

CHAPTER FOUR – VENEGENCE IS MINE

As the gym's warm shower rinsed the few remaining soap remnants from his slender teenage torso, a never-ending echo of Butch's promise began to play. *You know that we're not done yet. And before this day is over, I'm going to stomp that scrawny tail of yours so bad – they'll have to carry you out on a stretcher.*"

"You did promise that, Butch," Paul quietly said to himself as he turned to verify that Tim was still keeping watch from the wooden bench sitting in front of his gym locker. "But, sixth period is almost over. And so far, you haven't done it yet."

He then turned off the water and proceeded to dry himself.

"Paul," Tim yelled, as his friend was raising up, after drying his feet and legs. "I'm think I'm going to have to make a quick trip to my locker. I haven't been able to find my Droid. And I think I might have left it there."

"Are you sure?" Paul asked, now making his way out of the shower room. "You usually keep it on you wherever you go."

"I'm pretty sure," Tim said, nodding. "I've checked both my book bag and my gym locker. And it's nowhere to be found."

Paul immediately frowned. "Well. If you must ..."

"Sorry. I have to," Tim replied, taking a subtle gaze at his friend's nakedness as Paul unwrapped the gym towel from around his midsection. "Otherwise, tonight I won't know what my homework assignments are."

"Well ... OK, then."

Getting up off the bench, Tim started to head toward the exit. However, the moment he stepped inside the doorway, he unexpectedly turned around.

"Wouldn't you like to come with me? I'd feel a lot better if you did."

Paul emphatically shook his head, no. "Listen, Tim. I appreciate your concern. But, I dealt with Butch all last semester and he hasn't killed me yet."

"You've just been lucky," Tim stated, letting out a sigh. "I've seen Butch's kind before. And they're

nothing that anyone in their right mind would want to play with.”

Paul gave him a brief grin, and waved him off. “Just go get your Droid, Tim. ... And I’ll meet you on the bus.”

He then took a moment to watch his friend leave the building. Once Tim was out of sight, he grasped the stainless Master lock Mr. Flinch had issued everyone that afternoon at the beginning of today’s P.E. class and entered its combination. “Starting at the number 6, let’s first go right two rounds and stop at 12. ... OK. ... Now let’s go left one round and stop at 18. ... OK, that’s good. ... Now, all we need to do is to turn it right until we reach 24. ... Great. That should do it,” he said under his breath, while yanking the round cylinder downward.

The second Paul opened the locker’s metallic gray door, an odor similar to the wretched stench of rotting eggs overtook the surrounding area.

“Man. I’m really gonna have to start using odor eaters, or something,” he then exclaimed, before unceremoniously dropping his Converse shoes onto the floor.

A few moments later, when he started to reach up to fasten the straps of his Wrangler overalls, “So ... you’re finally alone,” a familiar voice calmly stated from a short distance away.

Paul instantly gulped. “Butch?”

Butch chuckled, in reply. “Who else were you expecting, Tinkle Bell? ... Santa Claus?”

Tinkle Bell? A confused look rapidly flashed across Paul’s face.

“Don’t look so surprised, Tinkle. ... I now have proof that both you and your friend are faggots,” Butch proclaimed as he stepped out from around the back row of lockers. “Didn’t you think I’d notice the way Tim kept staring at your ass while you showered? ... And you certainly didn’t appear to mind.”

“Tim was staring at me?” Paul replied. “You’ve got to be mistaken, Butch. ... I’ve known Tim almost all my life. And, if there’s one thing I know for sure ... it’s the fact that he’s definitely not gay.”

“Yeah ... right!” Butch stated in disbelief as he took a step closer. “And the next thing you’re going to tell me is, he was only keeping an eye on you in order to make sure I wouldn’t beat your ass while you showered.”

“Actually,” Paul said, before glimpsing at the gym’s cement floor. “You’re right.”

Butch snorted in reply, and then violently reached out and snatched the front of Paul's overalls.

"You never cease to amaze me, you little shithead. First, I find out that you're a city slicker and a geek. Then this morning, I discover that you have the audacity to step into my turf, wearing my gang's fashion and colors. And now I find out that you and your new city slicker friend really are a pair of faggots."

"Now just wait a minute, Butch," Paul replied as every muscle in his arms, legs, and abdomen began to stiffen. "You've been calling me a geek and a faggot since the beginning of last semester. That isn't anything new. ... Which can only mean – what's really got you pissed is this outfit I wore today."

"You're damn right I'm pissed," Butch said, spiting his reply as he drew his fist backwards. "How dare you step inside this school wearing clothes similar to my gangs! ... Then, to make it worse. You mocked us by wearing that faggot-looking yellow scarf and a pair of maroon cowboy boots?"

"I mocked you?" Paul replied.

"You're fucking right you did, you little faggot. And now you're gonna die." Butch replied, slamming his left fist into the center of his victim's abdomen, just below the ribcage.

Paul instantly lost his breath – and began to drop. However, before his knees had even the slightest chance to reach the floor, a huge right fist quickly connected with the bridge his nose, and a sharp snap echoed between the multiple rows of gym lockers.

Butch smiled with pride as he gazed at the blood that would spatter like torrent rain across his victim's face and chest with each kick and punch he would bestow upon him. However, just as the moment of personal enjoyment was starting to get good, a totally unexpected sound informed him that it would soon be ending.

"Wouldn't you know it. Somebody always has to start yelling, 'Fight!' Damn it, anyway."

Seconds later as Butch continued to stare at him and growl, Paul decided that it was time to rise up and at least make a marginal attempt to defend himself. However, the instant he started to lift ailing body off the floor, a brown leather work boot promptly struck his groin. Then a second strike landed directly across his heart.

"Stop it right there, boys!" the P.E. instructor's voice screamed as he and his assistant rapidly scampered across the room. "Fight's over!"

That true, Butch thought, now displaying a medieval grin as he gazed at the limp pile of meat in front of his feet. My victim no longer had ears that can hear you. ... For vengeance, once again, was successful in taking its toll.

Shortly afterwards – a piercing EMT siren started to reverberate across the countryside, and a small, eight year old boy still sitting inside his wheelchair gazed down at his brother, his hero, and began to loudly weep, “I tried to tell you this morning, Paul, not to wear that outfit. ... You just wouldn’t listen, and now you’re ...”