

SWEET STEPS TO SORROW

By

Dr. Adi Adins

Dedicated To My Dearest Wife, Roberta

2017/all rights reserved

Author Note

Some of the scenes in Hawaii were the ones I experienced.

I hope that you enjoy this simple, entirely fictional short story.

The Characters and events in this story are fictitious. Any similarity to actual persons living or dead is purely coincidental.

Dr. Jimmy Collins Prepares

He lay on his back, on his bed, for the last time, all dressed and ready to go, staring at the ceiling, following those grey and brown specks floating in his sight. Some were in long strings, and some were just dots. He made them move at his will by shifting his gaze in different directions and watching them float away and come back when he steadied his eyes.

“Muscae Volitantes.” Or “Fleeting Flies.” They were getting more prominent now.

When he first saw them years ago, there were only a few, and they were much smaller. He had thought that he had made a significant discovery. He detailed what he saw and took his findings to his Ocular Anatomy professor. He was told mockingly that everyone had them and that they were already named years ago.

The ceiling fan blades whirred right through those strings and dots. They would only bother those moving gnats if they were in a different visual area. He will be gone from this house and all it held forever. He will make a new start, as he has done many times. This was an ability he was proud of. Each time he faced adversity, he could start a new way without looking back and get on with his life. As long as he had his license to practice, he could survive. He looked upon it all as a new adventure.

He looked at his clock. *When will they come?*

He looked at his bags. They were all packed. Had he forgotten anything? It would not matter. *That Bitch will keep whatever she finds. He wished he would never see her again. Wished he had never met her. Maybe this time, a truck will hit her. Oh, that would be nice. Maybe not. She would go back to court, and the judge would make him pay her more. The Bloody Bitch, she planned it all. Right from the day he met her.*

It was easier with Candy; she was not like this Bitch. Candy was not as clever or as calculating. She was his first wife. He should have never married her. Candy had wanted sex in her apartment on their very first date. He was in his third year in the USA. He should have stopped when he found condoms in her bathroom the following day. She was not a virgin like him, and it bothered him. He was naïve, and he felt it was his duty to marry her. She told him she loved him. Then came Mary and, later, Christie into their lives. Jimmy loved spending hours playing with them.

Candy was also devoted to them, but her past desires for affairs with other men kept creeping up all the time. When they had spats, Jimmy would call her names he was ashamed of later. His mother would have never approved of her. Instead, his mother wanted him to marry someone with “class.”

Candy did not have a proper upbringing. Her stepfather worked in a Ford factory; her mother was a clerk in an office for the county. They lived in a broken-down house. Candy had moved to an apartment at an early age to get away from her abusive stepfather. She was smart enough to move to Berkeley to meet and snare a college student, and I was the sucker.

Candy's parents were addicted gamblers and went to Reno every weekend. The first time Jimmy met them was in the casino at Harrah's. "Look honey, a new bride...EEK that is my daughter." Both parents looked upon Jimmy as if he had robbed them. Candy had wanted it this way all the time.

Candy had horrible manners. When she ate, food dribbled after each bite which she constantly wiped with a disgusting crumpled tissue that made its way toward him. Food often caked around her lips. "Is it today's soup?" "No, it's yesterday's egg." Her room was always a mess. Panties, bras, and everything else were stacked in different piles; those that were dirty, those that had been washed days ago, and those she did not know when to wear. Her toilet had several empty spools lying around the floor. The area around her sink resembled a sidewalk sale by hawkers near a London Tube station.

Candy had a secretarial job from the afternoon until late every day while Jimmy was home studying after attending classes. On weekends and holidays, they took trips with the kids, who were always much fun. She was gentle and had a taste for beautiful clothes which filled her closets. She was patient, knowing that she would stop working after he got his Doctorate as they would be on easy street.

Jimmy had different plans. He was getting tired of Candy. Like his mother, he felt he had married below his station. She would not be suitable as a doctor's wife. He started to plan. He was methodical. He needed her to earn at present. After graduation, he would practice for a couple of years, keep his earnings low and then divorce her. Yes, he would be well prepared when the time came.

It was in his nature to be well prepared for all possibilities in advance. So he was ready when he left London. After spending two casual years in a business college in London, he set his eyes on America. He studied as much as he could about America from the USIS library. American women were fun-loving. He had seen many American movies and read many autobiographies of famous Americans. They were fun-loving people. Even during military parades, the Americans had the best bands and marched with a bit of swag as if it was all fun. The British, the French, and others were always so stiff. Even in simple conversation, if you miss a word, a British or French will correct you. In America, they all compromise. America was a newer country. People were still forming relationships and settling down. It was a dynamic country with all kinds of opportunities.

He applied for several scholarships. His uncle was an optician, and he had enjoyed his visits to his shop and was ecstatic when he could see clearly through his first pair of glasses. He wanted to be an optometrist. His uncle had advised him that the University of California in Berkeley had one of the best programs in this field. Besides, he liked the idea of being in the state where movie stars lived. So he applied, got accepted, and arrived on a student visa.

It was James until then. In America, he wanted to be called Jimmy. He liked being a freshman. There was something romantic in that word. Standing in front of his full-length dormitory mirror on his first day, he was pleased with what he saw. He was slim from playing tennis. He had measured himself just over the six-foot mark—his medium-wavy reddish-blondish blond hair to the left of the midline. A thin mustache across his upper lip gave him an air of royalty. He had had his flings. He danced better than most, and his British accent and manners garnered him many dates. The girls giggled when he opened the car doors for them.

College was easy for him, and he was proud to see his photograph with his square hat and gown holding his Doctor of Optometry diploma. He was now Dr. James Collins or still Jimmy to those close to him.

He was too involved with his new practice. Candy stopped working. Now his tirades and criticisms began to depress her. She called him a pompous ass. He called her names, which made her recoil. She was bored and got involved with the women's movements with her neighbor Shirley, known as the Village Drunk, who had married a man three times her age for security. The two became close friends, and Candy spent most of her days with her. They often went to dances, put on by military outfits at the Mather Airbase, and came home after midnight, each covering for the other. They got involved with other men while their husbands were at work. On some mornings after Mary and Christie were in school, Jimmy would see Candy and Shirley going for a bike ride with their tennis rackets while he went to work. In the evening, he would come home to an empty house after treating his patients all day. She always had some excuse to be away. He would find a note to heat some leftovers. He preferred restaurants.

Inside, he felt that things were going according to his plan. Candy was giving him a perfect excuse for a divorce. He could see what was coming on the horizon and was getting ready. Give her plenty of rope. She will trip. He must be prepared, as that was his character. Never wait for surprises, trust no one, and always plan for all situations. "There is always the unexpected," his mother had drummed into him. By planning and being prepared, one can always change the course like a river in a mudslide. He was a Capricorn. *Why did he not follow all that this time? Why did he not see this slaughter coming?*

That one morning, after a silly argument, Candy looked him straight in the eye and told him, “I am leaving; I do not love you anymore.” Even though he had foreseen this scenario, a chill went through him that he knew he would feel for the rest of his life. However, he was in control by then. He was ready. He knew she would ask for everything because of Mary and Christi. They were a joy in his life, and he could not understand what was happening except that they loved their mummy and daddy, who were always fighting. He loved playing with them and had volumes of pictures of their family travels. He had taken them all around the world. *He made sure those photos were in the bags.*

During one of their fights, Candy boasted. “I will take your house, your practice, and you will never see your kids again.” He knew that the system would let her do that. You better get prepared. He had to show lower earnings from his practice, or it would be very costly.

Jimmy preferred to avoid taking advantage. However, he refused to take any risks. His methodical ways helped him in his practice. He always wanted to remain prepared and know the outcome in advance. He developed a method for each of his interests. He won horse races because he studied their forms. At Blackjack, he practiced long hours playing with himself switching from being a dealer to a player. He learned to play without risks and bet on the house’s money. He was gratified when he was told to leave several casinos after they saw his playing style. There were just as many chances of a long run happening against a patron as against the house. You place the minimum bets for the former, but when the run is against the house, you increase those bets. There were several such professional players whose livelihood depended on that kind of principled playing. Nevertheless, it can become tiresome. It could take several hours or days of continuous playing before a long run comes against the house. When Casinos got

smart, they began to limit the amount of maximum play. That was when he gave up playing Blackjack. He could make more money in his practice.

Much money was coming into the practice. Yes, he had to show fewer earnings. As a self-employed optometrist, he could do that. He was paid for examining patients, and he could earn from materials like glasses and contact lenses. As long as he stayed within reasonable boundaries for the IRS, no questions would be asked; they monitor gross income and expenses. If he did not live lavishly, he could hide many a dollar. Double bookkeeping and cashing of refunds he received from returns of equipment were some of the many ploys that many businesses use, and the IRS never gets to know about them. Inflate all deductible office expenses and push them into the year that will best reduce gross earnings and taxes. The last one has always been legitimate and advised by many CPAs to businesses. Calvin Coolidge, during the Great Depression, said, "The business of America is business." Many loopholes were created to make companies prosper, generating more employment. One can smartly build up quite a hoard. Make sure to keep good books and be able to feign oversight. He was prepared to take calculated risks and pay later on.

In 1977 the California courts gave physical custody to mothers and legal custody to both parents. The system was not kind to fathers in those days. At least it was a "No Fault" divorce. Just say "irreconcilable differences," and divorce was granted. There was no need for manipulation as in previous years when one had to prove adultery by hiring private investigators to take pictures of the man in bed with another woman. Nevertheless, the courts regularly made their primary residence with the mother when it came to the question of which parent the children should live with. The norm was to make the father pay child support and see the

children as visitors, “visitation rights,” every other weekend. Thus, Candy got sole physical custody of the children, and all Jimmy could do was visit them on alternate weekends.

Jimmy was anxious to have his own life from then on. Not seeing Mary and Christi regularly was the hardest pill for Dr. James Collins to swallow. He saw them whenever Candy allowed, but there was always some excuse why he could not see them. They were sick or had an important function to attend, or she blamed him for something he said or did during his last visit. Besides, he did not like hearing about their mother’s activities with other men. He felt unwelcome. Soon he, too, was making excuses not to see them. They became strangers, but he was sure that despite their differences, Candy was a good person and mother. *She was not like this Bitch.*

Jimmy figured daughters got closer to their mothers. If he had a son, things might have been different. Anyway, he gloated over how he had maneuvered his accounts to pay the least amount in child support without spousal support that would end when the youngest reached the age of eighteen. The best part was when he gave her a choice; cash for the house or the house itself. At that time, house values had hit rock bottom. The government had even introduced a new word, “Rebate,” the amount the government paid to buy a house. She wanted cash to rent a place close by. She saw no value in the home that no one was buying. Two years later, the market turned around, and Candy, who was never thrifty, had spent all the cash. The house’s value skyrocketed and was now worth fifteen times its old value. Jimmy was proud of himself.

Jimmy had to continue his low profile and keep showing low income even after the divorce. Four years had passed since then. In a few years, the youngest will be eighteen. She reminded him of no more support payments to pay every month to make him mad. No more

worry about her going back to court. He would be free, move into a larger house, buy a Mercedes, take cruises and welcome all those hungry singles eagerly hunting for a sugar daddy or security. He would enjoy them. If they got serious, dump them. Marry only if one is more prosperous than him and can support herself or his lifestyle. He hoped to find one. Most of all, as his mother would say, “Make sure she has class.” He was never going to fall in love.

Lover’s Lies

Going to conventions and educational seminars was always rewarding. They were usually held in exotic places and the best resorts. The parties were grand, and the food and wine were top quality. All expenses were tax deductible and could easily be padded under educational expenses during tax time. This time it was the American Optometric Convention at the Hilton Hawaiian Village; all the bigwigs were there. They paraded around, showing off the number of ribbons pinned to their coats. The stripes were for official standing, memberships in committees, different branches of their specialties, lecturers, colleges, and more. There were ribbons for everything and anything. The human instinct to proclaim “I am superior” was in full swing.

Everybody was somebody.

Jimmy had arrived in Oahu the day before. At night, he went to the Hilton bar to check out the joint and maybe dance. He was an excellent and experienced ballroom dancer. In one or two dances, by speaking with his partner, he could determine if it would be worth spending more time with her. Women loved to dance with him as he was a good leader.

Jimmy had been on the Hilton dance floor during his visits to Oahu as usual; Don Ho was the star at the Hilton Luau with his same old songs and jokes. "If I became president, I would call it the Ho House." Half-naked Hawaiians were about to bring in the poor pig, covered with red-hot coals and baked all day in a pit. Now it would be brought to the grand Hilton Bowl on an over-used cart. Its carcass would be wheeled in, followed by an army of fat, hungry, lip-licking tourists, mainly from the Mainland, in bright-colored shirts and muumuus, who would be running behind it, circling and drooling like wild vultures.

At the Hilton, Jimmy did not ask anyone for a dance. There were too many colleagues there with their wives; some knew Candy and the kids. They would gossip about him if he danced too close to anyone. Besides, he preferred the Grand Hyatt for dancing. He was there twice before with Candy. He planned to go there the next day. He drank his two glasses of Red Label scotch and soda and went to bed.

Tonight will be the night of the hunter. He roved his eyes over the tourists who had come starry-eyed to the Grand Hyatt. Many consider the Grand Hyatt, the most luxurious hotel in Oahu. It was undoubtedly the most expensive: Two forty-story skyscrapers on Waikiki Beach connected with a large open area filled with giant tropical trees that hid most of the sky. There were all kinds of tropical plants with blazing flowers. That is where people danced to an exciting band that played until very late. Just behind the dance floor, in the middle, was a three-story

waterfall that emptied thunderously artificial rocks in a pool. The bar servers wore white togas and sarongs as they rushed their tall Mai Tais topped with tiny colored paper umbrellas to the thirsty patrons sitting at the bamboo tables.

Jimmy had spent all day taking lectures so he could deduct the trip. He could remove the costs of the plane, Hilton's suite, all the education expenses, and his inflated food and drink costs. He even shared a room with one of the other doctors who paid his share, which he would probably forget to include as income.

He did not want a Mai Tai or fancy rum drinks. When it came to alcohol, he remained British. Red Label Scotch and soda were all he wanted. He can be a stiff upper lip with that drink. That and his Queen's English would always wow them.

She was sitting all by herself at a table with an empty chair. She wore a low-shoulder white dress and was drinking a tall red drink. She looked plain. She had refused several offers to dance from others. She was choosy. He looked around for someone younger and prettier than she. There were a few, but they were giggling with others at their table. He would have a better chance with this one who sat alone. Most of the time, when they sat alone, they also wanted what he wanted.

The band was playing "Yellow Bird," one of his favorites. He walked up to her. "Would you care to rumba with me?"

She turned her head gently towards him and looked at him from head to waist. Then she coyly smiled. "Oh yes. Dr. James Collins." she got up and started to put her arm around his neck.

He took a step back with a frown. "Have we met before?"

“No, your name is on the label of your jacket.” She touched the plastic cardholder given to him during the registration at the Hilton.

“Oh, how clumsy of me; I should have removed it. I am attending seminars at the Hilton. I was at the Hilton dance floor yesterday and decided to pop in here tonight.” They started to dance with proper hip movements.

“You rumba beautifully,” she said as he raised his arm so she could twirl under. “I am not that fancy.”

“Keep up your beats as you turn, no matter what I do. So there, you have a good sense of rhythm.”

“You lead very well.”

“And you, my dear, follow marvelously.” The music ended. It started again in a fierce Argentine number. “Shall we, Samba?”

“I’ll try.”

Soon they were dancing at full speed with flaying arms taking over the small floor, pushing others who got in their way, “So Sorry.” “Beg your pardon,” sweating profusely.

“That was frightfully exhilarating.” He patted his brow with his handkerchief

and escorted her back to her chair. He pulled the chair out for her to sit.

“You have an accent; where is it from?”

“England, Madam, I speak the Queen’s English.” he said haughtily.” As he returned to his table, he wondered why she had to ask; an uneducated colonist. She will be easy.

After a break, when the music started, he asked her again. Hawaiians play popular songs with their ukuleles and guitars, with lingering sounds flowing from one octave to another. There are no harsh brass instruments, somewhat like the way the French speak, mostly vowels with few consonants. It envelopes one in a romantic mood. It became natural to get closer to the floor. He could feel the softness of her breasts, and her fingers around his neck played with his hair. She wants what I want; she will be easy. He would overwhelm her with his Suite in the Hilton on the twelfth floor. He wondered if she would ask for money. He had never paid for that and would not give her a penny. Instead, he had bought her drinks which she sipped most of the time.

“How long will you be staying?” he asked.

“I have six more days left,” she replied.

“Where are you staying?”

“Right here,” she said, looking away at a couple jumping up and down, out of rhythm.

“You mean in this Hyatt?” He thought she was joking. “How are the rooms?”

“Expensive but quite nice.” She paused, staring at him with a smile. “Would you like to see them?”

He was even more stunned when she pressed the top-floor button in the elevator. Then, as he stepped out of the elevator, his eyes lit up when he saw the sign, “PRESIDENT SUITE.”

She gave him the key to open the door with a large brass carved handle. She did not turn on the lights. From the living room's window, the moonlit Diamond Head, the most photographed site in all Hawaiian brochures, shimmered in its breathtaking majesty. From the wide verandah, the enormous Pacific waves were lapping with white crests rushing to gobble up the vast beach. They would pounce with a roar, retreat, and run forward again, to bite off more sand. So it went on forever while the three-quarter moon stood smirking. Cars and people below appeared small and far away. The Ala Moana and the Sheraton seemed undersized in the distance. In the far distance were the Hilton Rainbow Towers.

Jimmy stood in awe. This was no ordinary lady; she must be rich to pay for all this. He had better play his cards right. This will not be a one-night stand. With full British pomp and charm, he said. "It was jolly nice of you to show me all this. May I have your permission to take a few pictures from here tomorrow before dinner?"

She giggled, "Of course, you silly man. Come at six. The sun will set, and we can watch a real Hawaiian sunset." She did not have much flare for words, he thought. "Goodnight," he whispered and kissed her lips. Just a peck and went to the door. She followed. The elevator took its own sweet time to come. As he stepped in, he babbled some more jolly English and said, "Ta-Ta, see you tomorrow," as the door closed.

She walked back with a gleam. A soft smile came to her lips.

It was a whirlwind flight after that. The sunset was extra brilliant that evening. The air is always moist in the tropics, and you are always in a cloud. During the day, you do not notice its presence, it is hot, and the sun shines brightly. However, as the sun comes closer to the horizon,

it gets cooler. Clouds begin to appear, and they seem to rush toward the horizon to bid goodnight to the sun. As the sun gets closer, it radiates all its glorious light, breaking up in its VIBGYOR spectrum. Different colors, from bluish in the east to bright pink and red in the west, spray for miles in all directions through cracks in the clouds, constantly changing their shape. Finally, the glowing cool sun, which had already set four minutes ago but persisted in its appearance, gently touched the edge of the far waters. As it sinks, it shimmers. When the last splinter disappears, it rises somewhere else.

“When someone asks me what the purpose of living is, I tell them to see one more sunset like this.” Dr. Collins was exuberant as he timidly put his arms around her waist. She responded with enthusiasm. He did not want to rush into anything. He was going to be excellent. Take his own time even though she tried to move faster. He did not want it to end. This one was here to stay.

She had ordered dinner in her suite with a small bottle of red wine. She was wearing a ring with a large emerald surrounded by diamonds. An elegant thin gold necklace and pearl earrings adorned her. Her table manners were perfect, unlike Candy, who always patted her drooling mouth with that crumpled tissue. She was soft-spoken, and there was music when she laughed. Candy used to be boisterous; her loud guffaws could be heard in a restaurant’s men’s room. This one had a class like his mother. “Proper breeding,” he said to himself.

They went down and danced. They danced like lovers this time, as he knew they would become that night.

The next day they drove around the island. First, they stopped at Huanume Bay to snorkel. This is a large area where the beautiful colored fish found in the tropics have made their home. It was an active volcano once, but now it had gone underwater just low enough for one to snorkel.

She wore a blue one-piece swimsuit that flattered her petite figure, which he had familiarized himself with the night before. He felt awkward, especially when she looked towards his bony knees. They had rented the snorkels and the fins and had brought two packets of green peas. They hid the packages in their suits as they swam towards the left center of the bay, where the corals were enticing. The waves were mild, bobbling them slowly up and down. Gloriously colored fishes were everywhere, going from one furry rock to another, completely ignoring their presence. It was like being in a vast aquarium, they thought, as each pointed to a rare fish as it flipped by into a crevice.

It took only a moment, after a few of the bright green peas were released, for the sudden furious activity of the fish to rush to gobble each pea. They came from all sides, trying to penetrate the picture of the peas on the packet. When they held the peas in their palms, they could feel their teeth as they swallowed each pea. It was exciting. It was fun. He squeezed a few in her suit top, and she had to scamper when the hordes went after them. Then, within a few minutes, they had to open the second packet. This time they rationed them, so it took a long time. The fish kept hovering around them until the package was empty, and they made sure that they hid the empty bags in their suits.

They drove to the northern shores and watched the experts surf inside the tubes of the enormous waves. Jimmy, as usual, mainly talked about himself, but at intervals, when he asked

her, he learned that she was a recent widow, very lonely, and lived with her father in Atherton. “That is marvelous.” he was ecstatic. “It is just across the Bay from me in Berkeley.” They watched another blazing sunset, and Jimmy felt that this time he would not have to plan; he was never as much in love as he was now. He was leaving the next day.

Jimmy was ecstatic about his future with her. She was well-bred, had traveled, and lived in Atherton, where the houses ran into millions. She was an only child, a recent widow, and held business degrees from Stanford. She had left law school after two years when she got married.

Dr. Collins Falls in Love

It was over a month since they had kissed goodbye. He could not wait to see her, but she did not sound enthusiastic when he called her. She was hesitant and kept giving excuses for not visiting him right away. He started biting his nails. Suddenly she called and asked if he could come to the house. She gave him directions.

It was Sunday. He was supposed to be there at two. He was meandering from one street to another even though she had given him good directions. Atherton has been the historical bedroom of San Francisco’s moneyed people since the gold rush. They are not houses but

palaces with high archway entrances. It slowly opened as he drove up to the massive wrought iron gate. He drove through to the imposing front double doors. Above the door was an arch with a large Star of David in silver. Beneath the star was a more prominent “BELMONT” blazing in golden colors. She ran to him, blurting, “I missed you,” and kissed him passionately. He knew everything was going to be all right.

They held hands as they walked up the stone steps, through the double doors into a large room with a high ceiling. It was decorated in an old European motif with large hand-carved furniture everywhere. Two pink marble Corinthian pillars were holding up the top on either end of the large wall behind a long table. In the center of the table were a dried flower arrangement and two pewter candelabras at each end. An impressive bronze statue of the goddess Diana in the middle separated two colossal oil paintings on the wall. Several oriental carpets covered the shiny oak floor. It was like entering a museum, he thought. Before he could take it all in, he heard her say, “Dad, this is my Dr. Jimmy Collins.” The father wore a brown bow tie and a grey vest. He was of medium build with bushy eyebrows. The two men exchanged trite pleasantries. The father soon left, excusing himself for not being able to stay longer. Jimmy was perplexed as to why her father had left him so soon. Maybe he would have to convert to Judaism.

She gave him a tour of the house, showing him where everything had come from. There were many rooms, and in her bedroom were pictures of her childhood and college days. As he looked back at the house, Jimmy estimated it was worth the high millions. He was impressed.

They drove up to Half Moon Bay to be close to the same ocean that had brought them together. She told him that her father was an orthodox Jew. She told Jimmy that she was her father’s only daughter, but she had to live her own life. “It took me a long time to make him even

meet you.” They had dinner at an Italian restaurant on the beach. They professed their love and decided they could not live without one another, with or without her father’s consent.

Two weeks later, Dr. and Mrs. Collins stepped out of the wedding chapel in Reno. It was not like the church wedding with Candy. This was fast: A typical package deal that can only be done in America. He did not want to lose her. She told him of a substantial trust her mother had set up in her will before she died. He had hit the jackpot. He did not dare talk about any prenuptial agreement, especially when he had an account on the Cayman Islands, where they spent ten days on their honeymoon. He introduced her to the Irish bank manager and showed her his stash. He felt at home in the Grand Caymans. It was British. He wanted to impress her and did not want her to think he was a struggling failure. He shared his experiences with his last divorce and how he had manipulated Candy, who had no business sense.

They snorkeled inside a sunken ship and swam and loved like never before. They sat on the powdery white sands for hours and watched a different sunset each evening. He poured his heart out to her.

They were inseparable. She wanted to be by his side all the time. She soon replaced the two girls at the office and became his assistant. She had a flare for numbers and soon learned the practice’s intricacies and running. The practice improved with her respectful, careful handling of the patients. At times Jimmy felt that some patients’ names he did not recognize. She had billed MediCal and Medicare for them. However, he trusted her, did not want to question her, and stayed away from the business side of his practice. She handled all the checks and paid all the bills as he watched their bank accounts grow. She was his wife, lover, pillow, and working partner in all his dealings. Dr. James Collins could not be happier. He enjoyed fourteen months

of bliss. She told him that her father would not welcome him whenever he asked. He did not care as he knew that someday her father would accept him.

“Guess what honey, my father wants me to spend the next weekend with him. Maybe he has mellowed and would like to make amends and accept you, Jew or no Jew.”

She asked him to come to Atherton on Sunday afternoon

They had dinner in a cozy room, not in the grand dining room. Jimmy had several glasses of his scotch and was relaxed. “Honey, my father insists on adding your name so you will be part owner of Belmont. All you have to do is sign the papers, and I will take them to our lawyers tomorrow.

Jimmy was so excited to come into this sudden wealth. Together they started planning the future. He would sell his practice in Sacramento and buy or start another in Atherton; the three will live at Belmont and enjoy a luxurious life of travel and parties together. As he was leaving, she brought a bunch of papers for him to sign. He glanced through them fast as he wanted to get back on the road before it got too late. They looked authentic and had places for her and her father’s signatures which were already signed. He signed over his name at several highlighted areas.

After a passionate goodbye kiss and Jimmy was on his way to Sacramento. He felt a little giddy from all that Scotch and stopped for a quick coffee to remain alert. On his way home, Jimmy was excited about his good fortune; he had hit the jackpot. Wait until Candy finds out how his life has changed. When they visit him, Mary and Christie will love playing in the large garden at BELMONT.

THE BITCH

The Bitch had promised to come the next day after seeing her lawyer. She called the next morning and said that her father was ill and she wanted to stay with him. She said that her father was getting worse each night over the phone. As the week went by, Jimmy had to get temporary help as she and her father had come down with some contagious virus. He was told to stay away. Jimmy had to attend a seminar the following weekend in Sacramento.

Two weeks passed, and Jimmy was saying goodbye to his Friday afternoon patient who had paid a high price for four antique glasses and a year's supply of contact lenses. A man approached him. "Are you Dr. James Collins?" "Yes." "I am giving you this subpoena." He turned and walked away.

Surprised, he looked at the left corner of the large envelope. Bl....., K....., and L....., Attorneys at law. His heart sank. It must be some upset patient. He tore it open. He read, "In the marriage of Dr. James W. Collins and..... He closed his eyes. He had received one just like that from Candy. He was not prepared this time. "That Bloody, Bloody, Bitch". He screamed as he read more.

He left the office, asking the girl to tell his patients he had to go on an emergency. He drove north as the San Mateo Bridge would be faster and was soon at the big gate. It was closed. He kept ringing the bell, demanding to enter. "You know damned well who I am," he shouted to inquiries from a female voice inside the house. Two mastiffs showed up barking with jaws, ready

to devour him. He did not care. He would let them bark all night. He even thought of letting them get him. He could sue the hell out of that Bitch, then.

A police car came up. Jimmy told his story. They checked his license and called on their phone. The gates opened. He was told to drive in with the police cars following. A plump, reasonably well-dressed lady came to the door. The police stated, "This is a family affair; we cannot get involved. He says he is your husband." They both looked perplexed at each other. Jimmy explained his story. After a while, the lady shook her head and asked him to come in. The officers said they would wait in the car.

"I am afraid you have been taken, Dr." Those words made him even sicker. She told him the father was their caretaker and lived in the back cottage with his daughter, who helped around the house. They were employed at the time Jimmy had met her. Yes, the daughter was a recent widow at that time. She had received some insurance money and wanted to spend it all. "She wanted to experience how the rich lived for once in her life." the lady explained. She had loaned her some clothes and some jewelry. She had felt sorry for her and helped her to live her fantasy. After she had returned from Hawaii, the family left for Europe for a month. When they returned, they learned that the daughter was married. Last week, they had to let the father go because of his unremitting anti-Semitism.

"It is going to be expensive. You don't have much choice." Mr. Bolden, his attorney, was as tactful as a porcupine. He had represented Jimmy vs. Candy and knew his client well. "Your new wife wants everything in all your accounts plus more. Either you give it voluntarily, or she will expose you, and you know what that means. The IRS will be ruthless. They will heap on penalties, maybe put you in jail. You will lose your license to practice. She also wants your

house and everything in it. In addition, enough alimony to support the style of living she was accustomed to with you. There is no mercy. I have tried.” He gulped some water as Jimmy stared. “You have no choice. She has covered her tracks, emptied your joint bank accounts, and made a list to expose you. Give her what she asks. Save your license to practice. You will at least survive. You are still young. You will bounce back.”

THE FINAL PUNCH

Jimmy did not understand why the Bitch had insisted that he meet her and give her the keys personally. Maybe she wanted to see him for the last time, or she was sorry. The bell rang. He jumped up, took his bags, and opened the door.

It was the father with the bushy eyebrows. Jimmy did not shake his hand. He gave him the keys instead and walked out. “Hi, Daddy,” Mary and Christi were giggling.

“What are you doing here?” Jimmy had never expected to see them.

“We are all going to live here, dad.” As he hugged them both, he could not suppress his tears. As he looked through the mist, he could not believe his eyes.

That Bloody Bitch and Candy were staging a scene by passionately kissing each other.

THE END