

2. APPETTTE

Even as a newborn babe the evil came through. It was there staring back at the would-be caretakers who came along after “she-who-gave-birth” had fled in fright. Her departure was not so much because of the infant’s cold reptilian eyes that followed her everywhere, but more as a result of the very pointed razor-sharp teeth that erupted *en masse* on his third day and nearly ripped away her left breast from which he voraciously fed. The caretakers weren’t too far behind her. But still, he grew older and stronger, despite life’s best efforts to the contrary. And the evil grew with him.

No one can ever say for sure where evil comes from. They can only tell you where it goes and what it does. And his was an evil that was meant to go far and wide, doing much along the way. With no real conscience to pester or constrain him, his appetite ruled. On sight, instinct persuaded most humans, canines, felines, and other conscious living entities to back away from him, very, very slowly, before then turning to run as fast as the wind could carry them. A rank odor of death and decay came through the heavy sweat of his gray mottled flesh and soiled clothing. Even from a distance, his massive misshapen bulk of a body and bulging eyes beneath sparse greasy lank hair repelled close contact and offered little inspiration for intimacy.

Yet, there were those who would have tried to love him. Sympathy and compassion often discover judicious discrimination only in the left-over rubble of a “woefully-realized-too-late” error. He just called them all prey...

6. JUST DESSERTS

Revenge is big business. No matter what the economy or the rest of the world may be doing, revenge always sells. That’s why Kelsi didn’t think that she needed to advertise too strongly when she opened up shop and hung out her new sign. “Just Desserts” in big straight black letters. Under that, in a smaller red, arabesque, curly-cue font— “Tarot Reading, Spiritual Guidance & Spells”. Of course, the spells were the main order of business. But it never pays to be too obvious.

And it may not bear repeating, but revenge, retaliation, and intentional targeted consequences are in season all year round. Don’t believe that old cliché about “a dish best served cold”. As one of the most primal instincts of almost all living beings, the unholy trinity of vengeance, retribution, and payback ranks high on the list of human inspirations and aspirations--right up there with faith, hope, and love. And it doesn’t matter if it’s cold, hot, lukewarm, or tepid. When a reckoning is in order, there’s no time like the present.

Kelsi also didn’t worry too much about attracting a new clientele. She knew that they would find her. Nonetheless, ever so often, a few touristy goofballs did wander in looking for ice cream, cakes, pastries, and the like (why do some people never read the small print?). She would quickly shoo them away...

9. MY MOTHER AND OTHER MONSTERS

Defying most definitions of monsters as “large, ugly, and frightening”, Matilda was very petite, pretty, and friendly. However, make no mistake, she was, indeed, a monster and she had much pride in this respect. She had been loved and cherished as a child (but not by everybody) and then worshipped and respected as an adult (but, once again, not by everybody). And this is what seemed to vex her the most—because it was her belief (and it was a very deep-seated conviction)—that absolutely EVERYBODY was supposed to love and cherish

her and then in turn, worship and respect her. After all, she took the utmost care to always hide her fangs and claws.

I think that, of all the people who are the last to know about these things, it is always the naïve little children who find it hard to believe their own sweet mom or dad is really just a common, garden-variety monster. Maybe I should have paid more attention...