

Like A Suicide: The Wraith

Book 1 of “Like A Suicide” Series

By

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&

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Note from John J. Archer;

Collaboration with author Lee Daniel occurred for the writing of the 'Like A Suicide' series. This was due to his extensive training and work in military intelligence operations as well as his in depth study of psychology. He has spent many hours researching the mental illnesses that permeate amongst criminal minds and the various catalysts of madness. It has been beneficial in aiding me to write this book and hopefully you will agree as you read through the dreaded 'Like A Suicide' series.

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Chapter 1

Wraith felt the bite of the cold wind against his cheek. It was the first weekend in October, and autumn was making itself known. He checked his watch and surveyed his surroundings from the bench he sat on in Lincoln Park. It was two thirty in the afternoon, but few people were out and about in the park due to the cold. To his right, a couple of die hard golfers were getting their clubs out of the back of an old Jeep Cherokee. From the squared body, Wraith guessed it was probably from the late eighties, early nineties. The men were not wearing the typical outfits that Wraith associated with golf. There was not a speck of plaid on either man. Instead, they were dressed in hooded sweatshirts and jeans. 'What is the world coming to?' he wondered to himself. If you couldn't stereotype golfers, who could you stereotype?

This made him smile inwardly. Chaos. Change. These were things that many feared, but not Wraith. He was an agent of chaos. Anything that pulled away from the status quo was just fine with him. On a regular basis, Wraith himself was the instrument of such things, but every now and then they happened without his assistance. This was a fine example. These two men had chosen to wear what was practical rather than expected. It was almost enough to save their lives. Almost, but not quite.

While allowing the men to carry on in their recreational pursuits would allow them to display a small measure of rebellion due to their aversion to the norm, it did not create the sort of chaos that Wraith preferred. Subtleties can only be enjoyed by those that are looking for them after all. Wraith was more interested in the kind of chaos that shocked those who were mostly oblivious to subtle changes in the environment. That kind of chaos could only be achieved through the work of an expert such as himself.

He watched as the two went into the clubhouse in order to claim their tee time. Checking his watch again for no particular reason, Wraith lifted himself off of the bench. He was not really concerned about the time; he just liked to be aware of it. It never sat well with him if any of his contributions to chaos took place at a regular interval in time. Increments of five, ten, or fifteen minutes simply would not do. Truly heinous acts were better suited to be done at random times, like four thirty three, or seven nineteen. Since the times of his actions were important, Wraith checked his watch quite often.

Other than that, he had no reason at all to be concerned. It was Sunday, after all. He was not on any schedule, save his own. He did not have any assignments pending. He was simply out for his own enjoyment as a fan of chaos. That meant that it was quite necessary for him to wreak havoc in some sort of fashion. Sure that was what he did for a living, but it was also great entertainment for him on a personal level. Even if he was not getting paid for it, the only way he could truly enjoy himself was to pursue his one and only interest.

He casually walked across the grass to where the practice greens were situated. From here, he circled around the clubhouse and walked out onto the course. Nobody was currently near the first fairway, so he stepped out on to it and walked in the direction of the restroom

building that he saw out in the middle of the course. He walked briskly so as to imitate somebody trying to limit the amount of time they were exposed to the wind. When he was almost up to the small brick structure, a cart pulled up next to him with a portly man sitting in the driver's seat. From his shirt, it was obvious that he worked for the gold course.

"Can I help you sir?" The man asked, arching an eyebrow.

"Oh, no, I am just looking for my cell phone." Wraith said. "I was out here yesterday, when the weather was nicer, and I think that it must have fallen out of my pocket while I was using the restroom. I am just going to duck inside and see if it is there."

"Sure, no problem." The fat man said. "I just wondered what you were doing out here without any clubs."

"Now those I managed to keep track of." Wraith said smiling.

"Yeah." The man laughed. "It is all about priorities. Well, I hope you find it in there. If not, you might have better luck in the lost and found box in the clubhouse."

"Thanks." Wraith said. "I will look in there if I don't find it out here."

"Good luck. I am getting out of the wind. Have a nice day."

"You too." Wraith said, smiling congenially as he watched the fat man drive off on his golf cart. It had briefly crossed his mind that he could dispatch this man as well as his intended targets, but then he liked the idea of leaving a witness to provide his description to the police. It was a game that he played. He changed his look on a regular basis and dared the authorities to track him down.

He stepped into the bathroom and looked at his reflection. Devilish blue eyes stared back at him, so bright that they nearly mesmerized even him. They were contacts, of course. His real eyes were blue as well, but paler. So pale, in fact, that in certain light, they almost seemed colorless. A light blond wig sat on top of his smoothly shaven head. It was such a good fit that few would have been able to tell that it was not really his hair. He had unremarkable features that made it easy for him to blend in with any crowd, but he was able to use his contacts, wigs, and other accessories to make himself as attractive or ugly as he needed.

He smiled and winked at his reflection. He loved being an anarchist, and he loved himself. He loved only himself. He was not a social creature by any stretch of the imagination. In fact the truth was that he was not only anti social, he was shy to a debilitating degree. That was how he had learned to disguise himself. He had never known how to talk to others, until he had learned to act. Acting had opened a whole new world to him. He could be anybody he wanted to be. It did not matter how afraid he was of everybody around him. As long as he acted like he was bold, then he was bold. He could fake it with the best of them.

He waited inside the building for slightly more than half an hour before he heard the sounds of voices approaching. It sounded as if both men were in jovial moods despite the weather. They were laughing quite loud over some comment one of them had made. Wraith smiled the smile of a shark about to feed on unsuspecting prey. They might have been in a good mood for now, but he was ready to change that for them. One more glance at his watch told him that he was good to go as soon as they drew near. It was two forty one.

"Hey, I need to take a piss really quick." One of the men said from outside the bathroom.

"Me too." This was perfect. Wraith had thought that he would need to approach them, but here they were offering themselves up to him for the slaughter. While he had never tried to rely on such luck, these sorts of things tended to happen on a regular basis. He had always taken it as a sign of divine approval. Clearly God wanted him to continue in his quest to both thin out the herd and move society away from conformity. Wraith welcomed his divine assignment and stepped away from the door.

The first man who entered did not even register recognition of Wraith's presence before he was pulled inward and had a knife thrust between his ribs. Wraith expertly found the man's heart and he was dead before he even hit the floor. There was barely any blood on Wraith's knife due to his quick efficiency. He had already withdrawn the knife and focused on the second man before the first had finished dying.

"What the hell, man?" The second man laughed, not realizing what had just happened. Wraith had made a good living off of the element of surprises just like this one. "Did you forget how to walk or something?"

"I think he bumped into me." Wraith said with the knife held behind his right leg as he knelt down next to the dead man. He was lying on his face, so the wound was not visible. "I think he is hurt."

At this, the second man stepped in and knelt next to his friend. As the door closed behind the golfer, Wraith rolled his first victim over for the man to see. A small pool of blood was on the floor underneath the body. The man's eyes were open wide in a look of surprise and his pants were wet with the urine he had intended to expel in peace.

"Oh, my god, what happened?" The man stammered in total shock.

"This happened." Wraith said whipping the hidden knife out and slashing his throat. He always kept his knives well sharpened, and the blade sliced through without the slightest hesitancy. Blood sprayed from the wound, but Wraith had anticipated the path it would take and had managed to avoid getting any of it on him. It was not that he was afraid of blood. He had actually bathed in it from time to time. His current aversion was only to prevent being spotted walking through the park splattered with somebody else's blood. It might raise an eyebrow or two.

Once the majority of the blood that was going to flow out of both of them and poured itself out on the bathroom floor, Wraith began to strip their clothes off of them. This was not too difficult. Wraith was fairly strong, but often dead bodies were still hard for him to move around. These two men, however, were both small in stature, so it was with relative ease that he stripped them. When they were both naked, he reached for the knife once more. Humming slightly to himself as he worked, he severed their sexual organs. He shoved the first man's penis into his friend's mouth and repeated the step with the opposing man's organ as well.

It was not that Wraith had any sexual perversion in this regard. He was not gay. He enjoyed sex with women. He was also not into necrophilia, but this particular display was necessary in order to properly shock the individuals that would come across his work. It would also throw police off his trail. They would think that this had been done either by a homophobic person that thought these men were gay, or by a spited lover of one or both of the victims. In any case, an anarchist would probably not be on their radar. At least, not immediately.

He then took the first man's clothes and stuffed them into the only sit down toilet in the bathroom. He took the next man's clothes and used them to clog the drain in the urinal, as well as the sink. There was also a drain in the floor, which he used the man's socks to block. Once every known drain was plugged, he flushed the toilet and the urinal and turned the sink faucet on. Stepping out of the bathroom, he looked around quickly and saw that he was still alone on the course. He pulled out a roll of duct tape from his jacket pocket and taped off the edges of the bathroom door. This would allow the water to rise up suitably.

Satisfied with his work, he walked back in the direction of the clubhouse, whistling softly to himself as he went. This had been a very good day. With luck, he would be long gone from the park before the two men were discovered. Once they were, the place would be thrown into turmoil. Chaos would reign over the park for a while. Blessed, chaos.

Sure, eventually everything would go back to normal, but it would take quite a long time for those who knew about the incident to forget the horrible crime that had been committed on this cold autumn afternoon. Wraith smiled happily as he exited the golf course and walked across the street. This had been a very good day indeed.

Chapter 2

James finished brushing his teeth and stepped out the bathroom, of Jennifer's apartment. He had just moved in with her, so technically it was their apartment together, but it did not quite feel like it was his just yet. Most of his boxes were still down in the storage unit provided by the complex, and he had a feeling they might end up taking a permanent residence there. He had learned from watching friends and family that when a man and a woman find themselves in the same living quarters, either through marriage or an arrangement like his, the man's stuff is generally exiled to some place out of sight. In many occasions, this was a garage, an attic, a basement, or in James' case, a storage unit. For some reason, men's belongings seemed to 'clash' with everything.

As long as James had Jennifer's love, though, he did not consider the banishment of his personal affects to be any sort of loss. She was an amazing woman, and he counted himself lucky to have gained her affection. Not only was she drop dead gorgeous, but she had such a sweet tenderness to her, that even blind men would have been instantly attracted to her. He was still trying to figure out what the sexy red head had ever seen in him, but he was grateful that she never seemed to be trying to figure that out as well.

They had met six months ago in a coffee shop. Jennifer had approached him because of his smoothly shaven bald head. She worked as a nurse at St. Mary's Hospital in the radiology department, so she had wondered if he had cancer. She was familiar with most of the cancer patients in the Grand Valley, and yet she had never seen him before. When he told her that he had only kept his head shaved as a sign of support for his mother that really did have cancer, she was immediately struck with him. Talking over coffee soon led to talking on the phone, going to movies, kissing, and eventually laying down in the sheets together. It was inevitable that they would eventually move in together.

The move had made plenty of sense. James' work took him out of town all the time, so he was rarely ever home anyway. When he was in town, he was always over at Jennifer's. In that way, it was as if they had been living together for far longer than the recent official move. He knew that eventually he was going to have to ask her to marry him, but for some reason he felt the need to hold back on that. At least for a while. It was not that he was afraid of commitment. There was something else that he could not quite put his finger on. Some darkness in the back corner of his mind that was always there and yet eluded him when he tried to find it. He did not think it would be wise to lock down forever with a girl until he could figure out what it was that seemed to bother him so much.

He shook his head. This was not the time for such dark and dreary thoughts. The important thing was that he was happier than he had ever been. Work was going really well, and the love of his life was sitting up in bed smiling at him. Life was good today. There was no reason to mess it up with this stupid delusion of his that something terrible lied within him. He smiled back at Jennifer and slipped into the bed beside her. She felt warm against his body. It was not just the heat of her body against his. It was something much deeper and more

profound. Whenever he thought about the darkness, he felt cold, but Jennifer always took that away. She felt so refreshing and comforting. She felt like life in the fullest sense. He bent his neck down to kiss her.

"No, not yet." She said, squirming away. "Morning breath. You can't come in here right after brushing your teeth and kiss me with my nasty breath. It isn't fair. If you want to kiss me in the morning, you need to have just as stinky breath as me."

"You don't have stinky breath." James said. "Everything about you is wonderful."

"Oh, yeah, Mr.-doesn't-play-by-the-rules?" She said and breathed hot breath on his nose.

"Okay, maybe it is a little stinky." He admitted. "But it still isn't nearly as bad as mine is in the morning. Trust me, you don't want me kissing you before I brush."

"I want you to kiss me all day, every day." She said on her way to the bathroom.

"I think that sounds like a great idea." He called after her. "Why don't we do that today?"

"You know that I have to go to work." She said. "Just because you don't work anything resembling a normal schedule doesn't mean the rest of the world is just as chaotic. Today is Monday, and I have to go to work. If you don't have to go out of town on Saturday, I think I would love to stay in bed and get all of your kisses."

"Just call in sick." He said.

"Yeah, like they are going to believe that. I have my boyfriend move in with me over the weekend and all of a sudden I am too sick to go to work on Monday." She laughed. "You know that wouldn't fly."

"Okay, fine." He said, giving up. "Just don't stay late after work. I think a special dinner would be a nice way of celebrating."

"Sounds good to me." She said as she moved away from the bathroom to her closet. She pulled off her night gown and revealed her wonderful body. James had to resist jumping up and pulling her back to bed with him. She was not tall; she was only five foot three inches in height, but she was well proportioned. Her thin neck trailed down to perfect breasts. Each one was just slightly larger than James' hands, and they were nice and firm. She had a flat stomach from all of her exercise videos, and a perfectly toned backside. James always wanted her, even when she was clothed. When she was not clothed, he absolutely could not resist her.

He had to turn his attention away from watching her dress if he was going to let her get to work on time, so he reached for the television remote. He thought he might as well see what was going on in the world. He leaned back against the head board and relaxed. He did not have anything to do today. He was a travelling business consultant. He only worked when businesses needed him to come and tell them how to better run their office. It meant that he did not always work every day, and many days were spent in travel, but he made really good money at it, so he did not mind the lack of routine. In fact, he relished it. He did not know how Jennifer could handle working Monday through Friday of every week. It was always the same. James liked to have things changed up on a regular basis.

A news alert brought him out of his muse. Two men had been found naked and mutilated in the bathroom at Lincoln Park. At this time, police were not identifying the victims, but said that it might have been a hate crime. For the time being, it looked as if the men might have been homosexuals that were killed in order to make a point. No photos were

being released, but it was clear that the crime had been simply awful. James could tell by the look on the face of the police officer giving a statement that he had seen something that would haunt him for a while. A police sketch was shown of the suspect. Apparently a man that worked at the golf course had seen this man walking to the bathroom shortly before the killings were said to have occurred.

James looked at the picture of a man with short blond hair and bright blue eyes, but did not recognize him. He almost wished that he could. Anybody sick enough to do something like that needed to be locked up. The man's face was somehow unsettling to him. It was not ugly, but it seemed like something out of a nightmare. There was a darkness to it. James felt cold again.

"Hey babe, can you believe this?" He said to Jennifer.

"What?" She asked. She was back in the bathroom fixing her hair and had not been paying attention.

"Some freak killed two men at the Lincoln Park Golf Course yesterday. He stripped them naked, mutilated the bodies and used their clothes to flood the bathroom that they were in." James said. "I can't believe how sick some people are these days."

"Well, more and more people are moving here all the time." She said. "Grand Junction is really growing. A lot of these freaks come from big cities and bring their sickness with them."

"Well, I think it is disgusting." James said.

"I agree, but I think the more this city grows, the more we will see things like that." She said. "I know that it is a violation of HIPPA, but the things I hear out of the Emergency Room would scare the crap out of you. Last week a man came in with bite marks all over him. He was homeless, and another homeless man had tried to eat him. He had barely made it to get help. The nurses from over there said he had big chunks of his flesh that were torn away."

"Gross." James said.

"I know. With Halloween coming up, it sparked a bunch of talk about zombies." She almost laughed at that part. "There were some nurses who were actually afraid that the man would turn into a zombie and start infecting the hospital. I think they have spent too much time watching movies like Dawn of the Dead."

"So did he turn?" James asked jokingly.

"Yeah, and he bit me." Jennifer teased. "I want to eat your brains."

"Well, you will have to look elsewhere." James said. "I think I misplaced mine somewhere."

"Very funny." Jennifer said, coming out of the bathroom and reaching for her purse. "If you weren't smart, then companies would ask you to come and tell them how to run a business."

"Maybe they are just dumber than me." James suggested.

"Shut up." Jennifer said playfully and kissed him. "I have to go now. Have a good day. I will make sure that I get out of there in plenty of time to dress up for our dinner tonight."

"Sounds good." James said. "Don't get bitten by any zombies today."

"If I do, I am coming after you first." She laughed, as she went out the door.

James smiled and leaned back, slipping his glasses over his pale blue eyes. He loved her so much. She always made him feel good. Even her weird story about the homeless man had

cheered him up. He was no longer even thinking about the creep that had killed the golfers. He shut off the television and reached for the novel that he was reading. It was a good political thriller about China taking over the whole world and turning it into a big water monopoly empire. He found his place and began to read. Life was good.

Chapter 3

Wraith released himself from Vixen and rolled onto his back, chest heaving from the exertion. They were both covered in sweat and breathing hard from their afternoon rendezvous. Vixen was his lover, and the one person that he did not have to fake it to be around. With her, he was Wraith in his purest form. Head shaved, pale eyes and all. She was a freak and that was what he liked about her. From her dyed black hair to her red contacts, to her usual knee high socks of one bizarre color or another, she had never failed to excite him with her lack of conformity. He did not love her; he only loved himself and his work. He did crave her, though. He craved her all the time, especially after a nice kill.

Her name was not really Vixen, but that is what she went by. Wraith had no desire to learn her real name. A name like Susan or Becky simply would not have been very exciting. Vixen, on the other hand, was a name you could really sink your teeth into. And sink his teeth he did. So hard that he drew blood even. She did not shy away from such things, but rather screamed in ecstasy with every wound that he would inflict. She loved it rough. She would not have it any other way.

That was how he had formed this bond with her. Originally, he had been drawn to her when he saw her dancing at a bar called Cactus Canyon. He loved the way she presented herself as a mixture between a prostitute and a vampire. He had picked her up with the intention of raping and killing her and dropping her blood soaked naked body in the middle of an elementary school playground. When he had started to rape her, though, he realized that she was simply enjoying it. This had pushed him to try to hurt her even more, to push her beyond her pain threshold. He had tried his damndest to break her, but she just wanted more.

This incredible love of brutality had fascinated him. He could not bring himself to kill somebody that he could not break. Instead, they formed their bond that night by grabbing hold of a high school girl that was walking home alone from a friend's house. Wraith had held the girl, while Vixen took a knife to her. By the time morning came, Wraith was obsessed with Vixen and she was head over heels in love with him. And, of course, there was a mutilated naked body with its vitals strewn across the Clifton Elementary School playground.

Since that fateful night, Wraith had been abusing Vixen and using her to satisfy all of his twisted carnal desires. It seemed that the more psychotic his lust, the more willing Vixen was to satisfy. It was a truly beautiful relationship as far as Wraith was concerned. Vixen was so in love with him at this point that she would do anything for him. She would step in front of a train for him if he asked her to, and he had not ruled that out. He liked the idea of watching somebody willingly commit suicide.

Suicide fascinated Wraith to no end. He was so obsessed with it that he often forced his victims to kill themselves. Sometimes he would torture them until they begged him to kill them. Instead of performing the mercy kill, he would give them the instrument of their demise. A knife, a gun, or any sharp object would do. He would sit in rapt attention and

watch them take their own lives. Yes, Wraith loved the feeling of a good suicide. Nothing veered further from the norm than self murder. It was beautiful.

But Wraith was not ready for Vixen to kill herself for him. She was still too much fun to play with. Eventually he knew that he would find a way to break her, but for now he enjoyed the pursuit. Once she was broken, she would be discarded like any broken toy. Then he would watch her end her life in the ultimate display of her love for him. In the mean time, every love making session they had felt like a suicide to him. Each time she gave herself more and more to him for whatever brutality he had in mind. She was like a suicide. Not quite a suicide, but very much like one.

He turned his head to look at her. There was blood on her face from when he had smashed it into the head board with all of his strength. Her left eye was swollen from when he had backhanded her upon entering her place. Her stomach was smeared with blood from the light slashing wound he had ravaged upon it. He had definitely gone too easy on her this time. Next time he would need to make up for that. Scars went across her body in all sorts of different angles and shapes to give testament to better attempts he had made at breaking her. Some of the scars were not inflicted by him, though. She had been cutting herself long before he showed up.

"Not your best effort." She said, as if reading his mind. She ran her index finger through the blood on her stomach and brought it up to her mouth, licking it as if it were the nectar of the gods. "How do you ever expect to break me like that?"

"I will try harder next time, Vixen." He promised. He hated to disappoint her need for violation. "I am just a little distracted today."

"Why are you distracted? What could possibly have your focus more than raping me?" She demanded. "Do I not deserve all of your malice?"

"Not today." He answered honestly. He could see her pain at his lack of focus. "Something has come up that really pissed me off."

"What?" Vixen demanded. Wraith recognized and cherished her hurt feelings. Little by little she was offering herself up to him. Soon she would be broken. He could feel it. She was so close that he almost gave it another shot. Ultimately, though, he knew that he just did not have the right kind of concentration for the task. Not right now. He needed to take care of this new thorn in his side before he would be able to concentrate properly.

"Somebody has been stealing from me." He said.

"Who would be stupid enough to steal from you?" She asked. "Just go kill him my love. Then you can get back to breaking me. I want you to break me. I am willing to offer myself up to you."

"I know, pet, I know." Wraith responded. "You are close, but you are not ready yet. Just be patient. Your time will come soon."

"So what are you going to do?" She asked. Vixen realized that she was not going to regain his focus on her until he was over this distraction.

"I can't rush this." He said, thinking out loud. "My first thought was to hunt him down and kill him immediately. The more I think about it though, I think that I should take my time with it. The fact that he would steal from me tells me something about him. To steal from me, he would most likely know how I come across my money. That would mean that he is either incredibly stupid, as you suggested, or incredibly confident."

"Confident?" She asked.

"Yes, confident enough to think that I would pose no real threat to him. He didn't even try to hide his trail. It is almost like he is daring me to come after him." Wraith said, with a slight smile on his face. "Anybody that bold needs to be carefully studied. Hasty action could lead to my demise. You wouldn't want me to die before I could finish breaking you, would you?"

"No, you can't." Vixen said, sick at the thought. "You have to finish what you started. You have to accept my sacrifice of body and soul to you."

"I will." He said. "That is why I need to approach this man with caution. I need to learn everything about him. I need to know what drives him, what he holds dear. When I figure him out, I will take away everything from him that he loves until he begs me to kill him. Then I will make him kill himself."

"You think he will be a suicide?" She asked with a touch of envy in her voice. Wraith knew that she desperately wanted to be worthy of a suicide for him. She was always jealous when she found out that he had deemed somebody else to be worthy of a suicide over her. She wanted so badly to be considered worthy of a suicide.

"Yes, I think so." Wraith said, feeding off her need to be the one that pleased him. "He definitely feels like a suicide."

"Well, then I want to help." Vixen insisted. "Suicides are important, and I want to be a part of it. If he is going to offer himself up to you, I want to be there to see it. Please, let me help you."

"Okay, pet." He said. "You can help. I don't see any reason to keep you out of it. It would be good for you to see his offering. It would help prepare you for when you are ready to do the same. In the mean time, I need to let my employers know that I am going to need some personal time. I can't concentrate on an assignment from them until I am able to finish this thief."

With that, he got up and went to his laptop computer. Using the wireless internet connection to get online, he logged onto the website entitled 'Cute Little'. He couldn't help but smirk at the name. But then, it would be a red flag to the authorities to advertise their real name on their website. The Devoted Brotherhood of Anarchy did not want undue attention brought upon them. Not only did they support anarchy, they actively pursued it through employing Wraith and others like him.

Since they had more than one operative, Wraith did not have to be available to them on a constant basis. While he was their favorite instrument of destruction and chaos, they did have others that would gladly step in to fill a temporary void. In fact, his status as the number one operative was what allowed him such autonomy that he was able to take personal time whenever he so chose.

Wraith typed out a simple message announcing that he would not be available for a short time. He did not say what he would be doing or when he would again be available. He only typed in that he would be in touch. After he logged off of their site, he brought up Google. Whistling softly, he typed in the name James Harper and hit the enter button.

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