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Don’t Make Me Laugh

Patrick Augustus

1

LEO’S STORY

My brother got off with my wife. He thinks I don’t know, but I do. He thinks he’s got away with it. But he hasn’t. You wait and see. You can’t have it off with your brother’s wife and escape with no trouble. Stuff like that bites you back. It’s called karma. If you spit in the sky it will fall in your eye. No doubt.

My brother Trevor had it off with my wife but you wouldn't think it to hear him singing.

“We’re gonna win the cup. We’re gonna win the cup. Ee-yay-addee-oh. We’re gonna win the cup.”

Like he hasn't got a care in the world. Like I’m not standing next to him with a razor in my pocket and murder on my mind. I’m going to slit his throat.

We turn the turnstiles at White Hart Lane with thousands of other football fans. Trevor is chanting ”We’re gonna win the cup. We’re gonna win the cup. Ee-yay-addee-oh. We’re gonna win the cup!”

He’s jumping up and down and slapping me on my back. Like me and him are friends. We might be brothers, but I’m no friend of Trevor’s. Love and hate can never be friends. Trevor may be my brother, but I’m still going to cut off his balls.

You see Trevor’s not just my brother, he’s my twin. We’re supposed to be tight. Like glue. From head to toe. Dusk till dawn. Cradle to grave. Same blood, same heart. One love. Til death do us part. We should be feeling each other. Fighting for each other. Beef with Trevor should be beef with me.

We’re supposed to be peas in a pod. He’s my other half. We’re a matching pair. Same difference. Except we’re not. We’re opposites. He’s black and I’m white. He’s in the wrong and I’m in the right. He’s a dead man.

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"We're gonna win the cup, Leo. Can you believe it. I'm telling you, it's gonna to be one long party. We're gonna win the cup. Then the league. Then the Champions League. We're gonna win the bloody lot."

I stare at Trevor without blinking. He's right. We've had a brilliant season. The best ever. But I'm not cheering and I don't feel like talking. I'm killing time.

Once I would have killed for Trevor. I had a lot of love for him. That's how it is when you find your other half. You're strong. Like nothing could ever go wrong. Then your other half kicks you in the groin, whacks you across the bridge of the nose with a baseball bat and stabs you in the heart. That's how it feels. All because of my brother.

Out of all the women in the world he couldn't stop himself from having sex with my wife.

We ought to be partners not rivals. Trevor and me. We should have been watching out for each other. We could have achieved so much between us. There's so much to say still not said. So much love still not loved. I would have gone to hell for him. Now, I just want to send him there.

2

LEO'S STORY

I never even knew I had a twin until a year ago. The first of April. I'll never forget it. It was a Sunday. One of those sunny, lazy mornings. I jogged down the road to get the morning papers. Can you believe my shock when I saw myself staring back at me from the front page of one of the tabloids?

HAVE-A-GO HERO IN JAIL SHAME

The headline screamed. I panicked, snatched at the paper and scanned the story.

HAVE-A-GO HERO IN JAIL SHAME

The have-a-go hero who foiled a daring bank robber has a prison record as long as his arm, it has been revealed.

30-year-old Trevor Dunkley was jailed...

I bought the paper. In fact I bought as many papers as I could and jogged back home to read more.

HAVE-A-GO HERO IN JAIL SHAME

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The have-a-go hero who foiled a daring bank robber has a prison record as long as his arm, it has been revealed.

30-year-old Trevor Dunkley was jailed for his role in a con that could have netted £1m from a top West End casino...

As you can imagine I was stunned. My heart was racing. 30-year-old Trevor Dunkley. I read the words over and over again. I looked at the picture. My spitting image. A different surname but the same age as me. What are the chances of it being a fluke? All sorts of things were going through my head. All of them bad.

To be honest I was scared. It crossed my mind that it was April Fool's Day. Perhaps someone was having a laugh. Perhaps this was all some fancy hoax. Perhaps the paper seller was in on it too. Perhaps even the News of the World were winding me up. What are the chances of that?

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Back in the stadium, it's three on the dot. Kick-off time. The noise of the White Hart Lane crowd is like the roar of the sea in a storm. The fans are screaming their heads off. But I may as well be deaf to it. I'm thinking too deeply about my brother's stinky-breath tongue in my wife's mouth. What about his dirty t'ing?

The more I think about it, the more angry I become. The ref blows his whistle, but all I can hear is Trevor singing, "We're gonna win the cup! We're gonna win the cup" while sexing my wife. Who is winning? Who is losing? Who is in white and who is in blue? Whose throw-in is that? Whose corner? Free-kick? Penalty? Who cares?

"That was never a penalty, ref!" I hear the fans jeer. What do I know? My mind is somewhere else. Even if it had been the Cup Final the moaning of my wife making love to my brother would have drowned out the roar of the crowd.

Trevor nudges me in the ribs all friendly. I swear to God if he does that again I'll slit both his wrists and end this bullshit here and now.

"Oi Leo. What's the matter, Bruv? We're one-nil up and you ain't said a peep. You haven't even moved. What's up? Are you watching the same game I'm looking at? We just scored. Or is your mind on some other type of scoring? Only birds can have that effect on a bloke in the middle of a great match. Is there something you want to tell me, Bruv? Have you been having it off with some skirt on the sly? Is that what's up?"

He winked at me. I could have boxed him.

"I'm a married man," I said through gritted teeth"Or did you forget?"

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When I first found out about Trevor and my wife I refused to believe it. Even though the proof was staring me in the face. If I had been there in the room with them and seen it myself, I would have still doubted my eyes. I would have thought I was dreaming. That's what this feels like, a horrible dream.

Like the nightmares I've been having all my life. It's always the same dream. The falling off the edge of a cliff one where you wake up just before you hit the ground. Only it isn't me falling. It's someone else. A man. Tall. With a moustache. Always well dressed. Always wearing a trilby. Always reaching out for me as he falls backwards. Always laughing his head off as he vanishes over the edge of the cliff.

The same dream.Every night. As far back as I recall. The same dream. Every bloody night. Without fail.

I don't talk about it. I'm too ashamed. Too afraid of how it would make me look and what people would say. Would they think I was a nutter who needed help? I mean, it's weird isn't it? Having the same bloody dream every damn night. They would send me to a shrink and before you know it, I would start to sink with all the drugs the quacks give you. If you want to get on in the police force you can't afford to let people know your true mental state.

We're gonna win the cup

We're gonna win the cup

Eee-eye-addee-o

We're gonna win the cup.

It's that dream again. It's a hot day. Somewhere out in the country. There's a picnic with people eating and laughing. I am a toddler crawling through the grass. Away from the others. In the distance I can see a ship. It looks a lot closer than it is. I am moving towards it knowing that danger lies ahead. Even in my dreams I am begging the young me not to crawl any further.

I must have been as stubborn as an infant as I am now. I carry on. But someone grabs me by the hand and shoves me from behind. I go hurtling over the cliff screaming. On my way down the endless abyss I realise it's not me. It's that mystery man again. The tall one with the moustache. Wearing a trilby. Yet again I am confused. What does it all mean? Why do I keep getting these dreams? Who is that man? Is it my father? And who was it who pushed me over the cliff?

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3

LEO'S STORY

I can't believe murder is on my mind all the time. I swear to God I feel like death is calling me.

My brother and my wife. How do you expect me to feel? Angry. Sad. Bitter.

Twisted. Shocked. Angry. Angry. Angry. How would you feel?

I can see it in her eyes.

Trevor's a good actor. But Jenny isn't. Her eyes don't lie. The very first time she looked at me I knew I was in with a chance.

At the time, she was a waitress in a bar. It wasn't the most romantic place. But that didn't bother me. It felt like a magic carpet ride.

I fancied her right away. And her eyes told me, 'try your luck'.

I could read her mind just by looking into her eyes. She was like an open book. Deep in her eyes I could see what she was thinking.

I still can. That's why she can't look me in the face any longer. Not the way she used to.

I was crazy about Jenny. You won't believe this but my heart went zing, zing, zing the moment I saw her. It had never done that before. I knew straight away that I wanted to marry her. People said I was rushing things, moving too fast. But I knew she was the woman for me. I was in romance heaven until my brother came out of jail and couldn't stop himself from sleeping with her.

My blood is boiling. I'm waiting to explode with my boot in my cheating brother's bollocks. He betrayed me. Just when I thought I had found my soul-mate. Someone I could trust with my life. Someone I could rely on. He used my love and slept with my wife. I'll castrate him.

"YEEEEEEEEE-HA! We're gonna win the bloody lot!" Trevor screams, pumping his hands up and down and dancing a jig. "YEEEEEEEEE-HA!"

We've just scored again and the crowd at White Hart Lane are ready to party. We have not quite won the tie yet though. They've also scored. The ref has added two minutes of extra time. The game could still end in a draw. But I don't care.

With 90 seconds to go the ball is in the air and seems to hang there for ages. The sun is shining bright in the sky. I look up. All I can see is red. Red mist. All I can hear is my wife and my brother panting.

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Their heavy breathing all mixed up. Loud and getting louder. It echoes. Like there are three lots of my wife and three lots of my brother screaming "Yes. Yes. Yesssss. JEEZAS CRIES! Yes. Yes. Yesssssss."

My brother did the nasty with my wife and I'm feeling it bad. D'you get me? How could he do it? I keep asking myself. How could he betray me like that? Could he do it without thinking about me? Was he able to do it while thinking about me? I must have been on his mind the whole time he was on top of her. Or was she on top of him? How could he blank me out? No one is that cold. Are they?

I felt like telling Trevor there and then "You think I don't know. You think I'm blind. You think I'm stupid. You think you're so clever? Well you're not. I've sussed you and I'm going to sort you. You wait and see."

But I didn't.

We're going to win the cup, but I can't stop thinking of my dirty brother in bed with my woman. Him inside her. Making me sick. Did he go down on her or did she? Did he take her from behind or up front? Why do I need to know?

Half the stadium is chanting "Who's the bastard in the black!!" But all I can hear is the groan of sexual pleasure. Louder and louder. Harder and harder. Longer and longer. My brother riding my wife like a jockey. YEEEEEEEEE-HA like a cowboy.

I reached for the blade in my pocket. I could so easily stick it through his windpipe here and now.

I'm not sure any longer if Trevor is really still singing or whether I'm just hearing things. Like Kylie, I just can't get it out of my head. We're gonna win the cup! We're gonna win the cup, ee-yay-addee-oh we're gonna win the cup!

The thought of my brother and my wife is making me sick. Really sick. I can feel the puke climbing up my throat. Like I'm going to throw up at any moment. From the bottom of my stomach. Bile. Is that what they call it? I'm not sure. All I know is I can taste it creeping up the back of my throat. And it tastes vile.

I FEEL sick. But Trevor's the one who's not well. You've got to be sick to have sex with your brother's wife. Sick upstairs. He needs his head tested. Yeah, tested against my boot. I'll kick his head in.

I should kill him here and now. I should strangle him. I could beat him to death with my bare hands. That's how I feel. That's why I'm sticking two fingers down my throat to make Trevor feel how I feel.

HERE COMES THE BILE.

In Trevor's lap.

"Ahhhh shit, Leo! What the frigg you have to do that for?"

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"Sorry," I smile. "Not feeling too well."

"But there's thirty thousand other people here. Why did it have to be me? Why the f....."

Before Trevor completes what he had to say a huge roar goes up. It's another goal. Our section of the stadium is jumping for joy singing: "We're gonna win the bloody lot!" Trevor is jumping up and down too. He didn't even see the goal. But nothing else seems to matter.

As for the vomit, he wipes his jeans on the coat of the man in front.

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After seeing Trevor's picture in the papers last year I didn't know what to do. I was confused. My cop instincts were weighing up the facts. My common sense was telling me that I should leave it well alone. That this was a can of worms. I might regret looking into it. I checked police records at the station and found out a bit more about this 'have a go hero'. There was quite a lot on him.

He lived not far from me. He had been passing-by when he noticed a robber inside the bank. He had waited outside the door and as the man with the loot made his get-away, Trevor had stuck his foot out and the villain had gone flying.

One moment Trevor was a hero and the next he went back down to zero when the tabloids found out about his time behind bars.

I must have been staring at the paper for hours. I read the story over and over. I couldn't get it off my mind. I couldn't stop glaring at the photo of me staring back at me. In the end I picked up the phone and called the last person on earth.

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