

The man watched as the woman walked along the trail ahead of him, she walked in that way that all confident people walk and he hated her for it. She moved forward without ever looking back at him. He knew she would do this, it's why he chose her.

The man watched as she climbed onto the large rock that sat to the right of the trail and just at the edge of the cliff. She walked to the edge, unafraid, pulled her camera from her pack and began taking pictures. A hawk coasted through the air just above her, but only the man could see this from where he stood at the base of the rock, looking up at her as she looked out into the vastness that lay beyond. He took out his own camera and silently snapped a picture of his own.

Gently he slid his camera back into his bag and silently began to ascend the rock. His long legs made it an effortless ascent, requiring only 2 steps until he was standing directly behind her.

The man stood behind her and reveled in the closeness, he could sense the heat of her body and smell her scent as the breeze blew her long brown hair towards him. He closed his eyes and inhaled the scent, holding onto the sensation. Just then he sensed her sense him and she began to turn. She was startled to find him so close to her, but her shock turned to a smile when she realized it was him for she had felt safe with him. He watched as realization spread across her face as she looked into his eyes and saw what the mask had been hiding.

Her eyes darted around and she started to side step to add distance between herself and the man and the edge of the rock. The man let her shift her weight to step and then delivered a kick to the knee of her weight supporting leg. He heard the crack just before she screamed out and fell with a loud thud onto the rock.

The woman grabbed her knee and continued to scream in pain as the man watched her. The woman was distracted by her pain and didn't notice that the man had removed a wooden box from his backpack until he set the box on the rock next to her. She looked up at him, eyes wet from her tears and filled with fear and confusion. "What are you doing?! Why are you doing this? What do you want?", she gasped out between her labored breaths and sobs. She eyed the box suspiciously and then looked back to the man who was only staring at her with a blank expression.

She heard something inside the box and panic began to rise inside her. She started to try to move herself backwards away from the box and the man using her good leg and her hands but the movement sent shockwaves of pain throughout her body and she only managed to move a few inches. The man slid the box towards her again, this time he kicked the box and she heard the distinct sound of a rattle snake shaking it's rattlers. It was low at first, then the man kicked the box again a few times and the sound grew louder. The box began to move slightly on it's own as the snake became

more agitated and the man again kicked the box and began hitting it with his walking stick.

The man watched the fear wash over the woman and as she began to tremble as the panic set in, he smiled. This was his favorite part. The part when she lost her confidence. The part where she realized he was in control.

The man spoke, “Do you believe in God?” He waited for her response but she said nothing, she just looked at the box and trembled. He moved and squatted so that he was at eye level with her and spoke again, “Did you know, that woman is the reason there is sin in the world? You see, in the Garden of Eden, a serpent came to the woman and she sinned with the serpent. She did not listen to God, she did not listen to the man. She caused the man to sin as well. With her cunning ways, she led him to sin! And now, oh now, women have grown so bold that they openly sin and are PROUD of it. Women want to rule the world and make men their slaves. They want to earn more money than men. They want to be the boss of men at work and at home. They want men to be quiet and let them call the shots! They take all of the confidence from a man and then they leave him. Women are meant to submit to men. It is how God intended it. And now, here you are, in perfect submission to me. Your final act on this earth will be done in perfect submission to man and the serpent with which you conspired to destroy men. All of your cunning, beauty and wit cannot save you. That’s why I chose you, you know, because you possess these and you use them as weapons against men to force them to submit to your will. And now they have led to your demise. What one day makes you laugh, the next makes you cry.”

The man kicked over and then slid the end of his walking stick into the small hole and turned it, one time completely around counterclockwise. Inside the box, a latch clicked open and the wooden box fell open revealing a perfectly coiled rattle snake. The woman screamed and brought her arms up instinctively as if to shield herself and the snake leaped towards her, connecting with her right cheek and then slithered off the edge of the rock.

The man, wild eyed and covered in sweat, stood looking down at her as she began to convulse and white foam began to ooze from her mouth. She struggled to breathe as her eyes darted rapidly around and then began to roll back into her head.

When it was over, the man slowly removed his phone from his pocket and snapped another picture of the woman as she lay still on the rock with a look of terror frozen on her face. The man smiled and then turned away to find the path once again.

He hummed to himself as he walked away, thinking of the pretty park ranger he had seen at the trailhead— she seemed so confident as she wowed her backpacking group with tales of her adventures. The man smiled to himself as a vision began to form.

