Vixen
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EXT. ENGLISH COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

Lush, rolling hills and rocky outcrops veiled in mist. Cool, white sunlight breaks over the horizon.

Light rain patters down on a muddy trail leading up to a wooden stile.

A red-headed SCHOOLGIRL sits on top of the stile. She wears a white blouse, a school tie hangs loosely around her neck. Her short skirt rides up at the thigh.

The girl stares right through us, smiles a mouth full of braces. She holds out a hand, curls up a finger and beckons us, summons us, towards her.

We move, jogging, splashing through the mud and puddles, breathing heavy, heart POUNDING.

Closer now, the girl leans forward, blows a kiss, then turns and hops over the stile.

Pursuing faster, breathless, vaulting the stile and plunging into the forest.

Branches and twigs crack in our wake as we push onwards through the bracken.

The girl runs, her long red hair billows in the wind. We're gaining on her but still some distance away.

She trips and tumbles down into the ferns.

Slowing, we approach her. She rolls over and looks up with innocent, wide green eyes.

Catching our breath, we reach out a hand...

The girl's face twists and MORPHS into that of a fox.

Its mouth opens to reveal razor-sharp fangs.

The jaws SNAP.

INT. FARMHOUSE, BEDROOM - DAY

TED ASKEW's eyes SPRING OPEN.

Red-faced, brow soaked in sweat, he's past fifty and seen better days.
He takes quick, deep breaths and sits up in bed, squinting at the sunlight filtering through the curtains.

A female silhouette steps out in front of him. He blinks, struggles to focus on his wife's slender frame.

**JENNY ASKEW** stands at the foot of the bed. She's in her forties, dressed all in black, a dark veil partly obscures her sunken eyes and shallow cheeks.

**JENNY**
We're going to be late.

Ted eyes the clock: just past 8. He grabs a cup of tea off the night stand and slurps it down.

**TED**
I've already said I'm not goin'.

Jenny crosses her arms and sighs.

**JENNY**
The whole town's going to be there.

**TED**
We don't even know these people.

**JENNY**
That's not the point. It's about solidarity... community spirit.

**TED**
I'm sick as a fuckin' dog, Jen. Give it a rest, will ya?

**JENNY**
Like hell you're sick, you're just hung over.

**TED**
And that's a crime now, is it?

Am I not allowed a wee dram before I go to bed?

She pulls back her veil and looks at him.

**JENNY**
What's gotten into you lately?

**TED**
I told you, I'm sick!

She turns and walks to the door.
JENNY
I'm taking the car. I'll be back this afternoon.

She exits. Ted calls after her.

TED
What's for breakfast?

JENNY (O.S.)
Aspirin. Get it yourself!

A door SLAMS.

Ted slumps back into bed and pulls the covers over his face.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Ted enters, a dressing gown wrapped around his portly frame. He looks like death.

He walks to the counter and pops two slices of bread into the toaster.

He strokes the cat, JESS, who sits by the sink slurping milk from a saucer.

Ted waits impatiently for his toast. He flicks on the radio...

NEWSREADER (V.O.)
... Carnaby Street has been closed off and extra parking is available at the sports center. Police expect thousands of people to descend on the city center in the next few hours... The national media is already out in force, and TV crews have been camped outside the Cathedral since the early hours of the morning...

Ted flicks it off and fills a glass of water at the sink. He gulps it down and goes to fill it again when he spots something through the window.

A small red fox sits on the lawn outside. It stares right at him, blood dripping from its fangs.

The toaster POPS. Ted jumps and drops the glass in the sink. It breaks but he hardly notices.
He kicks off his slippers and throws on his boots. Grabs a shotgun from the wall mount and a box of shells from the cabinet.

Stuffing the shells into his pocket, he exits the house.

EXT. FARMHOUSE – DAY

Ted steps out onto the lawn and looks around, but the fox is gone.

He walks around the side of the house and pauses. He glances down to see feathers and spots of blood on the gravel path.

Ted frowns and jogs over to the chicken coop.

His jaw drops.

The cage is wide open, the straw-covered floor is dark with blood. A dozen or so chickens lie dead in the coop, their bodies torn apart.

Ted's face burns with rage. He curses under his breath.

He spins round and scans the vegetable plot at the back of the house.

Nothing.

He runs back to the front of the house and sees the fox scampering along the muddy track leading up to the fields.

Ted gives chase, huffing and panting, face growing redder with every step.

As he nears the edge of the field, he stops to catch his breath. He scans the field. The fox is nowhere to be seen but something else catches his eye.

A lamb lies dead in the grass. Flies buzz around its gruesome dismembered corpse.

He crouches next to it and dips his finger into its wound, as if to see that it's real, half expecting to wake from another nightmare.

The look of horror on his face tells us this is very real.

He stands, cocks his shotgun and gazes in disbelief across the field.
As he trudges on, dozens of sheep lie strewn across the field, their guts torn out, wool stained crimson with blood. A whole flock decimated.

A blur of red fur passes Ted's line of sight. He tracks it, eyes narrowed. He raises the shotgun...

BOOM!

Birds scatter from the trees. But the fox scampers on, unharmed.

Ted breaks into a jog, then a sprint as the fox scurries across the field, heading to the forest beyond.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

The sky turns dark and rain falls as Ted surges through the trees, shotgun gripped tightly in his hands.

He reaches a small clearing and stops, stands perfectly still, steadies his breathing, and listens...

A RUSTLE of leaves to his left. He turns... aims...

BOOM!

Blood splatters across the ferns.

Ted wipes the rain and sweat from his brow.

He approaches, reaches down and pulls back the leaves...

A SCHOOLGIRL, the same red-head from his dream, lies in the wet bracken, her abdomen peppered with buckshot.

The color drains from Ted's face. He leans in to examine the corpse when...

The girl's neck SNAPS UPWARDS, her eyes BURST OPEN. They sparkle with intensity and something approaching lust.

Ted backs away, mortified. He looks down at her blood soaked blouse.

The girl's hand reaches down and pulls up her shirt, revealing the sickly gunshot wound.

She looks at him alluringly and speaks in a soft, husky voice.
SCHOOLGIRL
You want me, don't you?

She smiles, then breaks into a giggle.

Ted watches, horrified, as her face MORPHS back into a fox.

It bares its teeth and SNARLS.

Ted turns and runs for his life.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

Ted sprints and stumbles through the long grass, zig-zagging through the dead sheep that litter the field.

He vaults the fence and rushes towards the house.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Ted bursts in and slams the door behind him. Panting, he locks it, slides the dead-bolt across, then goes to shut the window.

On the counter, he sees droplets of blood in the cat's saucer of milk.

A loud SLAP behind him. He spins...

The cat flap swings back and forth.

Ted turns back to the counter to see the schoolgirl leaning against it. She holds up a gutted cat, Ted's cat. Blood drips onto the tiled floor.

The girl cracks a smile and PURRS.

Ted backs away, cocks the shotgun and BOOM!

The window SHATTERS. The recoil knocks Ted off balance and he falls onto his back.

He looks up, the girl is gone.

He stretches out an arm, reaching blindly for the shotgun but the fox is on him in a flash. It leaps onto his chest, jaws snapping at his neck.

Ted digs his fingers into its, struggles to tear it off him.
In the blink of an eye, the fox is now the girl, straddling him, pinning his arms to the floor with inhuman strength.

She looks into his eyes and grins, showing off her braces.

    SCHOOLGIRL
    Enough of the foreplay.

She yanks his arms down to his side and wedges them under her knees.

Ted struggles but he's helpless.

With her hands now free she pulls open his dressing gown, revealing his bare chest.

Ted kicks and squirms to no avail.

    TED
    What the fuck do you want with me?

She giggles, enjoying his vain attempts to break free.

    SCHOOLGIRL
    You've had your fun, Mr. Askew, now it's time I had mine.

She cocks her head back and brushes the hair from her face. Her hands creep down to her blouse, she undoes a button, teasing him, then loosens her tie and slips it from around her neck.

She clamps a hand around his throat and places the tie over his head, securing it, noose-like around his neck.

    TED
    This isn't real... it's just another fucking dream.

She giggles.

    SCHOOLGIRL
    That's funny. Last time we met I told myself the same thing.

She yanks at the tie, pulling it tighter.

Ted's cheeks expand, a vein pulses on his forehead. He chokes, his eyes roll back.

The girl leans in close enough for him to feel her breath on his face.
SCHOOLGIRL
C'mon. Let's go watch T.V.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

The girl kicks open the door and drags the barely-conscious Ted into the room.

She hauls him up onto the sofa and pulls at the tie around his neck. Ted's legs kick in a reflex action but he's lost the will to fight... Maybe even the will to live.

SCHOOLGIRL
You ever want to be famous, Ted?

Ted let's out a short gasp.

SCHOOLGIRL
No... that's not what you're about, is it?

She picks up the remote off the table and flicks on the TV.

SCHOOLGIRL
I always wanted to be a singer... not much chance of that when you're throat's been cut.

She grabs Ted's hair and jerks his head up to look at the TV.

A photo of Ted and his wife on their wedding day sits atop the television set.

SCHOOLGIRL
What was it, Ted? Old lady Askew not putting out anymore?

She flips through the channels, stops at a news report.

SCHOOLGIRL
Maybe you let yourself go...

She pulls his face close to hers.

SCHOOLGIRL
Bet ya wish you'd let me go now dontcha, Ted?

The girl stands and walks around to the back of the sofa, never letting go of the tie.

Ted opens his eyes, struggles to focus on the news report.
ON TV

A picture of the schoolgirl fills the screen. Beneath it, the text reads:

IN MEMORIAM - VICTORIA CARTER, 1992 - 2007

    SCHOOLGIRL (O.S.)
    Look, I'm on TV!

She turns up the volume.

    SCHOOLGIRL (O.S.)
    Jeez, they coulda picked a better photo.

A cathedral appears on screen. Wreaths of flowers and cards adorn the gates. A large crowd, public and media, gathers outside.

    NEWS ANCHOR
    Hundreds of friends, family and well-wishers gathered today at Chapsworth cathedral to remember the life of murdered schoolgirl, Victoria Carter whose killer remains at large...

A tearful COUPLE exit the church, shielding their eyes from the paparazzi flashbulbs.

    NEWS ANCHOR
    Victoria's parents offered their heartfelt thanks to the public for their overwhelming support in the weeks since Victoria's disappearance, and the days since her body was discovered dumped in woodland eight miles from her family home...

A POLICE CHIEF talks at a press conference.

    NEWS ANCHOR
    Local police have urged the public to come forward with any information regarding the identity or whereabouts of Victoria's killer...

The TV snaps off.
The schoolgirl walks around from the back of the sofa and straddles Ted's limp body.

SCHOOLGIRL
Whaddy'a think, Ted? Should I call the cops?
Ted struggles to stay conscious, his tongue lolls from his mouth.
She giggles.

SCHOOLGIRL
What's the matter? You jealous 'cause I'm stealing the limelight?
She squeezes his cheeks and smiles.

SCHOOLGIRL
Don't worry, Ted. This time tomorrow you'll be front page news.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY
A car crunches along the gravel driveway and comes to a stop outside the house.
Jenny Askew climbs out, still dressed in funeral attire.
The sound of lambs bleating and chickens clucking can be heard. She gazes out into the field to see the flock alive and well.
Her attention turns to the house and the shattered glass on the lawn, the curtains flutter out of the gaping kitchen window.
Jenny hurries inside through the kitchen door.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY
Jess the cat sits on the work top, meowing over an empty saucer of milk.
Jenny pushes open the door to the living room.

JENNY
Ted?
INT. LIVING ROOM

Jenny enters and stops in the doorway. Her hand goes to her mouth.

Ted's naked, bloated body hangs from a beam in the center of the room. The girl's school-tie used as a noose.

EXT. FARMHOUSE

The fox emerges from the cat flap and jogs along the path. There's a twinkle in its eyes. It looks somehow happy.

FADE OUT.

THE END