

REVENGE OF THE COACH'S DAUGHTER

By J.J. Jonas

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It was New Year's Day, the epitome of football viewing days (my father had informed us the night before), superseding even Super Bowl Sunday, and he was not to be disturbed. From 10 a.m. until 10 p.m. he would command from his chair before three TV screens, several remote controls, a residential phone line and two cell phones. Now it is not unusual for the American male to participate in such a ritual, but it was sacred territory at our house as my father was a university football coach and this was business.

He was up early, tending to chores and animals in the wake of an overnight snow flurry. My non-traditionalist, otherwise feminist stepmother broke rank and made him breakfast for the occasion. All rules were bent this day. He settled into his chair like a general in the war room, arranging everything just so and checking it again and again.

Then he waited.

I, on the other hand, had a plan.

The eldest of four daughters in an all girl family, I had endured these pagan rites all my life. From birth I had spent every weekend in some sports arena or at some athletic event. Weeknights held scrimmages, banquets, bonfires or booster club speeches. I had served my time in drill team and as a cheerleader. I had even played running back on a powderpuff football team. I grew up never being able to leave the bathroom in a towel because Dad's players or graduate assistants were always dropping by unexpectedly. Actually, I didn't mind that part too much. Regardless, sports had always ruled our roost.

Today that would change.

I had plotted carefully and precisely. There could be no room for error. Timing was everything when you were in the final quarter and it was fourth down and--- You see what I mean? I have been brainwashed by a lifetime of football! Never mind.

I waited until all was quiet and no one was around. My step mom and little sister had braved the elements and were doing a movie marathon at the local theater. I slipped out from the little cottage

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apartment where I was living and I took a mop and soaked it thoroughly with water. I went inside Dad's house. I then dobed it on the living room ceiling near the French doors leading to the porch. I squeezed out a little portion on the carpet exactly below the wet spot on the ceiling. I smiled to myself, thinking of how well I would execute my plan, step by step.

I casually strolled into my father's bedroom, otherwise known as Command Central, and sat down on the love seat in the sitting area. He was talking on one cell phone while another was ringing.

"I'm telling you, Thunder, those two kids would make great cornerbacks. Hold on a second. Jeff Hamilton is calling in. Jeff, yeah, Thunder's on the other line. Really? Okay, let me change it to that channel. Hold on. I knew I should have gotten one more TV."

He looked over in my direction with uplifted eyebrows, a silent gesture questioning my presence.

"Whatcha need, honey?" he asked.

"Oh, nothing, really, I just noticed you had a leak in the living room ceiling and I just thought I should tell you about it."

"A leak? In the living room ceiling?" He looked at me incredulously.

"Oh, I'm sure it's not much, just probably some pressure from the snow on the roof, that's all. If you'll tell me where I can find a bucket, I'll set it out and you can check it later."

A look of concern crossed his face and he immediately ended both calls. He followed me to the living room and examined both the wet spot on the ceiling and the carpet below.

"Golly, gee whiz." My dad was always a gentleman when a lady was present. He shook his head and placed his hands on his hips. "Well, it doesn't look too bad, maybe it will wait until tomorrow."

We put the bucket under the leak and the General went back to headquarters.

Just as I had suspected.

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