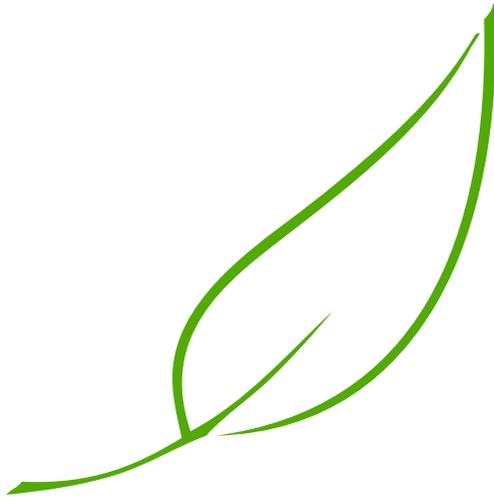


MURDER ONE

by Ken Bradbury



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Mick: She was tall, blonde, and dangerous. She had a record as long as your arm, and she'd left a trail of broken hearts scattered across town like fender parts in a demolition derby. And out of all the places in all the world, she came to see me, Mickey Spleen, Private Eye. (*she enters, the typical gangster moll, chewing her gum and protecting her nails*) Yeh?

Moll: You Speen?

Mick: Yeh, that's me.

Moll: I gotta talk.

Mick: Figures.

Moll: Can I sit down?

Mick: (*observing her outfit*) It'll be tough but give it a try.

Moll: T'anks. (*she sits*)

Mick: Who are ya?

Moll: You don't know me?

Mick: Sure. But just for the record.

Moll: Molly. Molly Cleaver.

Mick: Sharp.

Moll: Huh?

Mick: Your outfit. Classy dame.

Moll: Yeh, I know.

Mick: So what's your beef?

Moll: I'm in trouble. Big, big trouble.

Mick: You're tellin' me.

Moll: I think I killed a guy.

Mick: Dead?

Moll: I think so.

Mick: (*whistles*)

Moll: What chu lookin' at?

Mick: Your future, dame. Murder's serious.

Moll: Yeh, I know. Especially when they die.

Mick: So who was it?

Moll: I ain't shu-wa.

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Mick: You killed a guy and didn't even know his name?

Moll: I didn't have a chance to ask. He was dead before I met him.

Mick: Unusual.

Moll: Yeh. Ain't it though?

Mick: So spill it. What happened?

Moll: I ain't shu-wa. I wasn't there.

Mick: You killed a guy but you didn't know his name?

Moll: Yeh.

Mick: And you don't know what happened because you wasn't there?

Moll: Yeh. Ain't life funny?

Mick: (*to the audience*) The wild nuts are the hardest to crack.

Moll: You see, I was just standin' there outside da pawn shop when ... (*and she continues her spiel in pantomime as he continues*)

Mick: She talked on and on, makin' no sense at all. But I'd heard it all before ... a dame murders a guy she doesn't know before she meets him and she wasn't there when it happened. The oldest line in the book. Now she comes runnin' to me for help. That's the down side of this business ... new faces, same old lines.

Moll: (*as her dialogue becomes audible for a moment*) ... and I said, "Listen Buster, don't try that stuff with me, and ..." (*and again she goes into pantomime*)

Mick: Same old lines. Fact is, I was ready to give it up. Cash it in. Find a new line of work. I was desperate so I signed up for this night course at Junior College. (*holds up an imaginary book as Moll continues her silent story, acting out various methods of murder, shocking reactions, horror, mourning, etc.*) "Creative Writing." Last Thursday night I found the chapter that changed my life forever, "Using your Fantasies for Fun and Profit." (*reading*) "Stimulating ideas can be found in even the most mundane of conversations. The trick, dear writer, is to imagine the same conversation taking place in an exotic and exciting locale. The more remote, the better."

Moll: *(suddenly becoming audible again, this time with a seductive French accent)* Petite Pou, Mom ami!

Mick: Oui?

Moll: Oui! *(incensed)* Le mort!

Mick: No!

Moll: Oui! Du Louvre et Avenue des Champs Elysees!

Mick: Des Champs Elysees!

Moll: Oui! Oui! Et le Seine Opera! D'Orleans Tuileries Notre Dame!

Mick: Notre Dame!

Moll: Fois de Gras Hunchback!

Mick: No!

Moll: Oui!

Mick: Oi!

Moll: Montmartre Paris Republique! St. Louis Saint Michel Montmartre!

Mick: Hors d'oeuvre! Petit fours! Montreal!

Moll: Montreal!

Mick: DeGaulle! Bridgette Bardot!

Moll: Ahh! *(they both hum a few measures of the Marseillaise then fall sobbing into one another's arms (suddenly coming out of it, back to her Brooklyneese)* So then I told him, "Listen Buster, don't try that stuff with me, and ..."
(to pantomime)

Mick: It worked. In fact, it saved me, you might say. No more long conversations on hot summer afternoons. No more boring recitals of murder, larceny, and petty pois. Suddenly, all my clients became ... exotic!

Moll: *(rising up as an angry Spanish/Italian madwoman)* La Muerte!

Mick: *(shocked)* La Muerte?

Moll: Si! Y Pablo Picasso Alhambre!

Mick: No! Por favor! No!

Moll: Si, la muchacho! Ohhhhhhhhhhhh... *(as she storms around the room)* Ohhhhhh! La Batista con carne alfresco!

Mick: Alfresco!

Moll: Si! Alfresco y Castro!



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