

In one quick motion, Josh slipped the unopened condom back into the pocket of his green hoodie. "I didn't mean we had to do something this very moment," Josh said, his voice muffled by the song coming from the car CD player. "I just thought that having been together all summer, and this being homecoming night, that you might want to, you know, experiment."

"Josh Miles! I swear you are a doorknob. I've dated lots of guys and not one of them ever asked me that. What's your problem?"

"Don't be mad, Ginny. It was your idea to come here to the lake and park. I just thought I was getting signals from you that you were, you know, interested in some fun."

"Fun?" Ginny scoffed. "You got to be kidding!" Then, not waiting for Josh to respond, she continued, "Let's go swimming. Last one in is a filthy rotten egg." With that, Ginny opened the car door and started removing her clothes to reveal a neon pink bikini.

"You've got your suit on!" Josh said. Ginny's bikini highlighted her dark tan. Her tan made all the schoolboys ogle her, and Josh was a schoolboy. "Why didn't you tell me you wanted to go swimming tonight? I didn't wear mine."

"Whatever." Ginny ran down the steep hill to the beach and dove into the dark water. The faint moonlight and dim lights

from lakeside cottages illuminated the water. A woods of tall maples protected the cove and allowed only a slight breeze to skip across the surface of the water. She emerged and called out, "Josh, the water is warm. Come on, what's taking you so long?"

"Hang on, give me a minute." Josh yelled.

"I don't have a minute, buddy," said a voice from the darkness. Josh turned. A fist crashed into the side of his head. His vision blurred as a punch to his stomach folded the teen's body. A chop to the back of his neck sent Josh to the gravel. The assailant kicked and beat him until there was no longer any fight left in the teen.

The attacker slowly walked the dark beach toward Ginny. Losing his job, then being thrown out of his girlfriend's apartment, weighed heavily on his mind. Everyone made him angry, and his pent up sexual desires had led him to the beach to swim it off. He was confident the school's homecoming activities would keep people in town, and he had looked forward to an evening of solitary swimming. He hadn't planned this encounter when his walk through the park was interrupted by the teens' presence. He unleashed his anxieties on Josh, and now he focused on Ginny.

Ginny swam in the dark, warm water while she kept an eye out for Josh to come down to the beach and join her. Finally, she saw the car door close and the dome light go out. Ginny knew Josh wanted to impress his buddies and brag about getting to home base on homecoming night, but she wasn't about to let that happen. Maybe guys didn't have as much at risk as girls. She had classmates that were pregnant, and she wasn't going to be among that group. She had no desire to lose her virginity to anyone at her young age. Her religious upbringing and respect for herself was stronger than any temptation a good-looking teen boy could muster. No, she would reserve intimate activity for sometime in the future. She liked boys; there was no doubt about that. Attending school sporting events to watch the athletes perform was enough to satisfy her. Hanging out at games, going to parties, and general socializing was her agenda; sex with Josh, was not.

"Come on, Josh. What's taking you so long?"

Ginny's words fueled the attacker's anger. His girlfriend threw him out of her apartment with "What's taking you so long to find another job?" It wasn't his fault. Not many companies would hire an ex-convict, especially in these times of budget cuts and hiring freezes.

"My, you are a lovely thing," a voice from the dark said.

Ginny looked around and saw a figure that wasn't the skinny Josh she knew. The man ran into the water, grasped Ginny, and tried to pull her toward him. She escaped his clutches and dove under the water in an attempt to put some distance between her and her pursuer. She felt a hand grab her ankle. She kicked hard and was free. Panic took over. Adrenaline pumped into her system. Ginny was a good swimmer but escape would be faster on land. She needed to get to the shore, to the car. *Josh, where is Josh*, she thought. She dove to the bottom of the lake and picked up some large rocks. When she surfaced she turned and threw one of the larger rocks at her assailant hitting him. The man stopped swimming and stood in the water.

"Josh, help!" she called.

Ginny picked up more rocks and continued pummeling the man as he slowly walked toward her. Most of the rocks missed their mark, but one hit dead-on. The man staggered and fell into the water. Ginny ran along the beach and up the hillside to the parking lot. There she found Josh, now sitting next to his car trying to clear his head. Blood dripped from his nose, and his lips were bleeding and swollen.

"What happened to you?" Ginny asked.

"Damn. Some guy just clobbered me good," Josh explained. "I didn't get a good look at him. Help me up."

"Some man chased me down in the water. I threw rocks at him, and I think I hit him. Let's get out of here."

During his attack, Josh lost his keys in the gravel of the parking lot. The teens frantically looked for them, while keeping an eye out for the assailant. "We should call for help," Ginny suggested.

"Good idea, get your phone."

"The car is locked! Why did you lock the car?"

"I didn't, the guy that hit me must have locked it when he closed the door."

Just then, headlights emerged from the darkness. It was deputy Mersk on his nightly rounds. The teens flagged him down and related the recent events. Deputy Mersk radioed the information in to dispatch, got the teens seated in his car, focused his spotlight on the beach, and went down to the water's edge. From what Ginny told him, he half-expected to find a body floating in the lake. His flashlight illuminated the beach, the water, and the nearby woods, but he found nothing. If Ginny's rock did knock out the intruder, perhaps his body sank and was at the bottom of the lake. Deputy Mersk radioed in his findings and asked for Search and Rescue to send a team to the area. He returned to his squad car and found that another deputy had arrived.

"I've checked the area, but haven't found anyone," Officer Mersk said. "The girl said she hit the guy, and he fell into the water. Maybe he drowned and sank. Search and Rescue is on its way."

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The search never discovered a body. The local newspaper reported the incident. Some say Ginny and Josh made up the entire story so they wouldn't have to explain locking the car and losing the keys—not to mention Josh's split lip. Rumors spread throughout the town that a rapist frequented the beach at night. The weather soon cooled so no one went to the beach to swim; only joggers and sightseers visited the area, and they came during the day.

The man looked in the mirror at his missing front teeth. "That bitch sure had a mean arm. It was dumb luck that she actually was able to hit me with a rock. And to hit me square in the face really sucks."

He grasped the edge of the bandage on his forehead and in one quick motion yanked it off. "Don't worry little Miss Lucky, we will meet again. I know your name. I know where you live. I will be waiting for you."

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