

Hit me baby, one more time

by  
Richard Wildman

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

A salad is being plated up and dressed. A caterpillar is evident slap bang in the middle of the plate.

The plate is picked up by a waiter and carried through into the restaurant.

INT. RESTAURANT - EVENING

The restaurant is stylish and modern looking but is not very busy. A few couples sit scattered around, eating and talking.

The waiter delivers the plate complete with caterpillar to the couple of the next table.

HENRY and the WOMAN are having what looks like a romantic/coupley dinner. They are both well dressed. Henry is in a black, plain suit and she is dressed fashionably but business like.

Henry and the woman are sitting on a corner table, away from the window.

A waiter stands idly, glancing occasionally at Henry and the woman.

WOMAN

I've missed you.

Henry is looking at the woman but he looks distracted and distant.

HENRY

We've both been very busy.

The woman puts down her knife and fork, finishing her starter. Henry has not touched his food.

WOMAN

Not hungry?

HENRY

Not particularly

WOMAN

That's not like you, Henry

The woman picks up the bottle of red wine and moves to fill Henry's glass. He stops her.

HENRY

I don't

WOMAN

Sorry, I forgot.

Henry looks at her for a moment. He has come to a decision.

HENRY

I can't do this anymore.

Henry stands up, folds his napkin and places it on the table. He turns, looks around briefly and then takes a step towards the door.

WOMAN

It can't end like this. Not after  
10 years.

INT. FEATURELESS BACKDROP - DAY (FLASHBACK)

A MAN's face, contorted with agony, a rope pulled tight around his neck from behind.

INT. FEATURELESS BACKDROP - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

The back of a WOMAN as a knife is thrust into it

INT. BATH - DAY (FLASHBACK)

A bathtub filled with water, a wildly flailing person is plunged back under the water.

INT. RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

The woman is pouring red wine into her glass.

Henry grimaces with the weight of the memories, then continues to walk away. The waiter is watching him intently.

WOMAN

You know this isn't an organisation  
you just walk out of.

Henry stops walking.

HENRY

I know how it works.

WOMAN

It doesn't have to be that way for you, Henry.

Henry turns around.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

We have a special, last job for you. Do this and we'll forget about you. You can retire, safe.

Henry returns to his seat and sits down.

HENRY

I'm listening.

The woman passes a folder to him.

Henry opens the folder and is shocked at what he sees.

Inside the folder is a black and white photo of an older man. This is JIM, HENRY's mentor.

EXT. CAR - DAY (FLASHBACK)

A Henry of ten years ago, climbs into the car passenger seat. His hands are shaking, his face is ashen and pale. He has a gun in his hand and it is rattling in his grip.

Jim sits in the drivers seat. He looks at Henry briefly, takes the gun out of his hand and pats him on the arm.

He starts the car. Henry is staring ahead.

JIM

Its okay, everyone's like this the first time. After two or three jobs, all their faces blur into one.

INT. RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

Henry looks up at the woman. As he looks at her, her face blurs and morphs through the faces of VICTIMS.

INT. STAIRWELL - NIGHT

At the top of the stairwell is a closed door. The door is lit by a small bulb above it. A lone moth circles round the bulb.

The light is only strong enough to cast a pool of light that covers the top half of the stairwell and the door.

Henry emerges from the gloom of the staircase. He stops and pauses. He opens his jacket and checks the gun is present. He then checks his spare weapon and is about to continue up the stairs but something else is on his mind.

Henry looks up to the door and then back down the stairwell. He shakes his head and smiles, a realisation dawning.

He opens his jacket, removing the photo of Jim.

HENRY

Its a trap, isn't it, old buddy?  
You always were one step ahead.

Henry looks back at the door. The bulb flickers out and then fizzles back to life. The moth is gone.

Henry opens his jacket and takes out the gun. He places it on the stair ahead of him. He does the same with his spare weapon.

HENRY (CONT'D)

You were wrong though. They don't  
blur into one.

He straightens his tie and takes a deep breath. His eyes set straight ahead, he marches up the rest of the stairs and bursts through the door.

INT. THE ROOM - NIGHT

The room is dark but for the light from the single bulb outside.

He stands in the circle of light.

Suddenly, the room is lit up as the lights are turned on. The room is filled with men in black suits, wearing sunglasses and each with a hand inside their jackets. They stare at him, still and emotionless.

Henry's eyes scan the room, picking Jim out from the crowd.

Jim smiles and nods his recognition.

All eyes are on Henry.

After a wait that seems like an eternity... BANG!

Henry grabs his chest. A look of shock on his face. He pulls his hand away, in front of his face and opens it, revealing... A champagne cork.

Another champagne cork is popped.

Everyone takes their hands from their jackets. They are all holding glasses of bubbly. They raise them and shout "cheers!".

All the room lights come on and the "Happy Retirement" and "Sorry you're leaving" signs become visible.

Jim pushes through the crowd to Henry and presents him with his cake.

The cake has a man in a plain black suit and the message "Happy Retirement".

JIM  
Happy retirement. You're in good  
company, now.

Henry does not notice but a number of the "party goers" are secretly re-holstering their guns.

Henry blows out the candles.