. We passed through the newly renovated kitchen and opened the garage. The removal process would take days. I picked up another dusty box and glanced down at the black permanent marker 'Photos' I blew the dust off and unpacked the box, I began to search through the photos looking at my family tree and who created this wealthy and prestigious family. There were albums of my sister and me from when we were younger; I began to flick through the images, chuckling at the distinctive bold nature of my sister. I had found my favourite photo of us. We had planned a surprise party for dad; we decided to make it a 50's theme. All of us had the most mesmerising time. I miss her even though we don't talk much anymore. She moved to America with her flourishing career as a fashion designer. She left her friends and family behind; she was too 'flat out' with work to fly down for dad's funeral. It was appalling to say the least. We were always so close; I never expected our bond to break.

'Hunny, what's this?'

I walked over to the corner where Brad had been working on to find a small door protected with a padlock.

'Look for the key; it has to be here somewhere.'

'I found it!'

Brad struggled with the rusty lock but finally managed to release it. Inside seemed to be a covered object wrapped in white cloth. Both Brad and I were intrigued. We pulled the object out and I unravelled the cloth. It was a cradle...A baby's cradle.

'This is extraordinary, look at the carvings babe. This is hand made... Most probably from one of your relatives a long time ago. We should keep it.'

Brad always knew how to make me feel special with words like that.

'Ok, we'll keep it.'

'It will come in handy one day you know!'

We chuckled momentarily and got back to sorting boxes, I knew in my heart that that would never happen, Doctors had told me years ago, I was resolved to that fact. Our ventures came to an end and we packed the cradle in the back of the car and headed home. We kept it downstairs in the garage in case we ever needed it. It was strange that it was locked away, maybe it was special? No one would ever know the real truth behind the mystical object besides the deceased who created it with their bare hands. My father always attempted to scare my sister and me by telling us stories and myths about the harms of disrupting nature but I never took notice to the nonsense that he broadcasted.

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I fell pregnant; it was a miracle considering doctors proclaimed me infertile. I believe it was a blessing from my father. He was always watching me and he knew how badly I wanted a child. I was the happiest I had been since before the death of my father and that was an achievement due to the time taken to heal my wounds. I felt complete again, like dad had found his way back into my life again. I felt like a child

that was allowed to be free and explore life again. I was reborn. Months passed and the baby was due. Brad and I took every precaution to make sure our child was given the best chance at life. There had been many miscarriages throughout the history of my family and the thought of such a horrible experience frightened us immensely.

I was admitted into hospital and I delivered the most beautiful baby boy.

‘Joseph...let’s call him Joseph.’

I stared deeply into Brad’s eyes and I was blissfully ecstatic at that present moment in time. I felt as though nothing else mattered in the world but the little man which sat in the lengths of my arms. He was such a peaceful baby, he never cried but he always slept in our room. As the months passed we decided to move into a house more suitable for a family size. A house became available and we bought it almost immediately. On the tedious mission of unpacking boxes I came across the un-used cradle. It looked lonely and I had just the companion for it. I brought it up to the baby’s room which was filled with blue paint and decorative patterns along the walls.

‘Look what I have Joseph! It’s very special!’

I knew he couldn’t understand me but he had eye contact and attempted to scream with a joyful smile. Joseph became very unsettled once we placed him in the cradle. It was only natural for a baby to be unsettled with new furniture which was new and unfamiliar to them. I left Joseph in the cradle while I went downstairs to prepare

dinner. I heard a painful cry from the monitor. I ran upstairs; Joseph's face was bright red. I lifted him from the cradle and rocked him until he fell asleep. I placed him back in the cradle and continued on with the house work, being ever so quite not to wake him. I heard another painful cry and I settled him once again.

He needed to familiarise himself with his new surroundings, so we made the decision to keep him in our room with the cradle. It was the most unsettled night we had experienced with him. It almost appeared that he was scared of the cradle, like it possessed something that corrupted his innocent soul. For weeks the unbearable cries in the cradle continued. It was very clear that the cradle was extraordinary and Joseph didn't enjoy it.

One afternoon, before I took Joseph out with his favourite pram to settle him for sleep I threw the cradle out the front of the house. Brad was on his way home but we had made the decision to get rid of it together. On my way home I heard alarming sirens jet past me and fire brigades followed. One. Two. Three. I became alarmed at the number of emergency vehicles heading in the direction of my house. As I approached my street I smelt the strong fumes of smoke. I began to run, pushing Joseph faster. I stood on the opposite side of my street, glazing at my house. In flames.

**'NO, WHAT THE FUCK HAPPENED? MY HOUSE, MY HOME!'**

Brad ran towards me and tears streamed down my flustered cheeks. Police had no valuable excuse for the fire that destroyed my home. I felt the stress and anxieties build, I couldn't take it anymore. I had too much misfortune.

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Now it is I, who stands by the coffin of the one person I admired with all my life. Now it is I who understands how it feels to lose someone who brought you eternal happiness. Now it is I who is left questioning the value of life. Each day I question why we couldn't provide her with happiness that would have surrendered her from her death. In the same way she saw her father's death, I was a witness to hers. The nightmare never ends. Each day I replay over the events, she tricked me into believing she wanted to take a scenic outlook over the Gap. We arrived with a basket full of delicious food... We had even set Joseph to day care to spend 'quality time' together. We sat near the edge of the cliff, and I'll never forget her last words to me.

'I'm sorry; I just can't take it anymore. You deserve someone who is happy, and someone who will make you happy in return. I am weak, my life holds no value. Just like a hot air balloon I will float away into the midst of the air, but I will always be here. Now you tell Joseph that I love him. This has nothing to do with either of you; I want you to know that'

With those final words, she fell back over the edge of the cliff. I could do nothing but scream and shout, I began to shake and tremble with the greatest heart break known to mankind. There were others that had seen the tragic death of my wife; they ran

over, calling the police and providing all the assistance I needed. I was questioned by police officers; they attempted to make me a prime suspect into the suicide of my wife.

'Now Brad how is it that your wife wanted 'quality time' at one of Australia's most deadly cliffs?'

I had no answers to the officers that sat in front of me dressed in sturdy blue uniforms. They had no other suspects... This was their low call to create publicity 'Man killed his wife', 'Wife killed by Husband'. I began envisioning the pathetic publicity that would be created... but I had a guardian angel watching over me it was because of the witnesses that were present that they had no other choice but to believe I didn't do it. I was numb. I felt nothing. For months I couldn't sleep; waking up during the nights in sweats with flashbacks of the horrific event. Friends and family members looked after Joseph as I attempted to come to terms with what had happened. I had abandoned my own son to recover from this event. I felt as though I was a horrible parent

Now Joseph grows up only recognising his mother in the short and fragmented two years of his life. He is now known as the child whose mother killed herself because she couldn't take the pain... the pain of love and the pain of loss.

'Daddy, what happened to mummy? Is she coming back to visit?'

It is only children, who have hope implanted within their souls; it is children like Joseph who believe their mother's will return even if they are resting in heaven, but it is also children who can't carry heavy hearts of affliction. I was left to explain to Joseph that his mother was no longer with us, but he would see her some day.

'Mummy will always be with you Joseph, you just won't be able to see her, or touch her, or feel her... but she is here, she is with you every day, she will be watching you as you go to school and come home. She will know if you're being a bad boy so you have to make her proud, can you do that for me?'

'Yes... I will do that'

It was with her blessing that he did carry through his words. Both Joseph and I knew she was with us. I never believed what she did was for the best but her life had been consumed by nothing other than avengement.



## Reflection Statement

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Retribution is concept which rehabilitates my thoughts and views on life through different contextual periods. Through the development of my major work for Extension II English I have vigorously explored the impact of independent investigation on my work, the purpose and audience of my major work, and I have also evaluated the relationship of my concept, structure, technical and language features.

During the Extension II course, a vital part of creating a narrative is to research and gather information to develop and build an idea, which in turn, structures a foundation and starting point. In terms of my short story, ample amount of time was spent vigorously searching for information on the act of possession, punishment and cults, which lead to my concept of retribution, it is through the research process that I was able to create my concept and reflect it throughout my major work. During the early stages of the course, my research was firmly based on internet sites and google maps where I attempted to withhold enough information about the location I wish to set my story in.

On the 13<sup>th</sup> of March the English Teachers Association NSW held an Extension II Student day which I participated in, the workshop enabled me to gather a wider sense of awareness as to the progression of my own work. As a result of the workshop I became more focused on retrieving a specific purpose to the story and creating stable and intriguing voices to my characters. Along with these developed

skills the very common and well known concept 'show don't tell' has been retrieved into my work although there is an added remembrance to include sensory imagery and not purely sight this is portrayed through one of the opening lines "The townsfolk gathered, in anticipation and despair". The incorporated use of dialogue has enhanced my work by allowing a realistic visual image to appear in the readers mind. An extract sustains this point: "Good day sir, how may I assist you? A very tall man with a long black moustache addressed me". Although the tone is still formal and addressed a very idiomatic picture is imagined. This attribute has been attained also by the workshop. Overall the workshop enhanced my major work by learning to incorporate sensory imagery and strong voices.

Other stems of independent research that I have covered have led me to find two texts studied in the advanced course that display similar themes and ideas that I wish to present through my story. *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley is the first peripheral novel that raised the concept of annihilating life and re-creating something unnatural, this concept has been altered in my narrative and the creation is that of a 'cradle' which has been created by cutting down a sacred tree belonging to the Druids. *Frankenstein* also focuses on disputing nature and the effects of creating life with disregard. This can be found throughout my short story as the persona is unaware of the consequences of creating an object from forbidden materials "I had heard no rumours of its sacred meaning so I automatically assumed it would be suitable to use".

The fond nature of Mary Shelley's writing had me interested in more of her novels so I began to read *Falkner* which differently shows the morality of women and how despise of masculinity a women's values are triumphed. These texts have provided my major work with a new sense of direction and to a large extent, clarity on my concept.

Shakespeare's *Hamlet* when closely analysed devises ideas about vengeance, mortality and immorality. These ideas have been transferred and tailored into my work using various techniques such as dialogue, similes and metaphors. These class texts have embellished my work by adding meaning and admiration for the unique story line.

To gather a greater sense of visual imagery and the use of setting I gathered movies, which enabled me to learn how to express what was presented in front of me. Films such as *Mad Max* (1979) and *Man on Fire* (2004) assisted in creating the fundamental sensation of realism throughout my novel as both films vividly conveyed similar features to what my major work was also portraying.

Poems such as *All but Death, can be Adjusted* by Emily Dickinson and *The dance of death* by Charles Baudelaire describe the psychological works of what vengeance holds. These poems have given a stylistic view to my work especially *All but Death, can be Adjusted* as the short words quickly define the main points of the retrieved ideas. I have incorporated this stylistic device into my major with phrases such as

“Are you pleased...?” These sentences create suspense and tension which is fundamental to my work.

After extensive independent research I began to process my main ideas and focuses for my major. The purpose of my work is to juxtapose two different eras using a motif that links both stories. The time difference allows for a rich story line and unique character developments. The intended audience for my major work is young adults who are interested in valuable notions such as retribution and Mother Nature. These concepts are explored throughout the entirety of the story as a series of unfortunate events is thrashed upon characters in both part I and II of the story.

The relationship created by the concept, structure, technical and language conventions has uniquely shaped my short story. The structure of the story has allowed for the switch in generational time. The two part story is uniquely linked through a cursed cradle which destroys the lives of many. I have used short, structured sentences to emphasis strong moments throughout the story “Yes... I will do that”. This extract portrays the connection between the structure of the story and the techniques used. “I had let the woman of my life slip through my fingers like grains of rice”. The similes used throughout my work create authenticity to the nature of writing a short story. These language conventions portray my concept as regret is seen when retribution occurs.