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## Revenge Is Sweet

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## Revenge Is Sweet

### **Abstract**

It was the first time in my life that I had been alone. Yet I didn't feel lonely. I was enjoying my own space, my own time, discovering myself and all that. I did sense the presence of something slightly threatening. Now I look back, I did sense something, yes. It was during the night. Sometimes I would lift my head, thinking I heard a noise. My neck and body would stiffen as all my senses, especially my ears and eyes strained radar-like in search of potential danger. I lay there like a piece of petrified wood or one of those terrible lava preserved images from Pompeii. I would think up possible methods of attack and escape routes - most of them probably far more devastating in theory than they could possibly be in actuality. I suppose I wasted good sleeping hours in this way for about three months, on and off. I would get up in the morning and find my book was not where I thought I had left it. My scissors disappeared. There was sugar on the floor in the kitchen ... not much just enough to annoy me, crunching and sticking to my feet. Once the coffee jar was lying in the cupboard with its lid off. I don't drink coffee. I keep a jar in the cupboard for when guests come. I can't say I thought too much of all this though. These things have always happened to me in varying degrees. My imagination has been known to have fun with the creaks and groans of old houses and I can be absent-minded at the best of times.

GAELE SOBOTT-MOGWE

## Revenge Is Sweet

It was the first time in my life that I had been alone. Yet I didn't feel lonely. I was enjoying my own space, my own time, discovering myself and all that. I did sense the presence of something slightly threatening. Now I look back, I did sense something, yes. It was during the night. Sometimes I would lift my head, thinking I heard a noise. My neck and body would stiffen as all my senses, especially my ears and eyes strained radar-like in search of potential danger. I lay there like a piece of petrified wood or one of those terrible lava preserved images from Pompeii. I would think up possible methods of attack and escape routes - most of them probably far more devastating in theory than they could possibly be in actuality. I suppose I wasted good sleeping hours in this way for about three months, on and off. I would get up in the morning and find my book was not where I thought I had left it. My scissors disappeared. There was sugar on the floor in the kitchen...not much just enough to annoy me, crunching and sticking to my feet. Once the coffee jar was lying in the cupboard with its lid off. I don't drink coffee. I keep a jar in the cupboard for when guests come. I can't say I thought too much of all this though. These things have always happened to me in varying degrees. My imagination has been known to have fun with the creaks and groans of old houses and I can be absent-minded at the best of times.

I had been at Leloba's house. We'd been chewing on sweet reed and laughing a lot about people and work. It was dark when I got home. Leloba had given me a huge water melon which I was carrying in my arms in the dark. The dogs rubbed their wet noses behind my knees, wagging their tails, bouncing their front paws off the ground and scraping them down my legs. The lights were on and loud rhythms were blasting their base out the windows. It was my music so I liked it but I couldn't remember leaving it on. I didn't have any remote control or automatic gadgets. Maybe one of the kids had come home. A surprise? In some kind of trouble? I balanced the melon against the wall and fumbled around in my basket for the house keys. Surely the kids would have phoned. The door's open...stupid of me. The blame yourself for all the silly things that happen syndrome had plagued me for years.

'Oh, shit! What is that?' I yelled. The water melon splattered across the floor. 'A Tokoloshe!' It was so horrible. The sight. He came dancing up to me, grinning, swigging gin and sweating. I knew it was a Tokoloshe from

the descriptions I'd heard as a kid. Long furry ears, a pointed snout and spotted body. He was short and seethed a greasy sexuality. Thrusting his pelvis back and forth in time to the music. Leering. Blood shot eyes. He grabbed my arm and pulled me towards the kitchen.

'Come, cook for me my sweetheart!'

This was typical Tokoloshe behaviour. They have ravenous appetites and love meat.

'Ao batla nama?' I asked in a timid voice. 'Yes, give me meat, meat, meat!'

He pivoted on one foot and then sprang across the kitchen floor cackling.

I remembered someone saying that if a Tokoloshe has eaten well it will leave you alone. At least for a while. I had also heard that Tokoloshes hate salt. That is one sure way to rid yourself of a Tokoloshe. Feed it salt. I eyed the salt shaker. The meat was sizzling in the pan. He was still gyrating on the kitchen floor. I edged closer to the bench and stretched my arm out, slowly, very slowly. Where was he? I couldn't hear him. I stood still, my hand inches away from the salt shaker. I stood there listening, trying to place him. Where was he? His grimacing face exploded from under my skirt, a twisted screeching and salivating mass of teeth and hair. He had wheedled his way between my legs. I screamed, cold sudden fear pounding through my heart and lungs. His long grey finger nails hooked around the cupboard door handles and the drawer handles.

He clambered up on to the bench, picked up the salt shaker and pelted it across the room.

'Clean it up!' he spat.

I swept the salt and glass into a heap, scooped it up and threw it into the kitchen tidy. He grunted and began stuffing the meat and onions from the frying pan into his mouth, watching me from the corner of his eyes. Belching and making sloshy noises as he chewed. I pushed my back against the wall and watched him. He seemed to calm down. He rubbed his bloated stomach and burped again.

'Thank you, my darling! I'll see you later. Ke tla go bona kgantele, neh?' The words slithered by my ear as he disappeared in stages. He didn't just disappear suddenly - there one minute gone the next. He faded out of sight in phases with different colours predominating at various intervals. Reds and browns, greens, khaki, and mustard yellow. Digestion colours. Regurgitation and vomit colours.

I didn't waste any time. I ran outside. The dogs were jumping all over me. Excited by my late night activity. I carried bricks into the house. Two at a time. Scraping the inside of my arms. Rubbing red brick dust all over my blouse. I kept going until I had sixteen bricks in my bedroom. I placed four under one bed leg. The bed fell and grazed my back. I started crying and sat there for a while with my head in my hands. I removed three of the bricks. Then I placed one brick at a time under each bed leg. It made

more sense. Until the bed was perched up four bricks higher than its normal height. Four bricks under each bed leg.

I had to shower and put on a clean night dress. Somehow it felt better. I climbed onto my bed too tired to worry about eating, washing up the frying pan or cleaning up the smashed water melon. I actually fell asleep despite everything. For a while anyway. He came at sunrise. I knew he would. He came into the room. I could see his eyes shining. He was calling me and whispering obscenities. Heavy breathing, the lot. I waited. I rolled into the middle of the bed. His voice was becoming more desperate, beginning to squeak.

'Why, why did you do that?' he squealed.

He sprang up. His long nails scratched the air. He began screaming, screeching, turning in circles but he couldn't reach the bed. He disappeared. Suddenly this time, in a whirlwind of profanity and burning heat.

'Eat your heart out Rumpelstiltskin!' I whispered and fell asleep.

I phoned in sick. I had to rest. He'd be back. I cleaned the house, cooked a delicious lunch and ate it in the garden. I fed the dogs early. I didn't want him to do anything horrible to them. No one believes stories about Tokoloshes. I hadn't really believed the stories I had heard about Tokoloshes but at least I had listened to them. Most people get rid of Tokoloshes by feeding them salt. How was I going to get rid of this one? The bed trick was great but he'd be back. He'd bring his friends. I knew that from the stories.

He did come. He came with a woman Tokoloshe. He sneered at me. She smiled shyly. I put some music on and pulled out a bottle of whisky.

'Now you're getting the hang of it,' he cackled 'Have you taken the bricks out from under your bed? eeh? Have you?'

He was dancing and swigging great gulps of whisky from the bottle. She was also dancing. Laughing.

'Let's brighten up the decor!' he yelled and pulled over the bookshelf. He kicked a chair and sent it flying across the room. 'Fruit! Hee Hee!' He squashed some grapes into the wall and nibbled and licked pieces of the green grape skin from under his nails, spitting the seeds against the windows and watching them as they made slimy paths down the glass. I was beginning to lose my temper. I knew it would just make things worse but my control was slipping away.

'Have you cooked? Have you cooked my meat?' he screamed.

I could see right down his reddish maroon spotted throat and smelt the hot stench. I was going to be sick. Sour milk and stale gin mixed with something beyond definition.

'Cook my meat! Cook my meat!'

I sucked air through my back teeth - 'tlhh, oa ntena monna!' He pushed me, digging his nails into my back.

'Ke batla nama! I want meat!'

I stumbled into the kitchen, got out the frying pan and threw in a big piece of fillet. He was watching me slyly. The woman was still dancing in the other room making soft crooning noises. I chopped up some cabbage, tomatoes and onions. He loved it. I left him there stuffing the partly cooked food down his throat, slobbering and drivelling over the frying pan.

She was still dancing and crooning. I watched her hips sway. Her eyes were closed. I began dancing with her. She opened her eyes and smiled at me. I picked her up very gently. We danced across the floor, up the hall to my bedroom. I stroked her neck and back as I climbed up onto the bed. She continued to smile and made bubbly pigeon noises. I could hear him looking for us. He was scuffling and burping his way up the hall. I kissed her downy cheek. She kissed my shoulder. My skin did something it had never done before. It tasted her kiss. My skin became my tongue. I sucked her sweet nectar kiss into my pores and thought of the purple, slim-necked flowers I siphoned from the bees when I was a child. He was in the room. I could feel his presence. I could feel him watching us. Watching us in stunned amazement. I don't know when his hideous screaming started or stopped. Blue, red, green flashing lights getting louder and louder and then fading off into the distance. Gone forever. Nna Ke ile ka thulamela. I fell into a deep, sweet jazz sleep. Continuous slumberous curves, peaking and falling into honeyed ripples.