

excerpt from
NO RIGHT WAY TO DO A WRONG THING
Janice M. Allen

“I know you’re not walking around in broad daylight with a shotgun,” Val gasped.

Uncle Bubba stopped on the porch and leaned on his cane. “It ain’t real, Val.”

She caught his arm and yanked him inside the house, scanning the area for nosy neighbors. “It’s real enough to get you shot if the police see you with it.”

“And it’s real enough to keep that husband of yours in line if he comes back here actin’ a fool,” Uncle Bubba replied. “I used to respect that boy, but I don’t know what’s gotten into him. I betcha if I put some lead in him though, that’ll tighten him up real good. Get his head on straight.”

Her twin brother Dwayne walked in the front door, arms loaded with overnight bags.

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“And you,” Val scolded as Dwayne kicked the door closed. “Why’d you let Uncle Bubba come out of the house with that thing?”

“I’ll keep a close eye on him,” Dwayne promised. “He can’t hurt anybody with it anyway unless he uses it to beat them over the head.”

Uncle Bubba nodded. “Yeah, that gets my vote.” He snickered as he eased down on the couch. “Val, come watch a movie with me. You need to relax.” He scooted over on the couch, and Val curled up beside him.



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She awoke two hours later to a room that was completely dark except for the brightness of the screen on the tv.

“Told you that you needed to rest,” Uncle Bubba said. “You didn’t slobber on me, did you?” He inspected his sleeve.

She gave him a playful nudge, then pried herself off of the sofa. Headlights in the driveway and the unmistakable hum of Kurt’s SUV made her whole body tense up.

Kurt. Dwayne. Uncle Bubba. The shotgun.

Nothing but trouble waiting to happen.

Uncle Bubba called for Dwayne. “Pass me my piece, boy.”

Dwayne went straight for the shotgun.

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Val went straight for the phone.

“I’m calling the police,” she said as Kurt’s key slid in the first of the two locks.

“Val, put the phone down,” Uncle Bubba said as he took the weapon from Dwayne. “We got this under control.”

She shivered but relented. “Uncle Bubba, that is just a toy gun, right?”

He didn’t bother to answer.

Dwayne took up a position behind the door. Val stood frozen in place, praying that yellow crime scene tape wouldn’t soon decorate her home.

The second lock clicked and Kurt entered the semi-dark house. He felt for the switch on the wall.

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Uncle Bubba cleared his throat as soon as the ceiling light came on. Kurt's gaze traveled from the old man to the shotgun he held at his side. Dwayne stepped from behind the door. Kurt glared at the two men like they were bullies on the playground. "Did you have to get involved in our business?"

Dwayne positioned himself protectively in front of Val. "The police coming to this camp *is* our business."

Peeking around Dwayne's sturdy body, Val asked, "Why are you here?"

Kurt's gaze remained locked on Dwayne.

"You heard the girl," Uncle Bubba prodded. "What do you want?"

"I just needed to get a few things," Kurt said.

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“Well, me and Dwayne here are gonna do you like the cops prob’ly did you earlier,” Uncle Bubba advised. “We gonna escort you through the house so you can grab what you need and get to steppin’.”

Dwayne took a few steps forward and reached for Kurt’s elbow. Kurt wrenched away. “Man, don’t put your hands on me. This is *my* house,” he said, clenching his teeth and thumping his chest with his index finger.

“You wait one cotton-pickin’ minute,” Uncle Bubba said, raising the stock of the shotgun to his shoulder and cocking the pump action.

All sound left the room.

Not willing to give Kurt the satisfaction of seeing her blatant terror, Val jutted her chin out and crossed

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her arms, matching Dwayne's stance. She motioned for Dwayne to take Kurt to get his stuff. A brisk burst of air swept over her as the two men rushed past her. Uncle Bubba brought up the rear, his "phony" shotgun still trained on Kurt.

Three minutes later, Val's two guardian angels were ushering Kurt to the front door.

Dwayne opened it, saying "We're gonna be here for a hot minute, so don't think about coming back and starting some mess."

Looking like a ram ready to butt heads with a rival male, Kurt barged past his brother-in-law.

Uncle Bubba said, "You heard my nephew. Don't start none, won't be none!" As he closed the door, he

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crooned, “Bad boys, bad boys, whatcha gonna do?
Whatcha gonna do when they come for you?”