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Betsy knew that her new sandals would help her. They were green, racing-car green her father would have said, and then he would have told her the story of the wonderful Porsche he had inherited when he was young, an old '72 model, with deep red leather upholstery. It's the colour of romance he would also have said, meaning the racing-car green, for it was in that car that he had romanced her mother, when they were both young. But Betsy could never really see it from his point of view, because for her the colour of romance was, and always had been, red. She thought the romance was actually in the interior; lying back amongst the soft red leather cushions, feeling His lips touch her neck, then ever so slightly, and lightly, travel their way upwards, or downwards; depending on the particular moment, and the particular Him, and His particular proclivity.

But enough about romance. There was a mission to accomplish. A mission involving risk and daring and the natural cunning of the very well read.

Betsy (Elizabeth) Jane Angell. Sandalled up. Ready. She had deliberately taken the whole day off from her new job in the library, and had that morning gone early to the market, not in her new sandals but in a perfectly appropriate pair of red gardening shoes; a little like galoshes but rather more elegant, and also more suitable for the temperate Australian climate. Shoes which would adequately protect her feet from the odours and embraces of lettuce leaves not infrequently encountered in the chaos of the market.

She had purchased a fish. And it was a beautiful fish. A light silvery-blue bream, with a perfect, delicately rounded fish shape. It was a pity really that she was not going to eat it. But such are the sacrifices of the vengeful. Of those seeking vengeance.

Because that's what Zara Peters was going to experience. Vengeance.

Betsy had noted, previously, about life, the interesting phenomenon that one often feels the most rage not about wounds one has received oneself, but about those inflicted upon persons near and dear to oneself. She had in fact once totally lost her composure, had indeed seen red, yes, actual red in front of her eyes, at school, when a teacher had mercilessly taunted a new girl struggling with her studies. Thus it was that, one afternoon in an English class, after weeks of constant jibes, taunts and sarcasm, when this teacher forced Roberta to stand up in front of the class and read out loud from Shakespeare's Julius Caesar and then tore strips off her, Betsy exploded. She simply couldn't bear it any longer. She strode up to Miss Westin's desk, grabbing her specially annotated copy of the play for protection, and, placing herself in between Miss Westin and Roberta, proceeded to yell out her thoughts on kindness, compassion and understanding. Indeed, the Principal, Miss Myers, said later that it was in fact the remarkable eloquence and clarity of her ideas on these important issues, heard by most of the school

community, which had saved her from expulsion.

Betsy thought that Zara Peters could do with hearing some of those ideas. Although there would probably be an issue with comprehension, her brain and heart having been prematurely stunted by her meanness. Because Zara Peters was a bully. And had been bullying Betsy's little brother Col all year. So much, that recently he'd stopped eating. And he was only thirteen. Zara Peters had to be stopped. Thus, the fish.

The mission began exceedingly well. Betsy had, naturally, done meticulous and completely untraceable research as to location, logistics and potential dangers, and thus it was that at 2.17 p.m. precisely she found herself, together with fish and message, on the far end of the corrugated iron roof of the Peters' exceptionally expansive back shed. Big enough for a tractor. And a boat. Perhaps even a hippopotamus. Betsy could feel the warm, self-satisfied glow of victory rising inside her. Just twenty more steps or so, a quick climb in through Zara's bedroom window, the depositing of fish and message on pillow. And then,

And so across the iron she went. Step by step, each sandalled foot sounding out the firmness of the structure beneath her. But nature, alas, cannot be researched. At a critical moment, just as her sandalled right foot tested out the eleventh step, an extremely beautiful wattlebird swooped towards her squawking angrily, attracted by the fish. Betsy raised her arms to protect herself, causing herself to lose her balance, and thus her right foot landed rather too heavily on a rather too weak section of the roof and consequently she fell through the iron, through the beams, past the cobwebs, through the air and landed rather heavily on the ground below.

So heavily in fact that she passed out for several moments.

As she came to, she lay there for a moment, realising that vengeance, at least this time, was not going to be hers, that the wrongs sustained by little brother Col at Zara's hands would have to lie quiet for some time longer, that the fish was squashed under her back, and that she hurt, all over.

But then she realised that standing above her was an exceedingly attractive young man, looking worried, looking...just...lovely. She smiled, and then he bent over and helped her up and into his arms, enfolded her into his soft chest, enclosed her in his angora racing-car green jumper. And not only was he wearing a racing-car green jumper, but he was also wearing racing-car green gardening shoes.

It's irritating, she managed to think, somewhere amongst her bliss, how often fathers are actually right.

Adapted for performance by Barbara Campbell from a story by Caroline Lee.