

The Hairpin
by Jack Dungeon

It was Friday night....

I was sitting on a bench at the mall. It was the same bench where I first noticed Rachel. She was seventeen and looked like a dream. Long brown hair and a cheerful smile. A small body with dark innocent eyes. When she talked to you, you felt like you were somebody. Almost as if you were finally living. Like you'd spent your whole life just waiting for this girl.

She had some sort of wild energy about her. The way she laughed, I swear it would take you back to your childhood days. I would often imagine the two of us together. Going to parties, making love. I wanted her, couldn't stop thinking of her.

She used to work at one of the kiosks in the mall. She would always wear these tight dresses showing off the contours of her body.

I thought she was beautiful. I had approached her a dozen times, but she just wouldn't open herself up to me. It was like she was displeased with me, irritated for some reason.

Sometimes I'd see her sitting in the food court and I'd walk over and say hello or ask how her day was going. Most of the time, she would make up some lame excuse why she couldn't talk.

I forgot her for awhile. I mean there were other girls. And I had a life of my own. But then one

day, I saw her again. We were both in line at Orange Julius. I smiled and asked her if she wanted to catch a movie sometime. She agreed. But when the day came around she never showed.

That's when I met Kim: this Korean guy who worked at one of the other food huts in the mall. His father owned a small pawn shop downtown. I went out there with him a few times. The place his father ran was located in this really old building that had carved wood and gold trim. You could tell it had been nice at one time. Now it was a dark, dingy place filled with stuff everywhere. Nice stuff: glass cases with expensive jewelry and coins, Rolexes, video games, you name it, whatever you wanted. But you couldn't see half the stuff. Besides it being dark inside, the electricity was so bad that the lights would flicker every 10 seconds.

Kim had watched me get rejected and stood up by Rachel time and again. Then one day he told me he could hook me up with her.

But Kim was no ladies' man. His father had this electric hairpin at the pawn shop. Some inventor had supposedly spent twenty years working on the invention. A hair pin that, when put into a person's hair would send impulses to the person's brain programming them to fall in love with you. In the end, the guy went broke and was never able to release it. He said it had one major flaw. Once the person was programmed, there was no way to reverse it. Falling on hard times he traded it in for a loan at the pawn shop. Said it would be worth millions, he got a hundred dollars for it.

Kim said he would sell it to me, if I promised not tell anyone where I got it. I passed on the idea at first. It sounded ludicrous, a little too out there. But then I would see her. And desire is desire. So I eventually gave way. I sold my car, this sweet Supra I had saved up for. It had a 2JZ Turbo engine and a jet black paint job. I spent years building the engine and fine tuning the car. But cars and racing were no longer my obsession. Rachel was. I took the money I got from my car and scraped together what I had left in the bank and bought the hairpin.

The hairpin was silver with little white crystals all over it. Kim warned me not to mess around

with it, so I didn't try it out before I went to see Rachel. When I walked up to her I told her there was a spider in her hair. I pretended to lift the spider off her head. And placed the hairpin in her ponytail instead. She just looked annoyed and turned away.

The hairpin came with a diagram and the diagram said it would take approximately 2 hours for the programming to complete. So I waited around and then went back before Rachel left for the day. I told her I was checking to see that the spider hadn't returned and then lifted the hairpin out of her head.

But this time she smiled. She started laughing and joking around with me. Then she asked me to hang out with her after work. We went for pizza at Garazzi's and then walked along the pier. It was like never before. Rachel told me about growing up and what she always wanted to do in life. Her favorite movies and the bands she'd seen live. On a whim I put my hand on hers and she accepted. When we got back to my place, I invited her in. Usually I'd wait, but I wanted to see if she was really into me.

So we went downstairs, and we were all over each other. It was pure pleasure. All this from a girl, who a few weeks prior would barely speak to me.

Time was never better and things went great for awhile. I had the girl I had really wanted. And she was in love with me. Madly in love.

But that's how the problems all started. If a girl started talking to me, Rachel would get really upset. Flying off the handle upset Threatening the other girl, calling her a tramp.

This one time we were having dinner at this nice restaurant off Broadway. And the waitress started to take our order. She smiled and called me sweetheart. And Rachel got pissed. When the waitress came back with the food. Rachel took her plate of spaghetti and dumped it all over the waitress.

I mean, if I left her for a second, she drilled me with tons of questions. I never got any sleep or made it to work on time. So eventually the boss fired me. And then we lost the lease on our place. A

I remember the night she moved in. I was at work and got a call from her mom. Rachel had been admitted to the hospital earlier that morning. She kept coming home late at night, breaking curfew. And would often fight with her parents. Her mom had obviously noticed the changes in her. Was tired of dealing with her and asked me if I wanted to pick her up from the hospital and keep her.

Rachel wasn't able to work. She would get a job and show up, but the whole time she would be on the phone trying to call me. The company would always fire her. Her reasoning of course was she was in love and needed to be near me.

So we went to stay with my grandmother. But things got worse there and Rachel's behavior became really erratic. Every night she would sit up in bed and question if I loved her; she would go on for hours. She would scream and cry that she loved me. I would wake up in the middle of the night, and she would be staring at the wall, cursing and swearing that she loved me.

I never imagined I would have this kind problem, me of all people. I had been with other girls, but never like this.

The last outbreak was harrowing. Rachel had blood all over her body. She cut herself on the glass. She looked in the mirror, told the person she saw reflected back that she loved me. She punched the mirror and broke the glass. Then she picked up the broken pieces and gashed her skin. There was blood all over and she was shaking. Questioning herself, asking why she didn't love me enough.

The paramedics arrived in time to save her. But now three thousand stitches line her body from face to toe. And you know she'll never be the same.

The End.

Bio: Ace Dungeon grew up reading fiction novels and short stories, finding in these stories a place to

Hairpin/Dungeon

5

live and a place to escape. He attended college for a short time in Nebraska and Iowa before dropping out to pursue his own writing dreams. He is the writer and composer for the Kentucky Fried Mouse. He is currently at work on his first novel.

Website: <http://www.kentuckyfriedmouse.com>