

Jack's Revenge

by J.C.

What does the text "On Revenge" suggest to you regarding revenge?

Jack stood outside the grand mansion on Applegrimm Avenue. The wind was blowing gently but he could feel its harsh chill. Children in painted faces and grotesque costumes marched beside him and throughout the street. Bells and knocks echoed throughout the street, filled with the sweet smell of candy and the rot of week old carved pumpkins. He shoved his frostbitten hands into his pocket and shivered briefly. He shouldn't be here. His fingers struck the cold smooth metal of the gun barrel in his left pocket. Quickly he drew back from it but his fingers felt the smooth details of the weapon. It was an ornate weapon, years old and filled with rust and stain. It had been his father's. The very same gun he had shot himself with years ago. Jack looked back up at the dark house, a faint candle flickered in the top window. A giggle shot out from behind him and he flinched as a bunch of monsters sped past. He gently wiped the sweat from his brow as he began to turn back. He couldn't do this. I can't do this... but if I don't, who will?

Quint Reeley had killed his father. Well, not directly. His father, a hardworking and devoted stockbroker had been caught on the sharp end of the stock market crash years ago. Reeley had wasted no menace and cruelty when firing his father. The mock calls and surprising debts shot out from that man's black void which he called a soul. His father couldn't find another job, Reeley had been spreading ghastly rumors throughout the city. He couldn't even show his face in public anymore. That wasn't the least of his problems; debts rose out of his festering wounds and threatened to strangle him. The phone company, credit cards, and bank trusts demanded he pay for services he had never used nor opened. Jack hadn't been surprised when he saw the ambulance and police sirens outside his father's apartment building. He was calm when they told him of his father's suicide. One gun shot to the temple...instant death. Jack had inherited the apartment along with the debts. His mother was soon admitted to an insane asylum after the news of her husband's death. She couldn't cope and had to be restrained, lest she harm herself or others.

It had all been Reeley's fault. That was why he was here. The gun hummed silently in his coat pocket, it grew hot beneath his touch. Revenge... Jack never considered himself an angry man but this was different. This wasn't anger or grief...this was hatred. Deep never-ending hatred which boiled his skin and made his blood thick. No matter what he did, he always saw that man's face laughing. His fingers jabbing at his father's corpse as it laid on the altar in the coffin. Jack gritted his teeth as he stared at the house. More children bumped into him and he moved closer to the gateway of the ancient building. It was a mockery... how could this man live this way after he had slain his father?

The house was adorned with smashed eggs and toilet paper trailing. It seemed the kids had already had their revenge. There were no pumpkins, nor candy to be seen on the steps leading to the barren front door. It was a black house in the night and he could feel the cold breath seep from the house. It was suffocating. Jack looked up once again at the candle in the window and his heart froze. Reeley was standing in front of the window, and he was placing two fingers on the flame. Quick. It died and the form disappeared into the shadows. Jack's heart pumped loudly as he tried to hear his thoughts. It was overpowering and the gun scalded his fingers. Quickly he shot a glance both ways for children, for any eyes to see what he was about to do. No one was there. Everybody was gone and he looked down at his wristwatch. It was two in the morning...no wonder it was so cold. He hadn't been aware of the passing time. Yet that sensation was probably from the house... Silently he approached the house, anxious to get out of sight. In moments he was at the door, the slimy egg entrails were smashed all over the window and it was dark inside. He knelt down and took out a special key from his pocket. It was a bump key. Lock pickers used it in desperation because it broke the hinges inside the lock, rendering it useless. It didn't matter to Jack because this would be the end. With a loud snap the lock broke under the force of a small rock and he quickly stole inside.

It was dark. "Surprise," he thought sarcastically as he waited for his eyes to adjust. Lights from passing by vehicles flashed briefly through the open door and he quickly shut it. It moaned gently as he laid his other hand to suppress the squeal of the ancient door hinges. After his eyes adjusted he was surprised at the decor within the house. He bit his tongue as he the floorboards creaked beneath his feet. The stairs were at the end of the entrance way and he made his way up them. As he ascended he gazed at his surroundings. The walls were barren, no pictures nor mementos adorned the house. Only gaudy curtains and expensive furniture furbished the home...devoid of any real personality. After the first couple of flights he began to arrive at the top. He came to a short landing which led to one door. It was slightly open. A slight breeze hissed out from between the crack and he cautiously placed his eye up against it, gazing into the room.

Reeley's form heaved up and down peacefully beneath a heavy blanket in the room. Huge curtains billowed from the canopy overhead adding to stagnant atmosphere. Jack wrinkled his nose at the repugnant stench that radiated from the man... how fitting. As he looked upon the chest rise up and down he could feel his father's hand on his shoulder. He could feel the stares and laughs of the past few years weigh down on him. Feel the weight of his father's coffin as he carried it to his grave. It made his knees wobble and shake. His heart smashed and slammed into his ribs as he tried to steady his breath. This was it. This was what he had waited for...for years.

Yet his hand did not move. The door did not creak open and he did not burst in, letting loose a bullet of steel pierce the man's brow. No, he did not even blink as he looked away. The hand on his shoulder released its pressure and he could feel it release a sigh of relief. This wasn't the way to end this. It had ended the day he his father died. He had not desired revenge...he had yearned for his father. However, he was gone. He had to keep going on... Jack wiped a tear from his eye on his sleeve and straightened up. Silently he leaned against the wall beside the door to hold his breath. The ghostly form of revenge began to fade away. He would never forgive Reeley but he would not do this. Reeley deserved far worse than he could ever give. With this final thought, Jack turned and shut the door silently.

Before he awoke the sleeping man he hustled quickly down the stairs. The gun froze in silent anger in his pocket as he slipped out the door. Jack smiled as he walked down the sidewalk, heading farther and farther away from the mansion. It was over. It was done. His heart cried open as he took the gun in his hands. Out of curiosity he checked the barrel. There wasn't even a single bullet left. His father had left him an empty gun. At that moment he felt the tears burst through and his cheeks dampened from the sorrow. The gun cried silently as the tears washed away the blood stains from its muzzle. Now Jack could live. He could continue on. He walked briskly towards his father's apartment. All he could think about was lighting the old fireplace when he got home. The cold had chilled him to the bone. Time to get warm again.

After returning to his home he slept the nights events away in peaceful slumber. He could feel the tensions and emotions beginning to fade away as the night ticked away. When he awoke, he headed out for an early morning stroll. Yet as he turned the corner a curious surprise rose up to meet him. Jack looked up at the house again and the sun was burning his eyes. Sirens howled in the air and he could hardly believe his eyes. Nothing could have been prepared him for the sight he saw now. Two men rolled out a stretcher out of the mansion, their grim faces looking away. Jack stole over to the nearest police officer, he was clicking his pen nervously.

"Excuse me. What happened here?"

" Oh! You scared me lad! What happe- Well the ol' bugger finally bit it."

"He did?" Jack could scarcely keep up with his heart.

"Yup. Heart attack or something. The door had been picked although nothing had been stolen. Curious. Ol' blighter must've seen the bloke who done it!" the police officer shook his head in dismay as he clicked his tongue. Jack blinked his eyes in cold disbelief as he watched the men lift the heavy man into the ambulance. Off to the morgue.

He felt a hand on his shoulder and he turned to look at who it was. No one was there and he understood. Revenge is not a dish for anyone to serve. Yet it never fails to arrive.