

Casualties of War

A Story by Peter

The year was 1954, and I was about 13 years old. The Korean war had ended just last summer. Social services allowed me to live by myself since I had the economic means and I was mature for my age. My uncle agreed to keep tabs on me. As a teenager I was worth about 2 million, inherited from my parents who were deceased. My mother had died during childbirth and my dad who I lived with for a while died as a soldier on duty during the war. I was living with my uncle; we were not fond of each other and as soon as I could move out I did. I decided to purchase a small house on the main street in Mithaven. I was a bit of a loner and decided I didn't want to go to school. Social services allowed me to hire a private tutor / assistant for my schooling and housekeeping. I hired a beautiful young Korean woman who was about 20. I bought a new car planning on learning how to drive, and gave her a set of keys to allow her to use it. Not very many people in town had a car especially a new one and that led to some jealousy. A number of people in town had their noses out of joint at the fact that I'd hired someone with a Korean heritage as a tutor.

Mithaven was a small town west of Chaseford, and home to a nearby sizeable army training base. Historically the base had been present since frontier times. Centrally located to allow minimal transit time for troops to travel in any direction.

Steve didn't know what to do with himself. He'd been honorably discharged from the army as unfit for duty as the war was ending. Steve was a young man suffering from PTSD acquired during his tour in Korea during the war. On his last couple of missions he'd either frozen up or lashed out violently and unexpectedly; he was done as a soldier. He'd planned on making the army a career and now that wasn't possible. After about a year of obtaining then losing odd jobs due to anger issues he thought he finally may have found another occupation: insurance sales. The work hours were more flexible, he could schedule his own appointments or go door to door as a foot salesman as desired. He had only to meet his monthly quota in sales. How he did that was largely up to him.

Steve and myself were on an unfortunately collision course.

As a young insurance agent Steve kept pestering me to buy home and car insurance and I kept refusing to. I kept telling him I didn't need it as I was young, didn't have anyone depending on me, and I could afford to replace anything that broke. That infuriated him. He could see that I had a lot of money and yet wouldn't spend a dime on insurance.

One day after school my tutor was teaching me how to drive the car and Steve showed up. He was angry already. When he saw who my tutor was his eyes went funny. He grabbed the tutor out of the drivers side of the car and tossed her in the back. He then took a knife and sliced her open, eviscerated her and tossed her innards on the front seat of the car beside me. Afraid he was going to kill me too, I thought to get him talking and calmed down. I asked him why he did that, and all he said was 'that's what you were really after isn't it? That's why you need insurance.'

Steve was promptly arrested by the police and confessed to the crime. Apparently he'd been in quite a bit of distress and unable to control his actions.