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Warnings and Wilted Roses

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Warnings and Wilted Roses

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WARNINGS AND WILTED ROSES

Rachel Crane

This letter turned out better than I expected. I sit at my desk, tracing a streak of glue along the rectangle I've just cut from *People*. Words lifted from the soap opera accounts transfer from their paper to mine via sewing scissors and Elmer's glue.

A chorus of car horns outside my window jerks my hand and trails glue an inch across my desk. I glance out the window, huff, then reposition the glue over the slip of paper.

I wipe up the glue trail with latex-covered hands, fill in the rectangle with more glue, stick it to the paper, search *People* for the word "revenge," attach it to the end of the sentence. My message complete, I fold the paper in half, stuff it in an envelope, leave it on my desk while I clean up the scraps. Tomorrow I'll plant the note on our handsome leading man's backpack. No one at Richmond Civic Theater will notice an extra like me. No one ever notices me.

People and its remains tumble into my trashcan. As I turn, my Keurig, on a table by the door, catches my eye. Coffee sounds good after two hours of skimming, cutting, and gluing. I cross the room to the Keurig, wondering if I'll have to sell it to pay my rent. The poster above the machine captures my

attention; I sight my target. He poses in his Romeo costume. Some Romeo. Promising devotion to me till death parted us, really meaning the death of his affections. I wish I had some darts to throw at his heart, but then I remember he doesn't have one.

I start the Keurig, wait, pour the coffee, return to my desk, sit, place my Jane Austen mug beside the letter. As I reach over to close my blinds, my hand bumps the mug, spilling coffee everywhere. Black liquid seeps into the letter I just crafted. I growl and pound the desk with my fist.

No matter, I'll just make another one. I have what I need. Everything else I need I can get from the prop room: fake blood to stain Romeo's costume, five-dollar watches to smash and warn him of his limited time, a tape recorder so he'll hear me for once.

As I begin cutting out new words, I glance at the roses wilting in their vase. What a lovely gift they'll make for Romeo in two more days. They were a gift from Mom after opening night, but I can put them to better use than wilting on my desk. After all, what are flowers compared to revenge?