

# “Pull!”

“Are you screwing my wife?” Kyle asked looking down the shotgun barrel with bloodshot eyes. Daniel’s face flushed. He was overwhelmed with fear. He couldn’t move. He felt like a bird in a cage waiting some fate beyond his control.

The Westchester County Gun Club is a place of power and prestige. The rich and powerful are the common man here. Anyone here is either a big shot or trying to be one. Kyle Borman represents what it is to be rich and powerful. He’s a living example of a successful son of a bitch. He’s a “shooting enthusiast”. He shoots twice a week. He has a shooting coach whose advice he does not follow. The coach is a former world champion so there’s a presage factor. Most days Kyle can shoot better than any of the other two hundred members. Kyle’s den is full of shooting trophies and stuffed heads of live trophies he has shot. There are deer, antelopes, elk, moose, water buffalo, tigers and lions represented in the room. Each is another demonstration of his ability to “conquer and command.”

That’s the way Kyle views everyone and everything in his life. You’re either game to be shot and put on the den wall, or you’re something to use to get there. Kyle is an absolute bastard. He’s an attorney and a senior partner in a top New York firm. Kyle cheated to get through law school so there’s a bit of irony in his position. He really doesn’t know the law very well. He’s the rainmaker and deal maker of the firm. He brings in the clients and makes the deals that make the firm richer every year.

He’s still cheating with the law. An example would be that one of the chemical firms they represent was sued over a terrible chemical spill in some stream in South America. Kyle flew down there with, “a team”. He spent most of his time shooting wild boar in the jungle. Then he tells the client that they need to pay five million in cash to “some discreet officials” to

resolve the issues. The five million soon comes by chartered jet. Kyle's local underworld contact pays the bribe of three million and in addition to the animal skins Kyle brought back he also returned with two million in cash which he soon converted to bearer bonds. He is "holding in trust" the bearer bonds in his personal safety deposit box. Then he tells the client that they need to pay a five hundred thousand a year retainer to the firm, "to keep the young, inexperienced lawyers that had worked on the case in line". It is blackmail. The entire five hundred thousand will be credit to Kyle's "billable hours" which means Kyle's wallet. What really happened is that the chemicals were so potent that all the tribal Indians exposed to the spill died. There weren't many voices complaining. Only a few corrupt officials palms who learned about the event.

That example is to demonstrate the kind of person Kyle Borman is. Physically he's massive in size. He's six feet four inches with broad shoulders and a big gut overhanging his belt. He usually has a big, obnoxious smelling cigar in his mouth. He drinks Scotch by the bucket full. His favorite meal is Prime Rib so rare it makes a normal person sick to watch him eat.

Kyle has one other thing in life. I refer to this person as a "thing" because that is exactly how Kyle views everyone. Especially women and animals he hasn't shot yet. Kyle is married to an apparently warm, caring woman by the name of Ruth. And my how Ruth has suffered for so many years at this hand of this bully. She has endured every indignation you can imagine.

Kyle's sexual habits are akin to one of his jungle animals in heat. He will have sex with any woman, any place and any time. He stalks some of them like a great prey in the jungle. Other like young secretaries he manhandles over a desk. Then he gives them a bonus and transfers them to another floor. Of course most quit and run out of the building crying.

If he's in the right mood a five thousand dollar hooker fits the bill fine. By that I mean the client's bill for he charges them under the "plus expenses" category. He's been confronted by angry women in restaurants and at social functions and right in front of Ruth discusses either his last sexual encounter or his next. He berates Ruth without end. He uses her as a verbal punching bag to dispense the frustrations of the day. They've had no children.

When Daniel told Ruth about how Kyle handled the South American situation she fell into his arms and bed. She cried because she said that making love with Daniel was the most tender, loving moment she ever had in her life. Daniel fell completely in love with her.

Today is the slowest day at the gun range. Kyle has invited, really demanded that his number one junior partner Daniel Clayton join him. Daniel doesn't like guns. He's never shot a living animal and never will. He works seven days a week sometimes through the night. He is doing the "grunt work" that Kyle takes so much credit for. Daniel is a fine attorney with an excellent academic background. Their formula of success is Daniel does the work and Kyle takes the glory. Daniel is five foot eight. He's balding is a very average looking person with a shy personality. Daniel is the kind of person who leaves a hundred dollar bill on a secretary's desk when he over hears her having trouble paying a kids medical bill. Daniel puts up with all Kyle's ranting and ravings the hope of making partner someday. In other words Daniel is a chicken.

They are on the very distant shooting range. There is nobody around. Each round is five series of five shots each. Originally there were live birds under baskets and when the shooter called "pull" a servant pulled a line that flipped the basket over allowing the bird to take flight. It was a flight that was often interrupted by sudden death.

Now in the micro-chip age the shooter only shouts “pull” and the mechanical device inside the nearly buried blockhouse casts out the brightly colored clay target. The shooter doesn’t know which direction the clay target will be going. It’s important that the shooter aim at one corner of the blockhouse to catch and follow the target as it flies through the air. Part of the way that serious and professional shooters like Kyle get premium results is to follow the exact same pattern each time. They close the chamber to the gun with a live shell. Then they step one foot forward as they take a breath and raise the gun to their shoulder. The point at the same corner of the blockhouse and yell “pull”. Time after time they follow the same exact procedure. .

Daniel’s wondering why Kyle has commanded him to be here today. Thanks to Daniel things have been running smoothly at the office. Kyle has been his usual overbearing self as they went through the gyrations of getting ready to shoot. Kyle’s gun is the finest English shotgun you can buy with hand engraved silver. Kyle mentions that he needs to take it back to the gunsmith. He said he took it in last week complaining of the safety (the mechanism inside the gun where you push a button near the trigger that keeps the gun from going off if it’s bumped or accidentally the trigger is touched.)

Kyle insists that Daniel go first. Daniel's hitting almost none of the targets. Kyle yells out him that “he’s high; he’s behind that one, etc.” Kyle is shooting perfectly. He hits twenty five out of twenty five on the first round. Then he hits every target in the next series which puts him at fifty. Daniel’s shoulder is beginning to hurt from the recoil. However he is forced by the circumstances to keep going. He has never been able to stand up to Kyle. (One of Kyle’s talents is surrounding himself with people that can’t stand up to him). The third round continues with Daniel shooting no better and Kyle hitting another twenty five. It is getting near sunset and it is really too dark to shoot without the range lights on.

Daniel asks if he should go back to the clubhouse and ask them to turn the lights on. Kyle bellows at him, "God damn it no! I'm about to shoot a perfect one hundred and besides I knew this was going to be a round to remember"

They continued with Kyle insisting that Daniel go first. Daniel's saying the word "pull" sometimes isn't strong enough to activate the voice device so he has to repeat himself as Kyle scowls at him. Daniel does not hit a single target. When it Kyle's turn he pulverizes the targets one after the other.

Daniel doesn't care about missing the targets. He only wants to get it over with. It's getting dark. Kyle has continued to shoot perfectly. Ninety six, ninety seven, ninety eight, ninety nine are all perfect shots. He needs only one more to have shot a perfect one hundred round and qualify for another trophy to sit on the shelf in his study.

Daniel knows not to move and to be quiet. Kyle goes through the same routine, the step forward, taking a breath, but instead of pointing the massive gun at the blockhouse he turns halfway and points it directly at Daniel's face. The end of the gun barrel is only four feet from Daniel's nose.

"What the ?" asks Daniel as the color falls from his face.

"Are you screwing my wife?" Kyle asks as he looks down the barrel of the shotgun with both bloodshot eyes open.

"Ugh....ugh...."

"Give me a straight answer. You only get one chance."

"Yes. Ruth and I are sleeping together. How did you know?"

"Because she's been happy, and she's harder for me to control when she is." replied Kyle. "My main sport is dominating Ruthy with our little games. She's quite a challenge."

There is long pause as the men stare at each other down the barrel of a gun. Daniel for the first time ever finds the courage inside him and speaks in a strong voice. “You didn’t ask why? We’re in love with each other.”

“I think maybe Daniel you’ve said exactly the wrong thing.”

“Why? Because I’ve admitted sleeping with your wife or because I’ve told you we’re in love with each other?”

“Neither. I can understand why you would want Ruth. Hell, I picked her as the best out of a thousand. Ruthy might not be exactly the girl that you think she is. The only reason she’s never left me is that our ironclad prenuptial agreement. Best legal work I ever did. Actually I hired another attorney to do it. No,..... your mistake was in speaking up to me for the first time ever.”

Another pause ensued. They were alone now as the darkness closed in on them. The closest person was a boy working at the main building. Daniel could see him sweeping. Daniel could see how be easy for Kyle to explain. The gun has been to a gunsmith shop recently for a reported problem with the safety. Kyle had planned this out.

Daniel didn’t lose his newfound courage. He was thinking of Ruth and protecting her from being another stuffed animal on the Kyle’s den wall. He was also thinking about that bird under the basket. There had to be some action it could take to save itself. What if the bird flew directly at the shooter instead of away?

“Well Kyle it’s down to this” said Daniel. “You have two choices. You call “Pull” and kill me or you can call “Pull” and have a damn good chance of a perfect one hundred score and another trophy. Whatever you are going to do, get it done!”

“You know Danny boy..... if you’d developed some balls like this before I would have made you a partner in the firm.” said Kyle.

Meanwhile, Ruthy was speeding away towards the Canadian border in her bright yellow Jaguar convertible. The briefcase with the two million in bearer bonds from the safety deposit box was in the back seat. Once she had found out about the South American deal she had taken Kyle’s safety deposit box key while he was sleeping. She showed the bank her proof of being Kyle’s wife they let her into the safety deposit box. The beautiful young Italian woman who was her lover was rubbing the inside of her leg. It was a feeling Ruthy liked. It distracted her or she would have seen the oncoming cement truck with the sleepy driver cross the yellow line.

Kyle and Daniel were staring at each other.

“Pull!”