Dangerous Game

They lied about how they met. Strictly speaking, it wasn't a lie, but it wasn't the whole truth, either. To know their entire story was a dangerous game to play. The weight of knowing an unbearable burden, a constant reminder of the suffocating net they were entangled in. Few partook, and most were dead. For the rest, it was inevitable their luck would run out. A perilous dance between life and death, forever bound to a fate that seemed inevitable. Every lurking shadow a constant reminder of danger. Everyone wanted to survive, but only one was cunning enough to succeed.

I'd intended to write something completely different this week, and then time ran away from me. I lost it somewhere between fighting a cold and revisions on the second book I'm working through. With two half-baked ideas in mind, I chose the far more enticing one because the words flowed better from my keyboard.

The piece above started out as a simple opener, known as a hook. It was inspired by a webinar I recently attended that on the topic. People could submit their story's hook and the presenters would critique them. The floor was also open for constructive feedback from those of us attending live. I find opening lines, shared outside of the complete story, spur my imagination into hyper-drive, and I spent some time daydreaming of catchy hooks. Even if I had no intention of writing the full story behind them, they could join the other fragments stored away that I often dig through for inspiration, but somehow this one took flight.

The original hook was: *They told people they met at the airport. It wasn't a lie, but it wasn't the whole truth, either. Few knew the truth, and most of them were dead. The rest knew it was only a matter of time.* The story grew from there, but with limited time, I restricted it to just one hundred words.

This was an origional draft {post editing}:

> *They told people they met at the airport. It wasn't a lie, but it wasn't the whole truth, either. To know their entire story was a dangerous game to play. The weight of knowing an unbearable burden, a constant reminder of the suffocating noose they were entangled in. Few partook, and most were dead. For the rest, it was inevitable their luck would run out. A perilous dance between life and death, forever bound to a fate that seemed inevitable. Every lurking shadow a constant reminder of danger. Everyone wanted to survive, but only one was cunning enough to succeed.*

The sentence, *They told people they met at an airport.* Is a line I often tell people about how my husband and I met, and like the next sentence suggests, it's not a lie, but it is also not the whole truth. I debated expanding on that, but the story took its own unusual turn with a thriller feel of clandestine spies. We aren't spies, and no-one's in danger from knowing that while we did first meet in an airport, we'd known each other for years prior via the internet. No, it wasn't a dating site.

With the suggestion from a fellow writer to tighten up the opening line to really pack a punch and draw people in, I played with a couple variants for the opening. The final revision is the one you read at the beginning of this post, but this version was also one I toyed with:

> *It wasn't a lie, but it also wasn't the whole truth when they told people how they first met. To know their entire story was a dangerous game to play. The weight of knowing an unbearable burden, a constant reminder of the suffocating net they were entangled in. Few partook, and most were dead. For the rest, it was inevitable their luck would run out. A perilous dance between life and death, forever bound to a fate that seemed inevitable. Every lurking shadow a constant reminder of danger. Everyone wanted to*

> *survive, but only one was cunning enough to succeed.*

It's strange how I can put something off, and then once I face it and discover it's less daunting than I'd expected, I frequent it often. I've even toyed with the idea of writing a one hundred word story every week for the rest of the year. Weird, I know.

The Reluctant Author