

Rebecca Hawkes

Nemesis Mine

yours is the name I hate most of all
which I know because I have been repeating it
between my teeth instructing my minions
to conduct increasingly elaborate heists
that will lure you at last to your doom
 which is destined to be
 me obviously

I burglarize a priceless artwork
which you had acquired at significant personal cost
I cut out the gently smiling face in the painting
and replace it with a selfie
so when you steal it back the painting is worthless
on the black market
but you do not get rid of it
my spies report
 that you keep it under your pillow
 gilded edges jutting out

you construct a laser superweapon
to etch a gigantic tag of your name across the moon
on my birthday ruining my luxury
moon themed full moon party
to which I specifically did not invite you
though I did arrange a data leak of the coordinates
 when you arrive in your warship cannons booming
 my heart leaps in my throat whilst I dive for cover

how many times have you sailed recklessly
over continents and ocean trenches in hot pursuit
launching torpedoes as I careen in your spyglass sights
cackling away on my gold plated jet ski O nefarious
O dastardly I live
to hurl bullion back at you from a slingshot
while my space squad of highly educated dolphins
breaks into the hull of your craft
they purloin small items of enormous sentimental value
and release the conspiracy of lemurs you have trafficked
 and trained to paint flawless reproductions
 of frankly dated masterworks

loose at last the bandit-faced primates
graffiti your clandestine labyrinth
with the same tasteless repetitive sunflowers
but you have already arranged for special forces
to capture me at the border
loathsome busybody
I hate you I hate you
I wouldn't have it any other way

and yet my last several escapades went off
without a hitch
and I can no longer intercept
your vile machinations on any channel
even the encryptions only you and I use
mortal enemy the world is boring
without your meddling
I lie awake
awaiting intel

apparently you are spending your days
in a state of deranged reasonableness
you have been waking early to jog
without your bespoke catsuit or balaclava
your throwing stars rusting in their cabinet
you have taken to hand crocheting
hanging baskets for your carnivorous plants
you have filed tax returns on a number of offshore accounts
thereby defeating their very purpose
and you have quibbled
on consumer review sites for home appliances
under your real name

I cannot abide all this ruin by prudence
come for me you coward
get! in! your! pirate! ship!
you say you have been taking "therapy"
you are "working on yourself"
your psychoanalyst has some
"reservations"
about our "relationship"

ahoy there mouthbreathing brigand
thinking yourself too damaged for a final duel
I see it I do who knows you better than I
snivelling craven stand and fight yes

your shame is coiled up inside you
and ready to play yes
your shame is a slinky
delightful in rainbows
as it loops over itself going down
and down and down the spiral
stairwell in the frivolous castle
you built for your dreams
 this is not an invitation to tell me
 the unfinished business of your childhood

but do you really think you can outdo me
in abjection never fear
I will draw my own shame out of my throat
like a sparkling feather boa I will drape it
over my shoulders I will perform
a sensual dance using my shame as a prop
I will helicopter my shame wildly in front of my crotch
nemesis through all our capers and larceny
did you think I couldn't anticipate this twist
 our ultimate boss battle
 a public redemption arc

I always expected we would grow old together
spending our ill-gotten gains
to purchase adjacent volcanic island lairs
like two humongous tits jutting up from the ocean
we would spit at each other across the archipelago
and in the evenings
with our weakening arms
 we would row halfway out in our canoes
 and wrestle