

REVENGE OF THE HUNGRY BOOKKEEPER

by

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First Draft

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**INT. WAREHOUSE OFFICE - DAY**

The office is on the second floor of an abandoned warehouse. It's dusty, dimly lit and sparsely furnished with an old-fashioned card table and three folding chairs. The card table is stacked with a few "accounting" ledgers and an 80's style PC. Two narrow windows look out on the warehouse yard. The bottom pane of each window is screened and open.

JOE WEISS (61), a crime boss of middling success, but substantial girth, is leaning back, precariously, on one of the chairs with his feet up on the desk. HYMIE (45), one of Joe's henchmen and alleged bodyguard, is sitting on the other side of the desk playing a game of solitaire. MANI (52), another of Joe's henchmen, is standing at one of the windows. Neither of the henchmen could be described as "fit for service."

Joe's impatient; he looks at his watch.

JOE

God-damnit. He's an hour late. For what we're paying him, you'd expect him to be on time.

HYMIE

You said Tony sent him to you. Gotta be real good if Tony said he's OK.

JOE

(agitated)

Better be. Fucking prima donna. Wanted a catered lunch, for fuck's sake. What's he think I am, a fucking caterer.

HYMIE

(chuckling)

You do own three restaurants, boss.

Joe gives him an acid look. Mani looks over, alarmed.

**EXT. WAREHOUSE GATE - LATER**

A black, luxury Mercedes drives up to the warehouse yard gate and parks. No one gets out.

**INT. WAREHOUSE OFFICE - SIMULTANEOUS**

Hymie is at the window now - Mani has taken his place at the table.

HYMIE

Hey Boss, someone just pulled up to the gate.

Mani and Joe both get up and look out the window.

JOE

Must be the bookkeeper. What's he waiting for?

**INTERCUT GATE / OFFICE**

VICTORIA EPSTEIN (45), known simply as VIC to her clients, steps out of the car. She's wearing a black pencil skirt, black jacket, white blouse, and heels. She opens the rear door and pulls out a black, worn catalog case with wheels.

JOE

What the hell? Who the fuck is that?

Vic survey's the locked gate. She sees an opening torn into the fence beside the gate.

MANI

Must be the bookkeeper, Boss. You never said we was expecting a lady.

JOE

I didn't, and I wasn't. Go down and see what she wants.

Vic crouches and eases her way through the torn opening and starts walking towards the warehouse entrance. She looks up and sees Joe and Hymie at the window. The warehouse entrance door opens and Mani steps out.

MANI (O.S.)

Who are you? What do you want?

Vic stops.

VIC

You called for a bookkeeper?

MANI

Yeah. So we weren't expecting you.

VIC  
Well, here I am. You going to let  
me in, fat-man?

MANI  
You carrying?

VIC  
If I was carrying you'd be dead.

MANI  
Still, gotta pat you down.

VIC  
Touch me and I leave.

Vic and Mani stare each other down, Vic is better at it. Mani steps out from the door and looks up at his boss and shrugs, what do I do? Joe looks frustrated but moves his head indicating that they should come in.

Mani holds the door and waves in Vic. Vic walks up to the door but stops and stares down Mani.

MANI  
What now?

VIC  
You are not coming in behind me.

Mani shrugs and walks in, followed by Vic

**INT. WAREHOUSE PROPER - CONTINUOUS**

The ground floor of an deserted warehouse - rust covered posts and beams, abandoned machinery, and stacks of wooden crates covered in dust.

Mani leads Vic to a set of steel stairs going up to the offices on the second level. He climbs the steps laboriously. Vic follows with a lighter step.

Joe and Hymie are waiting for them at the office door. Joe looks at his watch as Mani joins them.

JOE  
You're late.

Vic stares him down and doesn't say anything. Finally...

VIC  
Vic Epstein. Tony referred me to  
you.

JOE  
 Tony told me to expect a  
 bookkeeper. He never said to  
 expect a dame.

VIC  
 (sighing)  
 Not one talks like that anymore  
 Joe.

More staring as they size each other up. Mani and Hymie  
 have their hands on their guns under their suit jackets.

VIC (CONT'D)  
 You going to invite me in?

Joe grunts and steps aside. Mani and Hymie take up  
 positions on each side of the door. Joe motions for her to  
 enter. Vic doesn't move.

JOE  
 Well?

Mani whispers in Joe's ear.

MANI  
 (whispering)  
 She don't like no one behind her  
 boss.

JOE  
 (under his breath)  
 Jesus Christ.

He looks at Mani, questioningly.

MANI  
 You can see she ain't carrying,  
 boss.

Joe shrugs and follows Hymie and Mani inside. Vic follows.

**INT. WAREHOUSE OFFICE - CONTINUOUS**

Vic registers the stack of ledgers, the old model computer  
 and sighs. She pulls out her phone and checks for cell and  
 wifi signals. She nods her head.

VIC  
 Clean.

She looks around the empty office and realizes there's  
 something missing.

VIC  
Where's my lunch?

JOE  
I ain't a fucking caterer.

Vic is frustrated but doesn't show it.

VIC  
Tony was very specific:  
Langoustine, duck, artisan  
cheeses, Italian coffee and a  
Piedmont Burdo with the duck.

Vic shoots daggers at Joe, then turns on her heels and leaves. Joe turns to his henchmen, puzzled and perplexed. He finally makes the decision to hustle after her.

**EXT. WAREHOUSE YARD - LATER**

Vic is scooting across the yard to the gate when Joe, huffing and puffing catches up to her.

JOE  
Vic, Vic. It was just a little  
misunderstanding.

Vic stops, turns and confronts Joe.

VIC  
(angry but controlled)  
Misunderstanding? Really? Like I  
said, Tony was very specific. No  
lunch, no service, no second  
chances.

She pauses to let that sink in.

VIC (CONT'D)  
And, it's Ms. Epstein. Don't call  
me Vic again.

Vic turns and starts towards the gate and her car. Joe follows, pleading.

JOE  
Vic. Ms. Epstein, please, maybe it  
wasn't a misunderstanding. Maybe I  
just didn't realize how important  
it was. I'll make it up to you.  
What do you want? I'll do  
anything.

(MORE)

JOE (CONT'D)  
 I'll have the boys run into town  
 to get something to eat. I'll pay  
 more more. Whatever.

Vic stops, intrigued. She's hungry, but intrigued. She turns.

VIC  
 300.

JOE  
 300? You fucking crazy?

She stares him down and says nothing. Joe shrugs, defeated.

JOE (CONT'D)  
 (reluctantly)  
 OK.

They continue to stand there. After a beat or two.

JOE (CONT'D)  
 Well, you gonna come back in, or  
 what?

It takes a beat or two but Joe finally realizes she isn't going to go back in with him behind her. He turns and starts walking back to the warehouse. Vic follows.

**INT. WAREHOUSE OFFICE - LATER**

Vic is poring through the ledgers. There are several open on the card table. She looks worried. She turns her attention to the computer and opens some of the files. She shakes her head. She calls Joe over to consult. They have their heads together while she points and gestures, turning pages, pointing to the screen. All this time, Vic has her tablet open and is making notes.

Time passes. The sun goes down and more lights go on.

Joe and his henchmen are getting antsy. Joe is pacing back and forth, pausing now and then to look over Vic's shoulder. Mani and Hymie are by the windows, glancing at their watches from time to time.

JOE  
 (clearing throat)  
 How much longer?

VIC

It's messy, no consistency, no rigour. It looks like you're losing hundreds of thousands through your various operations. Tony will not be pleased.

JOE

(incredulous)

Where? I don't believe you.

Vic motions him over and goes through several journal details, then points to the computer screen. She enters a few commands and points again.

Joe shakes his head.

JOE (CONT'D)

How do I fix it?

VIC

(shakes her head)

It won't be easy. I'll leave instructions that you'll have to follow to the letter. I can't help you with Tony, though.

Joe watches as Vic makes a few more notes on her tablet. She reaches into her catalog case and pulls out a portable printer. She sets it up, puts in paper and enters some commands on her laptop. A couple of sheets of dense text are slowly printed. Joe, Hymie and Mani crowd around, more impressed with the technology than her instructions.

When the sheets are printed, she deletes the file on her tablet, powers off her equipment and puts everything back into her case before turning her attention back to Joe. She stands and hands Joe one of the sheets.

VIC

These are the corrections and adjustments you need to make to the ledgers. You can't do anything about what's lost, but it won't happen again.

She hands Joe the other sheet.

VIC (CONT'D)

These are the changes that need to be made to the accounting systems at your "fronts". That'll help going forward.

(MORE)

VIC (CONT'D)

You'll see that I added a couple of notes about what to say when you get audited.

Joe looks over the sheets. He nods like he knows what to do.

VIC (CONT'D)

When you're done, burn the sheets. I'm finished here. Call Tony tonight and make arrangements for the new fee.

JOE

That's it? You done? 300 for two sheets of paper. You trying to cheat me or something?

Vic gives Joe a pitying stare.

VIC

Tonight!

She turns and leaves. Joe and his henchmen watch her leave and hear her making her way down the stairs. Joe turns to Mani.

JOE

Bitch!

He folds the paper and puts it into the inside pocket on his suit jacket.

JOE (CONT'D)

Come on, boys. Help me get this back into the car.

Joe, Mani and Hymie start packing up.

**INT. VIC'S MERCEDES - LATER**

Vic is driving back to town. We see the city lights in the close distance. Her mobile rings. She sees it's Tony. She touches the monitor to answer hands free.

VIC

Tony.

TONY (O.S.)

What'd you do to Joe?

VIC  
What I was paid to do.

TONY (O.S.)  
He's pissed. Says you show up and  
try to extort another 200 out of  
him.

VIC  
No lunch.

TONY (O.S.)  
Oh.

Tony is silent for a beat or two.

TONY (O.S.)  
What's my exposure?

VIC  
None.

TONY (O.S.)  
Do what you have to.

The line goes silent. Vic drives on.

**EXT. NONDESCRIPT STRIP MALL - DAY**

Vic's black Mercedes drives into the strip mall and finds a parking space in front of a nondescript office store front. She steps out. She's in a dark blue pant suit today, wearing heels, big sunglasses and a broad-brimmed hat. She walks into the office.

**INT. NONDESCRIPT OFFICE - LATER**

FBI agent BERNIE KATZ (42) is sitting at a worn, gunmetal, government surplus desk and matching chair. His desk is piled with file folders. He's working on one of those files now. There's a knock on the door.

BERNIE  
Come.

Vic enters and approaches the desk.

BERNIE (CONT'D)  
Victoria. What a surprise. Please.  
Have a seat.

Vic sits in one of the metal chairs on the other side of the desk.

VIC  
Bernie.

BERNIE  
To what do I owe the pleasure?

Vic hands Bernie a couple of tightly typewritten sheets. He reads them. He looks up.

BERNIE (CONT'D)  
This is good. Joe Weiss. We've been after him for years.

VIC  
No you haven't, otherwise you'd have already nabbed him. The man's sloppy and lazy.

BERNIE  
You're right. Why you giving him to us?

VIC  
Sort of like a yard sale. You were in the market and I need to sell something I had no use for.

BERNIE  
Don't want to know.

VIC  
We good?

Bernie pauses to think.

BERNIE  
Yes... For now

Vic gets up.

VIC  
Goodbye.

She turns and reaches the door.

BERNIE  
Drop by again if Tony every shows up in your yard sale.

Vic turns and gives Bernie an in-your-dreams smile, then exits, closing the door quietly behind her.

FADE TO BLACK.