

A short, titleless Halloween story

by Lisa Betley

Pennslake was a small four year college situated on a hill overlooking a small community. Mostly everybody knew their fellow students and neighbors and anyone new was looked upon with much care and caution.

Luke and Tony, two of the local boys, were walking down the hall from class talking about possible events that might happen on Halloween night. Luke was a very popular boy around campus. He knew, liked, and helped everyone. No matter what the problem was, Luke could help out. He seemed to have an almost sinister way about getting everything he asked for. He could get A's on tests that he never read material on, he could make captain of the basketball team without ever practicing, and he could mysteriously find money whenever he was broke.

Tony was the type of person who liked to hang around with a winner. Although he was an intelligent, quick-thinking, and fast-talking person in his own right, he'd rather build up Luke. Whenever Luke would perform another one of his miracles, Tony would come up with a good excuse of why it happened. You might say he was a real devil's advocate.

As the boys walked past Genie and Laura the girls started to talk.

"Do you think Luke will pull any of his show stoppers this year at the Halloween Dance?" asked Genie.

"What do you mean?" inquired Laura.

"Don't you remember last year's episode? Luke got in that fight at the gym and the punch bowl got smashed over his head. We saw blood running from all parts of his face and it looked like he was dead. Everyone ran out of the gym crying and screaming. Then two minutes later Luke and his sidekick, Tony, came walking out of the gym as if nothing happened. No one could believe it,

but Luke didn't have a scratch on him. And, of course, Tony came up with some kind of optical illusion story. I'm telling you that boy was dead! And then he wasn't! It seems that Luke does get everything he wants, even a second life."

"You're making too much of this, Genie."

"No I'm not. You mark my words; something is going to happen this Halloween, too."

As the girls were talking, Damon, a new freshman from another town, came up to the girls to talk. Damon was known to be a practical joker and people tended to stay away from him.

"What's happening girls?" asked Damon.

"Nothing is happening and let's keep it that way," stated Genie.

"Yea, whenever you're around things begin to fall on your head, or your dress starts to rip, or people start to laugh at you," said Laura.

"Frankly, you're not to be trusted, Damon. You haven't been here that long and nobody really knows you, yet everybody hates you," Genie stressed as she quickly made her exit.

"Why don't you get in with a respectable group of kids and do something constructive for once in your life?" Laura said with a bit of concern and a bit of sarcasm.

This encounter with the girls made Damon begin to wonder if now was the time to make his move — his move to become instantly popular. He had noticed how popular Luke was and he thought that he should have some of that status too.

"I'm sick and tired of trying to become popular with these common practical jokes. I'll give them something real to talk about," he said from an inner voice under great emotional pressure.

It was finally Halloween night and everyone was excited about what might happen when they went to the dance in the evening. Damon had been quiet and tame

all week, which led people to believe he was going to be harmless this Halloween night. But in reality, Damon had devoted every hour of the week toward planning and scheming.

It was dusk and Damon had taken his place among the trees on the side of the road opposite of the gym. Hours before, he had loosened the lugs on the wheels of Luke's car. Oh, how Damon's hatred for Luke and his car had grown over the past week. That car was part of the reason why Luke was so popular, and that same car would be his downfall. If he could only discredit Luke as a driver and prove that Luke wasn't so great, then maybe people would start swooning over him instead of Luke.

He saw Luke's car come speeding around the turn nearing the gym. He was extremely nervous, but tried to convince himself he was calm. It was chilly outside, yet Damon was hot and sweaty. His mind was ablaze with many thoughts, but his eyes could only concentrate on the car coming nearer, nearer.

Then, just at the right moment, Damon rolled two large garbage can lids out onto the road. Luke was startled and didn't know what to do. He swerved a couple of times trying to dodge the lids. Then the tires fell off the wheels just as Damon had planned.

Damon was standing on the side of the road grinning at the spectacle Luke was making of himself. He never felt so proud of such a perfectly planned deed. But what was Luke doing now? Damon couldn't understand why Luke was still accelerating. "Why doesn't he use his brakes and stop? Oh my God, he's headed toward the cliff."

"Stop!" Damon screamed. He

didn't want this to happen. If Luke died, he'd be held responsible. He began to run after the car, but it was too late. The car smashed through the guard rails and tumbled over the edge. Damon was screaming for help, but no one was around. That's when he realized that no one even saw his "well-planned" show. It was done all for nothing.

He saw the car all mangled at the foot of the cliff and the figure of a damaged body behind the wheel. All of a sudden, the car burst into an inferno of dancing flames. He imagined the flames were laughing at him and through them the sound of Luke's voice echoed. But how, was he losing his mind?

Damon decided to run back to the dance and get help. He'd tell them what happened and maybe they could rescue what was left of Luke.

When he arrived everyone was having a good time. He rushed up to Genie, who was collecting tickets at the door, and started rattling on about Luke being over the cliff.

Genie looked at him disgustedly and said, "You're just as weird as you ever were Damon. Stop your silly practical joke right now. You're not going to ruin our Halloween dance."

"You've got to believe me. Listen to me," he pleaded.

"Look," Genie pointed out the window of the door. "Luke's car is right beyond the doors and there is Luke over there with Tony. He had the nerve to come dressed as Lucifer himself."

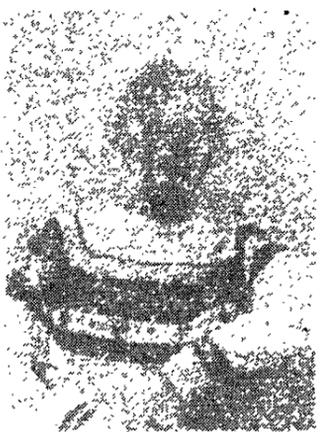
Just as Genie said Lucifer, Luke slowly turned his head toward Damon and looked directly into his frightened, wet eyes with his strong, defiant ones. Damon's mouth gaped open, he couldn't believe it. He knew what he saw, yet he knew what he was seeing.

Luke approached Damon with a slow cat-like stalk and said, "Little boys like you shouldn't play with fire, only I don't get burned."

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Dr. Orbin must attend a seminar sponsored by the Environmental Protection Agency. The seminar will give him a background on working with cases dealing in pesticide exposure. Dr. Orbin was honored to be elected.



Dr. David Orbin

Midnight walk

by Eric Riedinger

Oh Paris, sweet soft fragrance in a night's decay,
Church bells, hallways, corridors,
trainlights, and Paris,
Walk down the cobblestone way,
Life so free and fast, no time for pain,
Can't go home now, life feels too free, Oh Paris.

Soft ladies with satin clothes,
just writing letters by the Seine River,
Wine flowing from beer halls,
Ladies of the night in a bluish neon light,
No motives, nothing spoken,
Come join me in this city of past times,
Oh, can't go home now, life feels too free, Oh Paris.

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