

Acute concern crept across Melissa's and John's faces as they watched the screen from outside the Retrovision store window. "Police are still baffled as the death toll rises now to nine about the identity of the serial killer who still stalks the streets of Brisbane always using a small knife to slay his victims" cheerfully reported the annoying news reader.

" Police warn all females between the ages of fifteen to nineteen to lock up securely."

Concern turned to anxiety as Melissa thought of her seventeenth birthday scarcely a week ago. The young couple continued their way to the restaurant on their first date with only one topic of conversation. " Scary isn't it?" said Melissa, clearly disturbed.

" I reckon. That guy must be one sick puppy eh?" John replied. Melissa answered with a soft grunt as they stepped into the tacky eatery.

Melissa's long, flowing, golden hair fell from behind her ear where she had so carefully placed it moments before and hurriedly did so again. Her beautiful teenager's face was buried beneath layer upon layer of make up. She was wearing her most expensive dress which she saved for the most special of occasions. She considered this one of those occasions as she didn't want to take the risk of going on a blind date dressed badly if in the off chance her date looked like Brad Pitt. Her hunch had been right this time. Johnathan R. Frakes was a real catch for a girl. Tall, big shoulders, blond hair and deep blue eyes and most importantly thought Melissa, he had a dress sense. John also thought he had hit the jackpot on this blind date. He watched her slim body sit down at the table and knew this was going to be an interesting night.

They hurried out of the eatery later on determined not to miss the beginning of " The English Patient". During dinner the conversation had flourished about anything and everything as it became obvious these two enjoyed each other's company with fears John had earlier that they wouldn't get along soon dissipating as the evening rolled along. They stepped out of the movie holding hands asking questions to one another beginning with " How about the bit when....." now basking in the pleasure of each others company, a happy couple as they began the long trek back to Melissa's house where her parents were conveniently away for the weekend. Too involved with themselves were they that the tall, hunched over figure in the black trench coat silently watching them went unnoticed from across the street. They chatted uselessly as Melissa answered John's endless questions, loving, as most females do, talking about herself. Although talking quite loud it would not drown the soft tap-tapping of another's shoes closely behind.

At first ignoring it, the two kept talking not wanting to admit their somewhat embarrassing and childish fears to the other but now they conversed quieter. As the walking became closer and following them around several corners, finally John summoned the courage to mention his ill feelings about their follower. " I uh.....I think that guy (automatically assuming their assailant to be male) is getting closer." he stammered.

" I know." she said and gripped his hand tighter.

As if to confirm their fears they heard the menacing crunch of a twig as large boots quickened their pace from behind. The conversation abruptly stopped as if the fear that radiated from the dark figure behind them clasped around their throats stopping any sound from escaping.

" Do you think it's him?" Melissa whispered so quietly John had to lean over.

" Who?"

" Who do you think? The serial killer!" she scowled, becoming irritable from the fear.

" Oh Jesus....." he vacantly stared as he whispered, the thought dawning on him now.

The foot steps now no more than ten metres behind, John stole a quick glance at the large man clad neck to toe in black with the trench coat collar covering most of his face.

Greasy black hair held in clumps dangled in front of his eyes. A cigarette burning into the filter section sat between his lips. His arms hung rigidly by his sides and a large bulge protruded from above his belt possibly concealing a weapon. His vacant eyes never left the couple who were verging on running. Upon seeing Melissa's house at the far end of the street, the two terrified teenagers broke into a bolt sprinting as fast as they could. They heard the heavy, dull thud of Black boots crashing onto the pavement behind as their assailant began to run also. Dashing up the front steps they reached the house and Melissa unlocked the door with the man only seconds behind. Once inside, she slammed the door and locked it then both John and Melissa collapsed on the floor in a shaking heap of sweat and adrenalin.

They unsteadily stood up and leaned on each other as they calmed down from their traumatic experience. " Oh my God John! That was really him! It must have been! We're lucky to be alive!" she exclaimed.

" Jesus....." was all John could manage.

They wearily stumbled over to the couch and sat back. " Let's just forget it ever happened OK? I'm not going to let it ruin this perfect night." she said and John agreed.

" Like some coffee?" Melissa offered.

" I'd love some."

She got up and strolled into the kitchen filled the kettle with water, and put it onto boil. When she returned to the living room, John was browsing through a " Who Weekly". They began chatting while Melissa put on Savage Garden and pressed play. At that very same instant, at the far end of the house the window in Melissa's parents room flung open, the wood panel on the edge stripped of all it's paint from continual jamming with a small knife, then the man in black climbed stealthily in.

Melissa and John continued their conversation uninterrupted as the water continued to boil. " Do you know Grant Adams?"

" Yeah plays tennis right?" John drivelled.

" I think so....." she trailed off. The man in black landed with a soft thud on Mr and Mrs Stanford's king size bed. He rose and walked calmly into the corridor. Ears pricked, he listened intently for the voices of the young couple and found them, emanating from the living room at the front of the house. His dark eyes shifted up and down the corridor searching for any sign of movement but found none and silently began to creep down the corridor towards the voices as he drew his weapon from inside his belt and gripped it tightly in a gloved fist.

Melissa and John now sat very close and gazing into each others eyes as the spoke much quieter. They leant forward closing their eyes to kiss but were interrupted and startled by the loud, piercing burst of steam emitted from the kettle. Melissa smiled seductively, rose from the couch and doing the most sensual walk she could summon, made her way into the kitchen knowing John's eyes would be following her all the way. The man in black could see the light of the kitchen glowing into the corridor and hear the sounds of Melissa making coffee and evilly smiled. Caressing the weapon in his hands, feeling the weight of it he started the final few metres to the kitchen and Melissa.

Melissa poured the boiling water into the two mugs of coffee, gently stirred them and smiled when she head steps approaching from behind. " You just couldn't

wait could you John?" she remarked sensually. After hearing no response, she turned, dropped both mugs and screamed. John lunged at her, a six inch butterfly knife held high above his head in a classic stabbing position, a crazed, blood thirsty grin with tiny droplets of spittle flying from it was on his contorted face. " DIE BITCH DI....." he screamed as loud gunfire erupted from behind causing his chest to explode spraying Melissa's face with blood and chunks of

organ and bone. Melissa continued to scream as the man in black emerged from behind, a smoking berretta in one hand and a Brisbane City Police Department badge in the other. "Detective Jackson. I'm a cop. It's all right now so please stop screaming." he boomed reassuringly. He glanced down at the highly wanted serial killer. A blank expression now was present on John's face. Jackson could tell he wasn't dead even with a pretty messy wound like that. He'd make it to jail all right he thought and smiled, happy with his nights work. Melissa's screaming had turned now to a soft whimpering, waking Jackson up from his self appraisal. Placing his gun on the bench, he escorted the traumatised Melissa out onto the street and sat her on the foot path. " Detective Jackson unit 55 requesting back up 101 Stromgade Terrace over." he spoke into the police type personal radio and slipped it back into his trench coat. Knowing Melissa was safe and back up was on the way, he re-entered the house to retrieve his gun.

Jackson hurriedly stepped through the living room where "Savage Garden" still played and into the kitchen where he stopped dead in his tracks. On the floor where John had been now was a puddle of blood. He sprinted for the bench but, confirming his worst fears, the gun was gone. " Hey pig!" croaked a dry, hoarse voice from behind. Jackson spined around, looking straight now the barrel of his own gun. Outside, Melissa was just starting to come to terms with what she had just experienced. She heard the shots and began screaming once more.

