

VENGEANCE
by Eric Christianson

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GENRE: Vengeance is a feature-length revenge thriller in the vein of Lucky Number Slevin and Fargo.

SETTING: The story is set in present day and weaves back and forth between various locals in Redding, CA and the densely wooded area surrounding nearby Whiskeytown Lake.

LOGLINE: An unscrupulous DA hires a ruthless hitman to rescue his daughter and dispatch her kidnapers, but when the daughter's captors reveal her father's villainous ways, she sides with them in their fight for survival...and justice.

SYNOPSIS: After spending the last eleven years in prison for a crime he claims to be innocent of, bitter ex-con LUTHER GRIMES is determined to avenge this miscarriage of justice by kidnapping the daughter of the man who wronged him...

...SIMON BECK, the overly ambitious PA at his trial. Luther is convinced Simon withheld evidence that could have exonerated him and is determined to prove it.

With the help of his own daughter, MOLLY, and his girlfriend, ex-prison guard DARLA EVANS, the threesome kidnap RACHEL BECK and hold her hostage. When they contact Simon, via Rachel's phone, they have two goals:

- 1) Make Simon feel Luther's pain (Darla was pregnant with Molly at the time of the trial and the only contact Luther has had with Molly has been a handful of prison visits).
- 2) Persuade Simon to come clean about the trial so that he pays for his misdeeds and Luther can finally have justice.

But Simon values his career too much to do anything that would jeopardize it. Instead of complying, he hires sadistic professional killer, HITOMI KWAN, to rescue Rachel and off her kidnapers....

...whom idealistic Rachel becomes more and more sympathetic toward the more she learns about why she's been abducted. Still conflicted over her love for her father, Rachel loyalties are tested once Kwan arrives on the scene.

After an encounter that leaves Luther in a coma and Darla on the verge of being executed, Rachel makes her choice, snatching up Luther's pistol and shooting Kwan in the chest. He staggers backwards and falls onto a kerosene lamp, knocking it over and igniting a nearby gas generator. Following a huge explosion, the cabin is ablaze and Darla and the girls drag Luther away from the flames just in time.

Meanwhile, Simon has been arrested, as his trophy wife, ANDREA, overheard the phone conversation about hiring Kwan and ratted him out to the police. Simon refuses to cooperate...

...until Rachel is brought in and the two have a face-to-face. Rachel convinces Simon to admit his wrong-doings in exchange for her forgiveness. He is true to his word and, at his trial, months later, admits that it was actually he who committed the hit-and-run eleven years ago and framed Luther for it.

Luther has remained in a coma all this time but finally shows signs of life after an emotional visit from Darla. Still unconscious, memories begin flooding into his mind, and we finally learn the truth about what happened the night Luther was arrested:

An intoxicated Luther, traveling along a lonely county road, hits something big, stops to investigate, and glimpses a large buck scurry into the brush. As he heads back to his car, he hears a faint cry for help and there, at the edge of his headlight beams, finds MILO JENKINS, whom Simon had accidentally plowed into and dumped there earlier. Milo pleads with Luther to call 911 but Luther, instead, crashes Milo's head into the pavement, killing him just as the state troopers arrive.

Why? His memories also reveal that Milo had been blackmailing Luther to guarantee his silence about a one-night stand Luther had with some woman he met at a bar...who turns out to be Simon's first wife, EMILY (Rachel's mother), who was determined to get even with Simon for his philandering and had picked Luther at random to seduce.

Given the earlier references to Molly and Rachel being similar enough to be sisters, one is left to conclude that Luther - not Simon - may very well be Rachel's biological father!

CHARACTERS

LUTHER GRIMES: Ex-con trying to go straight. Not evil at heart but his incarceration jaded him enough to want revenge, given how little he has seen his daughter. Had a one-night stand he regrets and never told...

DARLA EVANS, his long-time girlfriend who stuck by him during his prison stint. Darla spent four years on the MMA circuit and has a secret of her own: she was sweethearts at law school with the PA of Luther's trial and, in fact, seduced him before the trial so that he...

SIMON BECK, would go easy on Luther. Simon did not, securing a conviction by withholding evidence, all so he could get a conviction to pad his resume, as he has his sights set on a State Attorney General appointment. He, too, has a secret, its revelation resulting from a promise he made to his daughter...

RACHEL BECK, idealistic, athletic, striker on her soccer team, and proficient with a firearm, thanks to Simon's training. Displays great courage while kidnapped. Uncanny resemblance to:

MOLLY EVANS, Darla's daughter. Conniving like her mother. Developed skills in computer hacking and being a pickpocket but eventually bonds with Rachel and regrets her behavior.

HITOMI KWAN: Ruthless professional hitman. His proficiency with swords and knives earned him his moniker "the Blade". Hired by Simon to rescue Rachel and leave no witnesses alive.

EMILY BECK: Simon's first wife and mother to Rachel. Simon's infidelity and lack of scruples drove Emily crazy and she was committed to the local asylum, but not before getting her revenge by sleeping with a random guy she seduced at a local bar....Luther!