

Excerpt – *Wolfpear*

Dianne Gray

She heard the wheezing in her throat. Stumbled backwards. Tripped on the garden edging and landed heavily on her well-padded rump. He was there, lying on the cement paving. A pool of blood formed a halo around his head like the richest of tomatoes crushed in a vice. The blood oozed into cracks and rivered toward the grass. His open eyes stared blankly into the October night. She followed his gaze. A full moon taunted rushing clouds.

She lifted herself onto shaking legs, took a wide berth around his body and grabbed the splintered handle of the spade at the corner of the house. Her heart thumped at her throat and she grunted as she dug into wet earth. She measured the length of the hole with the spade. He was taller than she thought. More digging. She gripped his ankles. Head pounding she heaved backwards. His arms lifted above his head in an exalted pose like a preacher. Her foot slipped on the wet grass and she was back on her rump again. She scrambled to her car, backed it up close to him and tied one end of a rope around his foot and the other to the bumper. She edged forward. She couldn't see him through the rear-view mirror, only her chubby red cheeks.

She unwound the rope from his foot. His untied leg had buckled behind his back like a ballet dancer. He was close enough now to roll. One push and he was in. She shovelled dirt over his clothes, head and shoes. Shadows in the sugarcane fields surrounding her house snagged the edge of her vision, voices screamed through her mind like children urging a fight — some whispering, some shouting – *killer killer killer*.

The last sight of him was his hand, fingers curled as if holding an invisible beer can. She scraped the last crumbs from the grass with a rake and slapped the freshly dug earth with the spade. She hosed the blood from the path. The rusty stains had been absorbed into the cement like ink on litmus paper.

She ran from the shadows and voices. Up the back stairs, into the bathroom.

The water from the shower-rose hit her face like cold needles. She struggled to roll her elastic bike-pants over rubbery thighs. She pulled her loose knitted top over her head and it slapped onto the wet tiles. She converted adrenaline to cleaning and rubbed soap over her discarded clothes. She squeezed them and scrubbed them over and over until rainbowed bubbles popped at her fat ankles. Her head rested on the wall. Eyes focused on blue seahorses, white background, embossed conch shells. Legs trembled, nose dripped. She looked down over rolls that hung like curtains of fat from her stomach and massaged them for comfort.

The sobbing and shaking erupted as she towel-dried her body. She could still smell him. Urine, sweat, blood, earth, death. She grabbed a scrubbing brush and scoured her splintered hands then plastered them with sorbolene cream. Her skin was sallow and dry and prone to irritation. She

rubbed the cream over the itchy spots covering her cheeks and chin and over the eczema on her elbows before wrapping herself in her dressing-gown.

In her kitchen she gulped straight whisky. She snatched at the tweezers on the bench and yanked the largest splinters from her trembling fingers. Car headlights washed over her kitchen window. Two car doors slammed. The security light on the back porch lit the yard.

She swore loudly and glanced around the kitchen as if looking for a place to hide.

Her parents had to drop in, tonight of all nights.

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