



Knife

Sometimes I feel bad about it. Old Willard is such a nice guy. It must be twenty years ago that I stole his knife. There's no other word for it, I stole it.

I tried pretending I was going to give it back, and frankly I would have at one time. But eventually I realized I was never going to return the knife. So, I didn't borrow it and Willard didn't loan it to me. I stole it.

I've always wanted that kind of knife, ever since I was a kid. Larger than a pen knife, Willard's is just the right size to fit in my pocket. The smooth wood sides of walnut make it a handsome looking piece. It has only two blades, so it's slim and even elegant, I think.

But I feel so bad. Willard is a good friend, and we often help each other out with one chore or another. He borrowed my truck to take his granddaughter's rusty swing set to the dump and the next day I found his knife on the floor near the brake pedal.

Twenty years is a long time. I'm sure he doesn't miss the knife, or he would have asked me about it. If I tell him now, he'll have good reason to resent my not getting around to mentioning it ... for two decades. He'll get pissy, like the time I forgot to pick him up after the Fish and Game Club meeting. He had to call his wife for a ride, and she was already in her nightie. That's a thought I won't dwell on.

Willard can get sort of nasty when he feels he's been wronged. He hasn't spoken to his next door neighbor for ten years, just because the guy had a loud party once.

And I saw Willard almost get violent last summer with his wife's dog, when the poor pooch pooped in the back seat of his new car.

Ya know, people who are nasty and violent shouldn't be allowed to have weapons. And I should have never allowed him to borrow my truck in the first place. He probably dropped the knife as he was getting ready to throw it at another driver.

Willard is lucky to be without that knife. Think of the trouble he would have gotten himself into. He'd be in jail by now for some offense. Then he wouldn't be allowed a fork or a spoon, let alone a knife.

Sometimes you just have to go against your honest nature to protect your home and family, or even protect a friend from himself. It's a terrible affliction of anger poor Willard has, and I won't be adding to his temptations by giving his knife back very soon. After all, what are friends for?

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OK, Full Disclosure. I made this up. I did give Willard his knife back many years ago. He didn't recognize it, and so I began to with I'd kept it. Every once in a while I ask Willard when he's going to give me back the knife he borrowed.

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