

- Strawberry Redness -

by BD Scott

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Her unappreciative boss never learns of her ultimate reward for a job well done.

Drizzling liquid strawberry redness on her chocolate cake slice seemed to remove the sting of a harsh start to her work week. Her unforgiving boss would not let her forget a simple mistake made earlier today.

But work had concluded at 7pm and she reminded herself of tonight's personal celebration. She felt she earned tonight fair and square. Her minor flaw had only been on paper and it hadn't caused negative revenue flow.

"We earned money, dammit? Where's my share?" She chastised her dessert.

Well, to her nothing would slow down the first succulent flavour-filed bite of that much deserved strawberry drenched chocolate cake slice.

"This'll be payment, for now," she whispered to her empty fork.

Her dainty fingers caught every drop underneath her chin and popped those fingertips between her rosy red lips.

Her eyes closed, pushing out a small moan of appreciation from her rose-red lips.

*Thank goodness for simple pleasures.*

This first bite took her back to her childhood, on a day in which her best friend surprised her with a trip to the park to command temporary ownership of the big swings. At age ten that was a big deal.

No bullies were around.

Today, delicious moist chewing of her dessert twirled about inside her sexy little mouth. All the while, she envisioned herself as a little girl playing carefree with her best friend.

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I really miss her.

When she opened her elegant eyelashes, his face broke the moment apart ~ from the other end of the ice cream parlour.

“What the fuck are you looking at?” she snapped.

His expression remained the same, no matter what words she yelled.

Turning her back would allow her moment to continue; although her peripheral vision remained vigilant to the side mirrors next to her bar stool.

Her time tonight might be ruined by a freak with deep set eyes, but not completely. But something inside her instructed her to cut her birthday celebration short.

She quickly engulfed the remainder of her treat and checked her phone. The best friend she daydreamed about just a moment ago called saying she was in town, wanting to get together. The call registered a day late for some odd reason. Her ringer had been turned off by accident. Instead of going wild with disappointment, Tanya nearly yelped at the timeliness of it all with a gleeful giggle. She picked up her bag from her lap and skipped mildly on her way home.

Her imminent reunion kept her spirits high while arriving to her lonely third floor apartment. It wasn't a bad place. It just sucked big time, she visually assessed with a sad chuckle. Bad location, horrendous furnishings and god-awful smells made her nights long and persistently tortuous. A few more years doing unappreciative work might amount to some kind of a raise and apartment upgrade.

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It's a good dream to have anyway, even if a little-short sighted. But then again, her best friend would temporarily color an otherwise dull life. Being a twenty-something paralegal was a more exciting presentation in the infomercial portrayal versus the whole educational effort to land this job. Her mind hung on achieving the high status life.

*Just a few more years and it should be worth it. Make a few contacts in the field. Get picked up by a young hotshot lawyer. And...*

The moment she unlocked her door and opened it she knew her feet should have slowed her home-bound scamper.

His deeply etched face was millimeters from her own face just before crossing the doorway threshold.

Wondering how he got in was interrupted with the crashing of the knife to floor. Along with it was the flow of her dessert, innards, and a river of strawberry mixed with blood.

Her body slumped to the floor and her world went black followed by the silent closing of her front door. He wiped his hands with the day's newspaper.

It's headline read: Ninth female victim claimed by unknown murderer.

The word "ninth" was crossed out, with Tanya's best friend's picture placed alongside the headline.

Tanya's eyes fluttered opened one more time and registered the sight of the headline and her friend's picture. Her eyes hinted a fight to live and silently went grey.

Grotesque handwriting blotted out the first word in the headline.

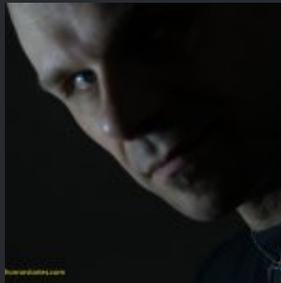
In its place read, "TENTH."

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“I was looking at you, if you must know, ” his crackled resonant voice echoed to her permanently quiet face.

“I’ll just close the door behind me. I’ll be very quiet about it, Strawberry girl.”

—End



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