

POISON

by

Erin King

FADE IN:

INT. CAMPUS BUILDING - STORAGE CLOSET - SPRING - EVENING

DEBORAH, 21, peeks inside a dark storage closet and looks around. She steps just inside the closet door and flicks on the dim light with a pullstring.

Deborah is very attractive, about 5'8", with long, straight, light brown hair. She is wearing shorts with a white, airy blouse and sandals, holding a bookbag.

JENNA, 21, is behind Deborah CHEWING gum and also sporting a bookbag. She is attractive and slightly shorter with dark, wavy hair, wearing capri pants with a colorful tank top.

She steps inside the closet as well.

JENNA

I saw it roll under the door so
it's in here somewhere.

DEBORAH

(sarcastically)

Hey it's not like I was planning
to meet up with anyone for a drink
right about now.

JENNA

Look near those two boxes over
there. I need that ring, it was a
present from Jay.

The young women hunt around the small dim closet.

Two small boxes sit near the corner while cleaning supplies and rags sit in the rear of the space weirdly stacked on top of one another next to a pile of kewpie dolls. A small crate sits near Jenna.

DEBORAH

How the hell did you drop your
ring anyway?

JENNA

I was putting it back on after using the restroom and it slipped out of my hands.

Deborah kneels and looks around the boxes, moving them out of the way. Her back faces Jenna who stands and stares at her back.

DEBORAH

I can barely see anything in here.

JENNA

I can see perfectly fine.

DEBORAH

Alright Jenna, I'll help you look for ten minutes then I'm outta' here.

Jenna turns and shuts the closet door, quickly removing a key from her pocket and locking the two of them inside.

Deborah stands up, confused.

DEBORAH

(puzzled)

Jenna what the hell are you doin'?

Jenna ignores Deborah as she reaches into her bookbag and removes a small box wrapped in a towel. She faces Deborah with a serious look on her face, holding the covered box with both hands.

JENNA

Sit down Deborah, I need to talk to you about something.

DEBORAH

(with attitude)

Excuse me, did you just lock the door?

JENNA

(dead serious)

Yes, and since you don't have the key and I do, you should sit down and listen to what I have to say.

Deborah goes to the door and tries to open it but the knob won't budge.

DEBORAH

Jenna come on, what gives?

Jenna points toward one of the boxes in the corner.

JENNA

I'm not kidding, sit down, this won't take long.

Deborah hesitates. She appears confused and nervous as she looks around the small closet.

JENNA

Seriously, this will only take a few minutes. I just needed some privacy and your attention.

Deborah flops down onto one of the boxes, dropping her bookbag next to it. She is very irritated.

DEBORAH

Fine, what?

JENNA

I had a talk with my boyfriend Jay the other day--well my ex-boyfriend Jay, now. I actually threw his stupid ring into the garbage. Apparently, he's seeing someone else.

Deborah looks away. Jenna looks straight at her.

JENNA

You know how girlfriends talk? Well, our girlfriends have been giving me an earful about Jay and how they've seen him hanging out at night with some backstabbing bitch.

Deborah SIGHS.

DEBORAH

Okay Jenna, I was at the Allen Street Grill one evening and I saw Jay on the street so I waved hello to him through the window and the next thing I knew we were having appetizers and talking. But it was innocent, I swear.

JENNA

Then why not mention it?

DEBORAH

It never crossed my mind to because it wasn't a big deal.

Jenna shoves the small crate with her foot and sits down on it across from Deborah, facing her. The towel-covered box sits in her lap.

Deborah averts her eyes in every direction except Jenna's.

JENNA

Did it ever cross your mind that Donna and Mike had actually talked about getting engaged before you had your way with him?

DEBORAH

I wasn't serious about Mike, that was just casual.

JENNA

I see. That must be the reason you dated him for only a few weeks before you moved on to Edward and Matt.

Deborah is startled at hearing this.

DEBORAH

How do you even know all this?

Jenna casually removes the towel from the box on her lap. It's a clear plastic container with tiny holes at the top in which a brown spider about 1 inch across moving about.

JENNA

I told you, girlfriends talk. Real friends, anyway. I'm sure you thought you were being very discreet.

Deborah squeamishly moves backward, her eyes very focused on the box.

DEBORAH

What the hell do you have that for?

Jenna studies the container as though she is seeing it for the first time. She then abruptly holds it out toward Deborah with a creepy smile. Deborah SQUEALS and moves back.

JENNA

What's wrong?

DEBORAH

(freaked out)

Get that creepy freakin' thing away from me and let me out of here Jenna. I am dead serious!

Jenna CHUCKLES a little. She studies the container again then looks straight into Deborah's eyes.

JENNA

You don't have a clue about dead serious.

Deborah squirms uncomfortably on the box as Jenna stares at her and speaks in a flat, serious tone.

JENNA

I've always been fascinated by dangerous animals. Sharks, lions, snakes, spiders. Well not all spiders, just the poisonous ones that can kill with a single bite. Not that you would know any of this about me. It's not as though you ever befriended another girl to learn who she really is.

Deborah stands up anxiously.

DEBORAH

Okay, I may have dated some of the same guys that my friends have dated, so what? It's college for heaven's sake.

Jenna grabs her arm and yanks her back down.

JENNA

It's much more than that and you know it. What is it, some kind of sickness with you? Thousands of guys on this campus but you only get hot for the ones dating your friends? This town is way too small for that to stay a secret for long.

Jenna inches toward Deborah. Deborah scoots backward.

JENNA

Sit still, I'm not through yet.

DEBORAH

(sweating)

But you said this would just take a few minutes!

JENNA

I lied! Just like you lie! So keep your ass on that box or I will open this goddamn container!

DEBORAH

You're out of your damn mind!

Jenna makes a move to open the container and Deborah freezes in place.

DEBORAH

Okay okay!

Jenna holds up the box and turns it around to display it fully. She is calm and focused.

JENNA

It's a brown recluse spider. I trapped it in Cindy's attic. You remember Cindy. Had you noticed how she's stopped speaking to you? Needless to say, she was thrilled when she found out the reason I wanted the spider and she couldn't wait to help. Because that's what friends do.

Deborah's breathing begins to waver.

DEBORAH

(pleading)

Jenna, please. I know I screwed up and I am so sorry for hurting any of you. From now on I'll just assume that all the guys my friends date are off limits.

Jenna LAUGHS.

JENNA

Oh please. That's not a new rule; everybody knows that one, including you. We both know why you go after your friends' boyfriends and it has nothing to do with being clueless about the dating rule.

DEBORAH

I swear, I--

Jenna suddenly removes the gum from her mouth and plants it hard onto Deborah's forehead. A look of sheer terror falls over Deborah's face.

JENNA

Deborah, give the bullshit a break why don't you! You hoped you'd be found out, because you get off on what you do!

(MORE)

JENNA (CONT'D)

You're one of those girls who deep down likes to stick it to other women because it makes you feel some deluded sense of power. That's why you can't be friends with us because you're too busy competing.

DEBORAH

(weakly)

That's not true.

Deborah's eyes tear up. Jenna just stares at her.

JENNA

(sarcastically)

Right. That's not true.

Jenna and Deborah both gaze at the spider moving inside the container on Jenna's lap.

JENNA

How about some trivia?

Deborah looks at her with an expression of bewilderment.

JENNA

The brown recluse is a deadly, poisonous spider that can be identified by the violin-shaped marking on its back. I hear that they've been migrating to Pennsylvania like mad.

Jenna moves the container around in her hands and speaks about the spider as though she is trying to sell it.

JENNA

Anyway, even though its bite can kill, many people have survived being bitten, though not without immediate medical attention.

Deborah is now panicked and teary-eyed.

JENNA

And even then the highly toxic venom may still severely destroy tissues and in some cases even burst red blood cells, which can cause quite a mess.

Suddenly, Deborah rips the gum from her forehead and rushes toward the door, BANGING on it and trying desperately to turn the knob as she SOBS and YELLS loudly.

DEBORAH

Help somebody, I'm locked in the closet, please help! Help, please!

Jenna stands and opens the container halfway. She moves toward Deborah and SHOUTS louder.

JENNA

I'm warning you Deborah, either you sit here and be quiet until I am through or prepare for the sting of your life.

Deborah quickly turns around and backs away from Jenna.

DEBORAH

Why are you doing this? You can't seriously be planning to kill me.

JENNA

I'm not a killer, the spider is.

Deborah SOBS.

DEBORAH

What's the difference when you're the one holding it?

She continues backing away as Jenna takes a step toward her.

DEBORAH

Jenna, please don't. I'm sorry about Jay, I really am.

(MORE)

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

I only hung out with him a couple of times and I gave him my number, that's all. You can't do this.

JENNA

I was just introducing you to someone that I think you have a lot in common with. You both simply do what comes naturally.

Jenna sits on the crate again. Deborah hesitatingly reclaims her seat on the box. Tears run down her face as she folds her hands on her lap and looks at the floor.

Jenna's eyes are fixed on the clear container and its wiggling prisoner.

DEBORAH

Jenna? Jenna?

JENNA

I have nothing else to say Deborah. Just that I can speak for Cindy, Beverly, Anna, Selena, Donna, and myself when I say we want nothing more to do with you.

Deborah gives a deep SIGH.

DEBORAH

I understand.

JENNA

I'm sure you do.

DEBORAH

Can I ask you something?

JENNA

Why not.

DEBORAH

Can I please go now?

Jenna stares blankly at Deborah. Then she looks back at the irate spider.

DEBORAH

Jenna! Please, will you unlock the door?

Just then a cell phone RINGS. The sound is coming from the direction of Deborah's bookbag on the floor. Deborah doesn't move. Jenna glances at the bag with a knowing look.

JENNA

Oh right I almost forgot, you have a date tonight. No wonder you're as anxious to get back out into the world as this little creature. Guess what? One of you is going to get your wish.

Jenna opens the container and shakes the spider onto Deborah's leg. Deborah SCREAMS and thrashes around madly as her former friend goes and unlocks the door then exits the closet, closing the door behind her.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - DAYTIME

Deborah lets out a SHRIEK as she awakens from one hell of a nightmare. She is BREATHING hard. Her cellphone RINGS.

DEBORAH

Jesus.

She sits up and looks over at the cellphone sitting on her nightstand.

INSERT - PHOTO AND "INCOMING CALL FROM JAY"

Deborah turns the phone off and tosses it across the room. She reflects for a moment then jumps out of bed to retrieve her cellphone.

Once she has it, she speed dials a number and puts the cell to her ear. A female voice is heard answering.

JENNA (V.O.)

Hey, what's up?

DEBORAH

Hey Jenna. I...I really need to talk to you. To you and Cindy and Anna, and...I just need to meet up with you guys to discuss some important stuff. Ya' think we could all meet up at Allen Street Grill?

FADE OUT.

THE END