

The Car Outside
by Molly Weinfurter

The car remained parked outside. It had been there for weeks now. Just a rusty red Chevy Cobalt. But I was certain I knew who it belonged to.

“Addi, have you noticed that ugly red car parked out back?” I asked my coworker as she turned off the open sign of the restaurant. I swept the floor, waiting for her response, but she only shrugged.

“What red car?”

I sighed. “Every time I come to work and every time I leave, there is always a rusty Cobalt parked there as well. It’s been there for weeks! Have you not seen it?”

She grabbed a broom from the supply closet to help me sweep. “Kat, you know I’m not really that observant. But even if there is a little red car parked outside, so what? I always thought you loved little cars like that.”

“Well, yeah I guess. Maybe ugly wasn’t the right word, but still, don’t you think it’s a bit odd that it’s been there so long?”

She shrugged, not meeting my gaze. “Not really.”

I rolled my eyes and leaned the broom up against the counter. I walked over to Addi and grabbed her arm, pulling her close so she could really hear me. “Addi, listen. Isn’t that the car that Brandon drove?”

“Brandon?”

“You know, the Brandon that used to work here. The Brandon that I dated. The Brandon that—”

She pushed me away. “Yeah, I know who Brandon is. And don’t worry, I heard all about what happened with you two.”

My eyes widened. “Wait, what did you hear?”

“Oh, you know. That he was mean, that he hurt you, just general stuff like that,” she said as she continued to sweep. “Is it true?”

I clenched my fists as the memories came flooding back to me. The yelling. The screaming. The scars on my body and in my mind. I shook my head and glanced out the back window of the restaurant. The car remained parked outside.

“Yeah, it’s true.”

Addi glanced up at me and frowned. She dropped the broom and took my hand, dragging me toward the back door. “Then why are we just standing here? Come on.”

“Addi, what are we doing?” I pulled backwards, releasing myself from her grasp.

“He’s a jerk that has no right to leave his car here mocking you! He’s the one that quit, remember? Last time I checked, quitting meant that you did not come back.”

“What are you planning to do?” I asked. “I can’t even imagine what he’d do to us if he found out we did something to his car.”

“Kat, listen to yourself! You’re the one that is bothered by his car being there, so why not do something about it?”

I shrugged, taking a step backwards. “Couldn’t we just leave him a note? Or couldn’t you just text him and tell him to move it?”

“Not good enough. Guys like him can’t be easily reasoned with. I just need to find something to smash it with.” She scanned the area, sorting through various kitchen supplies. I glanced out the window and frowned. The car remained outside.

“Addi, even if he did make my life a living hell, I don’t think that it’s right to retaliate like this.”

Addi finally grabbed a large kitchen knife and held it high. “Well, why don’t we go outside and face this car, then? Maybe then you’ll change your mind.” She shoved me out the back door. I closed my eyes, refusing to look at his car. The car that I had ridden in many times before. I shook my head furiously. He had shoved me out the car door once due to a simple disagreement. He had hit me once just for changing the music in that car.

My eyes flew open. The car remained parked outside.

“Give me that knife,” I said as I snatched it from Addi’s grasp.

“But Kat—”

I stepped toward the car, lifting the hammer high in the air. All I could picture was Brandon towering over me, threatening to hit me himself.

“Kat!”

I flew around and glared at her. “Addi, what do you want? You’re the one that encouraged me to do this!”

Her mouth hung wide open as she shook her head. “But Kat... there’s no car there.”

“What?” I said, turning back toward the car only to see an empty parking space.

The car no longer remained parked outside.