

The Joy of Revenge - Chapter 1 Prologue

Prologue

Let me tell you a story...

Once upon a time, there was a young girl named Joy. She lived in a small town called New Salem in North Dakota. Her family wasn't rich, but they weren't considered poor either. Her parents were hardworking and religious folk and they were respected among the town's people.

Her mother named her Joy because when she was born, she brought joy into their lives. Her mother and father had been trying so long to have a baby and when her mother became pregnant, her parents were so happy. Finally, after so many years of all the disappointments and false alarms, they were going to have a baby.

Joy's mother had to stay in bed all throughout her pregnancy. There was a bit of bleeding during the first trimester, so the doctor ordered her mother to stay in bed. Her mother didn't mind if she wasn't allowed out of the house. She believed it was all for a good cause. Joy's father hired someone else to help him at the small grocery store they owned in town and also hired some help around the house so Joy's mother could take of herself and their baby. He'd do anything just as long as their little Joy came out healthy.

When Joy was born, her mother said she came out howling. She had strong lungs and the doctor said she was healthy as a horse. When the nurse came to her mother's room so she could suckle, Joy's cries were so loud, they could already hear her as the nurse came. But once Joy was in her mother's arms, she quieted instantly, like she knew she belonged there. Her father brought all their friends to the hospital to come see Joy. He was so proud.

Joy grew up like any other little girl. Playing games with all her friends, riding her bike to the park, eating ice cream on a hot summer's day and watching the stars on a clear starlit night. She was always full of energy. She could never sit still for a second...not even for the Taylor family's annual Christmas photo they hand out to friends and family. Joy was always seen fidgeting, she could never keep still.

When it was time for Joy to go to school, she fit right in with all her peers. She was one of the brightest in her class and the students and teachers in the local grade school always fawned over her. She was a pretty little girl with

chestnut colored hair and aquamarine colored eyes. There was usually an ongoing debate whether Joy's eyes were green or blue. To stop the squabbling, her father would say everyone was right. He told them Joy's eye color depended on the time of day. When it was bright, they were green. When it was dark, they were blue like the ocean.

Everything seemed fine for the Taylors until Joy entered high school. Sure, she was still one of the brightest in her class, but the students and teachers in the local high school no longer fawned over her. She was skinny, tall and awkward for a freshman while the other girls her age had nice perky breasts and were curvaceous. For the first time in her life, Joy became the butt of someone's joke, the receiving end of a prank, a victim of a bully.

Joy would often wonder why did people need to undergo puberty as she'd stare at herself in the mirror before dressing for school. Everything was fine before high school. No one made fun of her, criticized her, or laughed at her. What was so special about breasts or sashaying hips?

Well, Joy didn't mind just as long as her bestfriend, Noah, was beside her. When they were little, Noah's family moved into a house along their cul-de-sac. He was shy and timid and had a stutter, but Joy didn't mind. To her, Noah was special.

Noah was smaller than the average boy and he was picked on a lot. Joy would always defend him from the playground bullies, hold his hand when he was hurt, and shared everything of hers with him. They were two peas in a pod. Where one was, it was expected the other was there too. They only separated when they had to go home to sleep.

One night, when they were stargazing under the clear night sky on a picnic blanket at the meadow near Joy's house, they made a pact that they would always be friends forever, no matter what. Noah smiled at her with that adorable toothless grin of his and hugged her real tight. Joy knew in her heart that Noah would never leave her. Not now, not ever.

But unlike Joy, who obviously was a late bloomer, Noah began to grow into the man he was destined to be during their freshmen year. He grew tall and his muscles started to form. He was no longer toothless and was blessed with perfect white teeth. His blonde hair shined like wheat in the sunlight and his chocolate brown eyes twinkled when he smiled. The freckles around the bridge of his nose gave him that manly charm. He even grew out of his stutter. When they walked through their school together, Noah in his favorite white T-

shirt tucked in his ripped blue jeans, the girls would all sigh as he passed them.

Unfortunately, their friendship changed the summer before their sophomore year when Noah got a job flipping burgers at the local diner in town. He made friends with the kids who used to bully him in grade school. They were the popular kids in their high school and they believed Noah would be a good fit in their group. Yeah, they were all handsome and beautiful, some of them rich with powerful parents, and Noah knew being friends with them would give him an edge to get where he wanted to be in the future. He began ignoring Joy and brushing her off when she came to see him. It broke Joy's heart. She understood people did change, but she couldn't believe Noah, of all people, would hurt her.

During their sophomore year, Joy was now all alone. What was worse, Noah, who promised he would never leave her, began joining in on his friends' fun of tormenting her every day. She would lock herself up in the girls' bathroom and cry. She couldn't believe her Noah could be so cruel!

Joy left town to visit her aunt, who lived in California, the summer before their junior year. When she came back, no one could recognize her. She had finally blossomed into a lady. Her once frizzy chestnut brown hair was now straight and curled at the ends. She now had big perky breasts and curves in all the right places. Since she was tall, her long legs gleamed like alabaster in the sunlight. Her braces were gone and she smiled so sweetly, showing off her perfect teeth through her perfect pink lips.

She was loved by all and she lived happily ever after...

Sorry, I was just fooling you. You know what they say, life is complicated.

And joy can turn into misery in a heartbeat.

It was one in the morning when the Taylors heard a knock on their door. It was the night of the spring dance and Joy had permission to sleep at a friend's house after the event.

Joy's father peered through the peep hole of the door and saw Noah standing at their doorstep.

"Noah, Joy isn't here. She's staying over at Lisa's for the night," Joy's father said as he swung the door open, wearing a robe over his pajamas. His eyes

widened when he saw Noah carrying a girl in his arms. Her unrecognizable face was covered with blood, her wrists and ankles had ligature marks, and her white dress was torn to reveal her naked, bruised and wounded body underneath. He recognized the white dress. It was the same dress Joy made for the spring dance. "OH MY GOD! JOY!"

Noah was crying and shaking terribly. "M-Mr. Taylor, can I bring Joy inside? I-I f-found her in the b-boy's gym room tied up and badly hurt."

"Give my daughter to me!" Joy's father screamed. Noah gently placed Joy in her father's arm, backed away and wiped his nose. "MARGARET! GET THE KEYS TO THE TRUCK! I NEED TO BRING JOY TO THE HOSPITAL!"

Joy's mother ran down the stairs of their two-storey home, completely confused. "Why do you need to bring Joy to-" She froze as she saw her bloodied daughter in her husband's arms. "WHAT HAPPENED?! My baby! What happened to you?" Joy's mother exclaimed as she rushed to her daughter, sobbing pitifully.

"Maggie, we need to bring Joy to the hospital. Grab my keys and my wallet and lock the door," Joy's father said calmly. Joy's mother quickly grabbed the keys and her husband's wallet from a tray on a small table in the foyer. "Noah, follow us in your car. I need you to tell the police what you know."

At the hospital, the doctor gave the grim news to the Taylors that Joy was raped repeatedly. She also had broken ribs, trauma to her face and head, and a broken leg and arm. Whoever attacked her left her for dead.

When Noah talked to the police, he said he didn't know anything and when the police visited the local high school, the kids didn't want to talk. Instead, they said Joy was begging for it since she was wearing a backless white dress to the dance that left nothing to the imagination.

The boy's gym was immaculate when the police searched the premises for evidence. They could not find any trace of hair, blood or semen. All they found was the smell of bleach.

Joy's gown and sexual assault kit mysteriously went missing. Without any evidence, the Sheriff told Joy's father they could not file charges. If they did go ahead and file charges, Joy would have to relive everything those boys did to her in front of so many people and if they lose the case, she would be branded as the town's whore forever.

Joy didn't return to school after she was discharged from the hospital and no one saw her after that. The Taylors sold everything and left, hoping to give Joy a chance at a normal life after her ordeal.

No one knew where they went and after ten long years, the Taylors were now just a mere memory in the small town of New Salem.

Well, not anymore.