



The Dark Haired Stranger

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It has been increasingly felt by educationists that kids introduced to science through narratives do well in their science and communication careers later in life. In India science and communication careers are not a craze. It is with the purpose of provoking kids to the fascinating careers in neuroscience that some stories by accomplished scientists are being introduced in order to investigate if these pages in a neuroscience journal can kindle interest in neuroscience by popularizing the Journal in High schools. The story presented here, in series, revolves around the experience of a lead scientist and author with the reviving of this Journal. At the request of the author the names of the characters have not been changed.

Hell, I should have seen her coming. If there are 7 words I should always remember, those words are "Hell, I should have seen her coming". Would have saved me a lot of time, money and heartache, yeah heartache. I know, Dusty Deek don't have a heart; that's what y'all think. But truth be told, Deek does, and he isn't about to give it up to no damn transplant recipient.

Fact is, I did see her coming. Maybe it was that cheap perfume she always wore. Maybe it was just instinct. Maybe it was just, well maybe it was just whatever. But as I sat there wondering if Anand would return to finish me off, I knew she was on her way to the bar room doors. So I got out the back — just in time, I thought. I thought wrong. When I turned, there I saw her — face to face behind that Bar. Yeah it was her alright. Some call her the Tucson Tease; sportsgirl; others just call her trouble, trouble with a capital T. I just call her Sis. (usually about once a month, on a Saturday or whenever).

Sis stood fixed, that shimmering blue dress tightly clinging to her body, as she slowly took her final drag on the Virginia Slim hanging from her lips, before she flung the still lit cigar into my eyes.

"What's happening Deek", she asked, not unexpectedly. I shivered in fear. Did Anand send her? Was she still working for the Firm? Something serious was on her mind; I could tell from that look in her eyes.

I didn't have to ask; she supplied all the information I needed..."Got any drink up there Deek?, you know, the good stuff?"

I knew right then that night was going to cost me plenty; I wondered how much I would have to spend to survive. Then she hit me with the bottom line..."ya knows Jimbo Jims a comin', and he's a comin' for you, Deek".

Great; Dark Haired Anand was packing a gun with my name on its sole bullet and Jim Prockell of Pittsburgh — arguably the foxiest outlaw in the steel city was coming to settle another score. But Jim had a weakness, two really. One, he was easily taken in by the charms of Sis, and 2, he had a drinking problem. Yeah, a drinking problem. Whenever he tried to drink anything, it

would not enter his mouth and instead roll down his shirt, and Jim loved his shirts. I made a plan.

"Sis" I beckoned, "Come yonder for a sec".

"be there in a minute Deek".

I thought hard during that minute, perhaps my only way out alive.

When sis strolled to me, her body outlined against the moonlit sky, her thin silk dress blowing easily to the East at the gentle push of a breeze, she got a bit close, perhaps too close for comfort. Was she wired? I considered the possibility at some length. Outfitted with a 2134A translation wire recently developed by the department of defense, she could pick up conversations in Iran. Hell, many think she does. A school Marm? Her job in some out of the way place none of the surviving members of the James gang ever heard of.

I don't think so, in fact, no one has ever seen her teach; not a single person. Not her mother, brothers, cousins or even Jim. No body. Why is that Sis?, I was afraid to ask. Do you work for the Firm? I knew Jim worked for the Company, but the Firm....I never met anyone who worked for the Firm, probably because the Firm employees are secret agents and secret agents don't go around wearing a name tag..."Sis...Secret Agent". Oh never mind; you get the drift. But what would the Firm want with me, a mid level crook and general nuisance? Was it my connection with Anand? Had to be, or he wouldn't have allowed me to live. The pieces were falling together at last and fast; but the puzzle they solved spelt death for Deek, and Deek knew it.

According to plan, I decided to get Sis drunk and exploit Jim's drinking problem to get him out of the picture first. "Sis", I asserted..."Wanna get some new shirts for Jim?"

"Hey Deek, he'd like that".

I wouldn't, It would set me back at least a buck three 80, but I figured what the hell; one last shot. I led sis to a fashion clothier, Tar Jey's on 9th street. We picked up 4 new shirts for Jim and 4 bottles of drink they had.

When we returned, we showed them to Jim who was as excited as he was apprehensive. "Deek" Jim announced. I love the shirts, but my drinking problem...."

"Don't worry dude" I uttered, "I have it all figured out".

"But how..what, where" Jim said.

I retorted "Hush now dude, and follow me" I led Sis and Jim to my room above the Say When Inn, which is just up the road from the "Do Drop Inn" (I had to decide which to use here so I found a way to use both. That's called "creative writing" in case anyone cares.)

Entering the murky room, yeah the one with my name on its dirty glass door "Deek-Investigator at Large", I told Jim to just

take off his shirt, that way "your drinking problem won't result in drink spilled all over it", which I knew he could not stand. I also knew that Jim likes a pretty shirt, and ambushed him the moment he removed his velvet shirt. "Sis", I gently whispered, "get one of them new shirts for Jim, you know, that right pretty one". I ended with the wink of my eye. Sis nodded that she knew where I was going, but I duped her as well by opening a bottle of drink fast, a bottle she downed in a matter of nano-seconds (probably seconds would read better, but I am being innovative here).

After Sis emptied the first bottle, I was able to remove the wire decoder from her purse; it was a 2134A, the second one I ever saw (My son Kyle had one, but traded it in for a IPOD, a decision he would later regret).

She waved the shirt at Jim, who snapped it quickly from her hands and donned it at once. Acting like I didn't know, I opened the second bottle and handed a glass to Jim. He took a chance; the chance I hoped he would take. And as sure as I sit here at the wired keypad attached to this lousy Dell 6000 Inspiron with an internet connection slower than Mario Andretti's last lap (well hell, the router is in the Pendleton City Hall, at least 5 blocks away), Jim took a sip. I should say he tried to take a sip. But he was not able. His drinking problem led the contents of that glass to spill over his new shirt. Panicked, he asked for a phone book to find a cleaner. I said "Jim. I have a good friend who will clean it while you wait". I lied, but Jim appeared relieved. "Where" he asked in desperation. I pointed down main street, told

Jim to catch a cab there and tell the driver to take him to the OK Corral. Jim left adorned by his drink-stained shirt. He was never seen again. Word is that he was killed the next day at noon; killed by a single bullet through his heart delivered by..... Anand. In a gunfight at the OK Corral. (So it's trite. DO better!!!)

That left Sis there with me alone; her half drunk; me half stoned. (That was the usual case anyway).

I lit my last unfiltered Camel, the bluish Smoke rising against the light of the randomly blinking Neon sign that invited derelicts outside my hotel to come right in: "Rooms for Rent...losers Welcome", the blue neon sign flashed continuously during the night. The "No" preceding the "Vacancy" sign at the bottom had never been lit.

I dimmed the room lights, allowing the smoke to dance against the outer neon glow. Sis murmured that she felt comfortable finally. I suggested that she clean the place up. Boy did that piss her off. She leapt up and grabbed her purse; an 8 mm Magnum appeared. I dove thru the plate glass window, shots ringing in my ears. I hit the ground 4 stories below hard; fortunately I hit my head, so I sustained minimal damage.

Sis reloaded as I crawled under a water troth for cover. She slowly and carefully aimed that gun out of the busted window right at my head. I prepared to die and looked up one last time. And there she was; my horse, Trigger. Would Sis kill a horse to take me out? I wondered as I thought of a way to mount Trigger.

(.....to be continued in next issue)