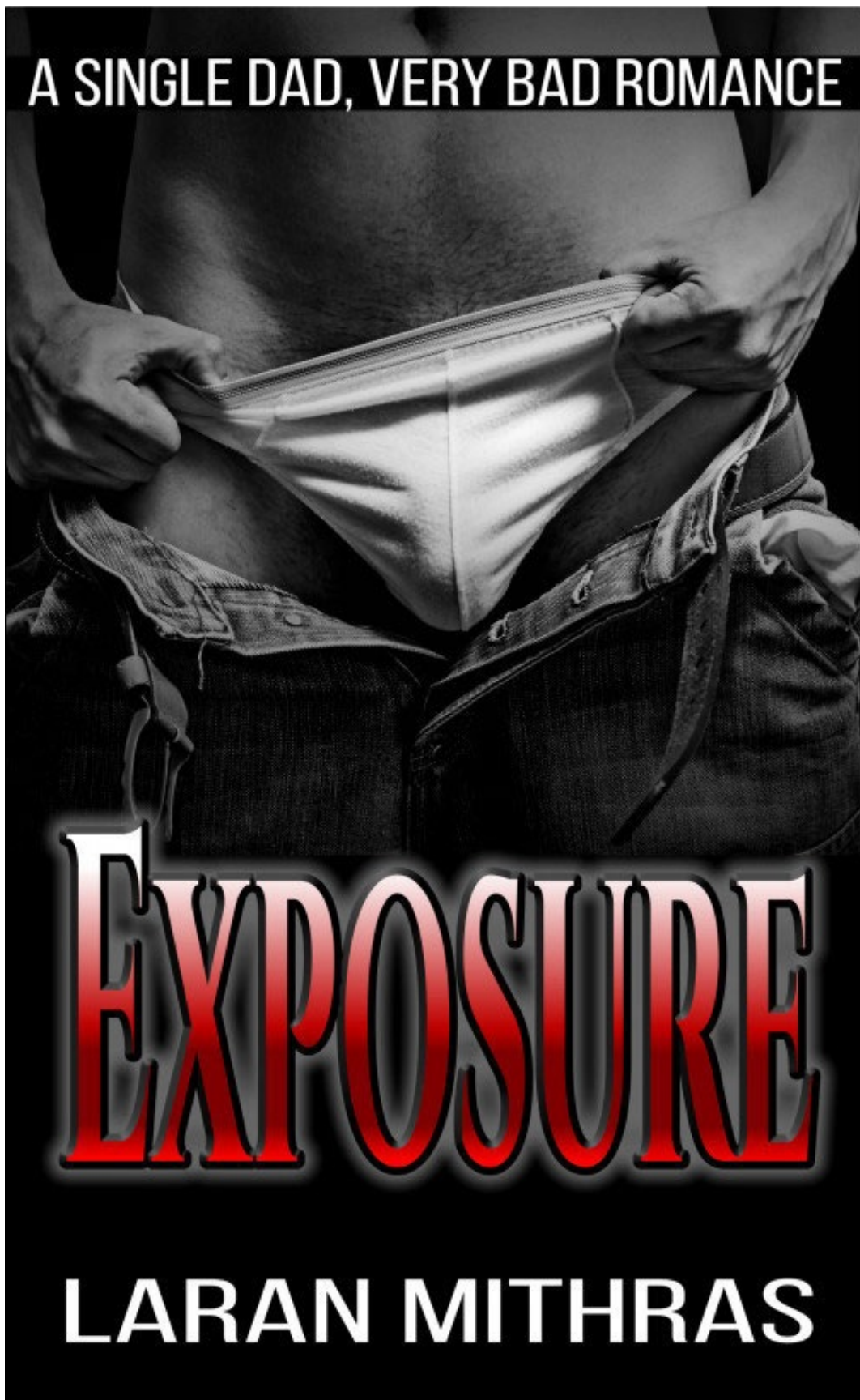


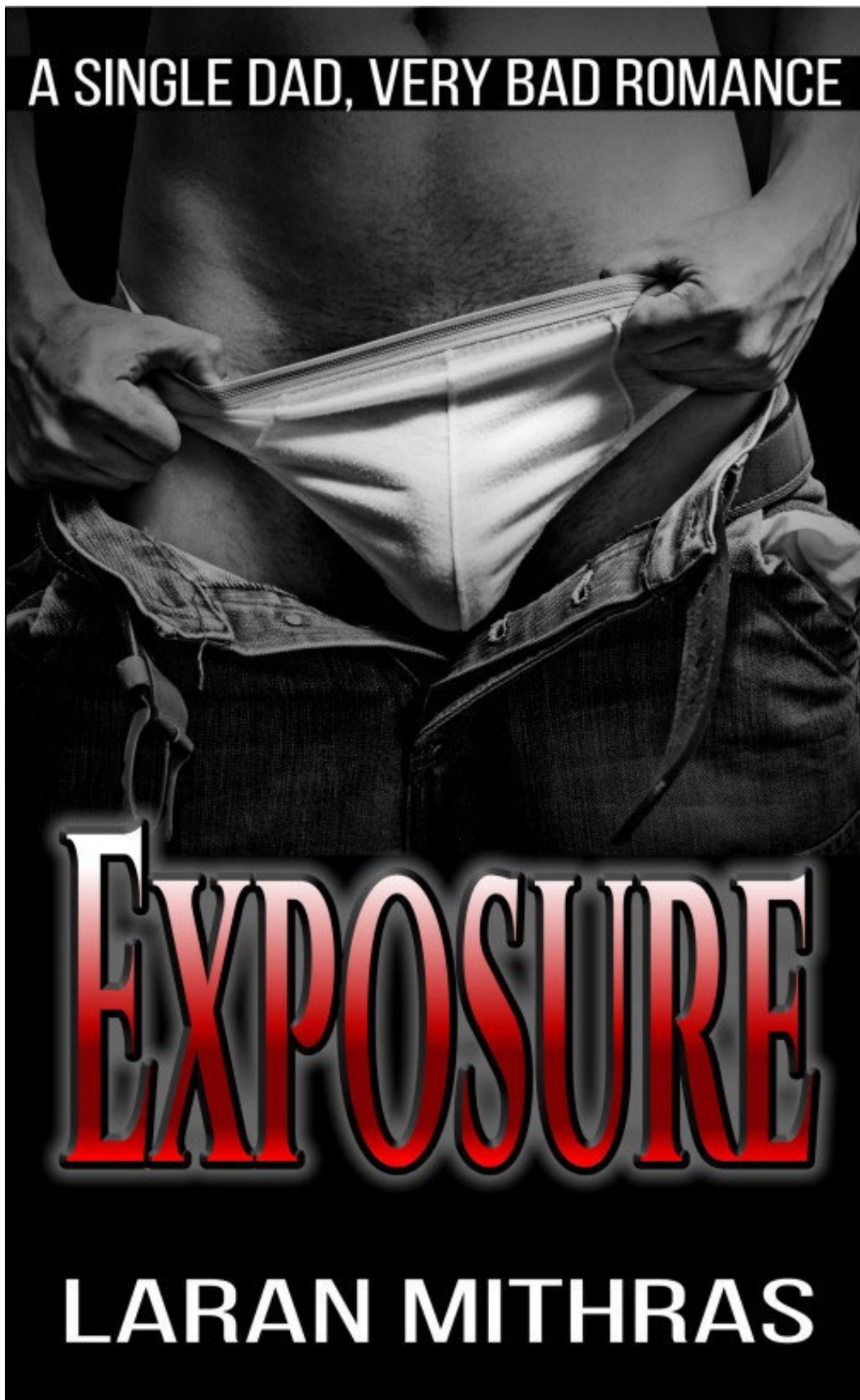
A SINGLE DAD, VERY BAD ROMANCE



EXPOSURE

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By

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Sometimes, men don't appreciate what they have.

CHAPTER 1

Cindy

I was overjoyed at the new house. My mom had warned me life was hard, but she was old. What did she know? I was a millennial and the world belonged to me.

Just graduated from high school, I was already more successful than mom.

A husband, a house of my own, and soon a car.

My generation moves. We make things happen.

My husband leaned into the large master bathroom. He was a real man. Forty-six and fatherly, he had been my high school counselor. "The neighbor is a single dad. Wife died from a fall."

I didn't really care, but my husband was excited to learn it. "So?"

His wink told me he was thinking dirty again. "We might be able to interest him."

I didn't mind that. Sex was sex and the pictures and videos were no different. Raymond had been taking pictures of me since we had started having our affair in high school. He sold the pictures to people he wouldn't talk about.

It was no big deal to me, but he told me to keep my mouth shut about it as other people thought it might be child porn.

Of course, I was not a child. I was very mature at fifteen – a total adult.

I'm eighteen. No one has a right to say I'm not an adult. They didn't have that right all those years ago, either. I unpacked my bathroom box.

The house was something strange, built by some do-it-yourselfer. My husband seemed to appreciate it.

The master bathroom was funky, though, larger than it needed to be and so square. The shower and toilet were on one wall and separated by this large expanse of empty space to the sink on the other side. A huge window provided light. The only fixture was a single bulb sconce over the sink. The window provided the light to see anything.

It felt... not like a bathroom, but more of a room with bathroom stuff in it.

I looked out the big window, resting my knees up against the sill.

We had a fantastic view – of the neighbor's backyard. Directly across from my window was the curtained window of the neighbor's place.

Not facing the sun, that guy probably didn't need the curtains open for light. Maybe he had better light fixtures.

I saw his curtain move.

Knowing my husband wanted me to interest him and possibly get him to buy pictures, I put a hand on my hip and struck a pose.

His face appeared, blinking and bleary-looking.

My husband and the movers were making a lot of noise on that moving truck ramp. Every time they rolled the hand truck onto it, the thing boomed and echoed.

I saw the guy scrub a hand over his face, then catch sight of me.

We looked at each other across the way, staring.

He finally waved.

Handsome guy...

CHAPTER 2

Bill

Some dumb fucker was making the most maddening racket. I scratched at my neck in frustration.

Writing horror novels took all my effort.

Horror was all that was left of my life.

I heard Pyper playing downstairs, talking to her dolls. She was probably getting ready to come upstairs and introduce me to one again.

I hated exterior noise.

Pyper's noise was welcome and I wrote well with it. But this booming shit was too much.

I looked out the bedroom window, seeing the culprits right away: the new neighbors that had purchased drunk Danny's house. A man and a young guy were running hand trucks up and down an aluminum loading ramp on their U-Haul.

Loud.

The young guy was especially into it, hitting the ramp with the empty hand truck at a run. His feet stomped all the way up the ramp.

Stupid kid.

I saw something out of the ordinary in my peripheral vision and looked straight across.

Well now, there's a welcome change.

Drunk Danny would often stand in his bathroom buck-ass naked. Couldn't miss him with the window so large.

But this time was a stunning little cutey. The older guy's daughter? Looked like it; she looked young enough to still be in high school.

I probably shouldn't be checking out his daughter. I waved, dismissing her.

Pyper was behind me, holding up a Barbie. She had put a Gi-Joe helmet on her.

"Is that Gi-Barbie?"

She nodded, her blonde curls bouncing with emphasis. "Yes."

I stroked her hair back, but she ignored me as she always did when I played with her hair. It was her mother's hair and pained me every time I touched it.

I found myself just thumbing her hair slowly back off her forehead, remembering Kelly's hair.

"Son of a bitch..." I murmured. Life is shit.

Pyper bounced the doll in her hands and nodded with a toddler's certainty.

"Sunbitch."

I sighed and hugged her. "No, no, Pyper, those words aren't for you." Three years old, and no mother.

I wasn't going to cry. Not this time. Not this fucking time.

No...

CHAPTER 3

Cindy

"Do we have to?"

Raymond gave me an impatient look. "He's out back. It's the perfect time."

I dropped my shoulders and tossed my head back. "Fine."

"Put on your tube top."

"All right, all right, already." He liked me ready to exhibit. He was as kinky as fuck.

I pulled off my shorts, removed my panties, and put my shorts back on. Taking off my t-shirt, I dropped it to the floor and found my tube top in the box of my clothes.

"Cindy."

I held my hand up and out. "What?"

"You don't live with mom anymore."

"Yeah, so?"

He pointed to my t-shirt on the floor. "Learn to be an adult."

I stamped my foot. "I am an adult. Being an adult means doing anything I want and no one has the right to tell me what to do."

He grimaced and picked up my shirt.

I followed him out back and across the yard. There was a large circle of trees scattered at the edges of the property and they encompassed both our yard and the neighbor's yard.

Raymond had mentioned a fence.

We crossed the property line from long grass to sort of long grass.

That sexy neighbor guy was mowing.

Sitting on the patio was a little girl – all blonde curls and dolls.

The roar of the mower seemed a lot louder up close.

The guy shut it off and leaned on the handle, looking at us with a studious scowl. He was unshaven with perhaps a month's worth of beard. He swept back a couple locks of hair from his eyes.

My husband was advancing, hand outstretched. "Hi, we're your new neighbors."

The man looked at his hand and said, "No shit?"

"I'm Raymond." He extended his hand a little more.

The man took it. "Bill."

My husband motioned towards me. "My wife Cindy."

His eyes registered surprise.

I stepped up and offered my hand.

His eyebrows rose and he grimaced. He shook my hand. His eyes were locked on mine.

I swallowed, feeling a tingle run up my arm from my hand. I shivered, despite the warmth of the afternoon. "Hi."

He gave a pained look at my husband. "Your wife?"

Raymond was used to the pointed questions. "Yes, we were married last week."

"You don't say..."

"What say we bring some beer over later?"

"I don't drink beer."

"Wine?"

"As long as it's the color of blood." He scratched at his beard.

Raymond put his arm around me, but up high under my arm. He liked having his hand near my boob when he talked to men. "We'll see you tonight then."

Bill's eyes flicked down to where my husband's hand rested just under the tiny swell of my breast. He swallowed and looked back up. "Yeah... sure. I put my daughter down at eight. Come by then."

You don't sound very sure, mister. I let Raymond lead me back to the taller grasses on our side.

He said to me, "Try to act more sexy next time."

"Is this the new plan thing?"

"Yes."

I frowned. He had mentioned opening up new opportunities for money. Selling my underage pictures had brought in good money, but not so much now. It was the age of webcams and video. The plans were to start making videos and having stunt men in them, as he called them.

I knew what that meant; I'd be having sex with other people. I was okay with that: sex was sex.

But something about Bill made me nervous.

His wife had died in a fall?

Or had he pushed her?

Something just didn't feel right.

CHAPTER 4

Bill

I couldn't get the little girl out of my head. What was their game? Why was an older guy with someone who looked like she was eleven years old?

Okay, maybe she looked fifteen.

She looked like she should be in braces and wearing a Catholic school uniform.

Fuck.

Was she really an adult? Because I had gotten hard looking at her.

No woman had done that to me since... Kelly.

I was going to need that wine.

I was bathed and shaved.

I didn't want guests.

I didn't need guests.

It was like an invasion of the sanctity of my wife's memory.

Two years is such a short time, usually. Two years from the day of her death is such a long, horrid time.

Funny how time stretches and shrinks to the impact of the event.

I would never step foot on a ladder again. Not even a small one. Kelly had been on a tall one, arranging a store banner. She fell – no one knew why.

I certainly didn't.

What were her last thoughts? Of me? Of Pyper? Of losing her balance? It meant a lot to wonder about it, but it was something I could never know. It was endless mental masturbation of the most morose kind.

I dressed our daughter... my daughter... in her sleep dress. Kelly had insisted on this quirky little thing of dressing her in old-fashioned clothing. Her sleep dress was an actual white dress with lace and the ankle-length hem and sleeve cuffs. There was a cloth hat that went with it that had more lace around the rim. I didn't put that on her – she'd just tear it off, anyway.

I had antique-style clothing for her until she was six. But something inside me knew I would continue buying her the same vein of clothing.

I couldn't help it.

I heard their knock at the door.

I sighed and kissed Pyper's head. So soft and vulnerable. Don't ever start climbing, girl, I don't know what I'd do.

I let her sit and select her sleep dolls. She always had to have a crowd of them with her. I went and answered the door.

That Raymond fuck was smiling his greasy smile. There was something about him that crawled up my ass and rotted. Beside him was his little wife.

Fuck. "Hey... Come in." I unlatched the screen door and let them in.

He was waving a bottle of red like he was a wise king delivering gifts to Jesus in the manger.

I snatched it from his hand, already annoyed. "Gimme that." I tried to breathe away my aggravation.

I didn't need visitors.

I popped the cork in the kitchen and set out three glasses. I came out and said, "I'll let the bottle air a bit?" I trailed off as I ignored jerk and looked at his wife.

She was squatted down in a very flattering way, inspecting my daughter.

No, not inspecting. Studying. Scrutinizing.

In awe.

I went to her side and lifted Pyper. I met Cindy's eyes. They were wide and stunned, as if having seen something deeply distressing.

I clutched my daughter to me protectively while looking down at this girl.

Something in her face was trying to comprehend. Some air about her spoke of question and concern. She blinked and shook her head ever so slightly. Her eyebrows drew down. "What's her name?"

Her husband was looking around as if he couldn't be bothered.

I said, "Pyper. Pyper Laurie Macks."

Her response was small, tiny. Inconsequential. "She's adorable."

And it meant everything to me to hear it. I lowered my eyes, tightened my lips, and swallowed hard. "Yeah, well, it's her bedtime."

Pyper leaned over, reaching.

I sighed and pointed, motioning to a doll. "Um, could you hand me that one? The naked Barbie with the machine gun?"

Cindy snatched it, and passed it up reverently. She rose after handing it to me.

I escaped to Pyper's bedroom down the hall. Giving her a soft kiss goodnight, I turned on the baby monitor and took the receiver. I slept on the second floor and needed to have a way of knowing if she needed my attention. I hitched it to my belt and went out to the living room.

Raymond had made himself at home, all leaned back with both arms up and out on the back of the sofa.

Cindy was perched lightly on the arm nearest to the leather recliner.

I sat slowly, adjusting not just to the chair but also the idea of having people in my home.

Raymond had a commanding air about him, but solicitous, as if having once been in a position of dealing with people. A lot of people. "So what do you do?"

"Sit around and scratch my ass." I couldn't help it. What business of it was his?

He blinked at me.

Fuck, I'm being unfair. "Actually, that's pretty much what I do. I write horror stories."

His eyes went from glowing to uninterested.

I knew the look and I didn't give a fuck. "What do you do?"

"I was with the school district for over twenty years. Pension, now. Among some other things you might be interested in."

I arched an eyebrow at him. "Oh? Is that right?"

"Quite. I've been selling some top-quality photos of Cindy here."

"Photos?"

He waved his hand and made a face. "Oh, I wouldn't waste your time with things like that. But she is pretty, isn't she?" His fingers brushed over her forearm.

Yeah, she was. Her black hair was straight and silky. Bangs came down to her eyebrows in delicate strands. Her skin was so pale I thought she might have been a ghost from my latest book. Her puffy red lips were her only color other than her brown eyes.

She was enchanting. Entrancing. Fucking distracting.

I said, "Yes, she is." What's greasy getting at?

My baby monitor squawked, "Sunbitch."

I sighed and ran a hand back through my hair. I needed to get it cut.

Raymond was looking at my belt with a mixture of revulsion and stupefaction.

I got up. "I'll pour the wine."

"Good, good. When you come back, I have a proposition for you."

"A proposition, huh?" Somehow I didn't think his idea was going to be about splitting the cost of a backyard fence.

CHAPTER 5

Cindy

My husband scowled at me. "When he comes back in, sit on the recliner with him." He waved his finger as if I couldn't see the chair.

I rolled my eyes. "Yes, I get it."

The thing was, Bill had rather taken my breath away. He was so cute I couldn't breathe.

My husband was going to pitch videos of me, and maybe my older pictures if he felt Bill had that kind of desire.

I don't think our neighbor did.

He seemed extremely protective of his daughter.

Pyper had haunted me with something I wanted to remember, but couldn't – something well beyond the grasp of my memory. Had it been something to do with the silly way he dressed her?

Maybe fathers didn't know about current sleepwear; I was sure all little kids wore sweats to bed.

I didn't know if my father had any weird clothing ideas; I don't remember having a father. My mother would just refer to him as "your father" and not in a very nice tone.

She didn't want to talk about him and I didn't care, though I was curious. Who had he been?

Bill came back out and I began to feel tense. I didn't know if I could go through with this.

Raymond nudged me.

I took the wine glass and moved over to the arm of his recliner when he sat.

Immediately, he radiated tension. He looked at me with accusing eyes, then over to my husband with a glare. He growled, "What's going on?"

I sensed discomfort in his posture. I felt the disturbance in the words. I couldn't even say anything.

He looked up at me and I swallowed, eyes fearing how he might look at me. His expression changed when he looked at me, and changed again when he looked at my husband. What was wrong with Raymond?

My husband cleared his throat pointedly at me but I was scared. He finally said, "She likes to make videos. We thought you might be interested."

Bill relaxed visibly. He lifted his chin and considered the color of the wine. Then he gulped it down. He let out a sigh and stood. "Nice wine. Thanks for coming. Nice to meet you. Now get the fuck out."

My husband pursed his lips in disapproval and did a slight shake of his head. Typical teacher smirk. But he said nothing – just stood and beckoned me with his hand.

We left his home.

He shut the door quietly after us and turned out the porch light.

I felt... sad.

Raymond was gritting his teeth. "You're gonna have to come on to him. No man can resist such a beautiful young girl."

Young woman, thank you. I'm an adult. "I'm eighteen."

"Yes, yes." He waved fingers at me in dismissal. "You're going to have to linger

in the bathroom window naked. Show yourself to him. We'll have him starving for you and shelling out megabucks in no time."

I wanted to appeal to Bill. Sort of. "Okay."

He sighed deeply. "I guess I'll have you tonight since he won't."

Goodie. Sex was fun and liberating.

Not twenty minutes later, Raymond was thrusting his cock into me. I was doing the womanly thing, lying there as still and stiff as possible and enjoying his animal lust. I answered when spoken to.

He grunted forcefully, "Does little girl like cock?"

I was always little girl. "Yes."

"How old are you, little girl?"

He only ever wanted me to be one age. "Ten."

"Am I hurting your little pussy?"

"Yes." He wasn't, but that's what he liked hearing.

He groaned and rammed harder. "Fuck the child, so good. So deep."

It had always been kinda creepy, but I wasn't a child, so it was okay. This was where he liked me crying as if I was in pain. I dutifully whimpered and wailed.

His hotness leaked into me and he pulled out. He fell over to the side and waved his hand. "Go finish yourself in the window. Maybe he'll be looking. Make it a habit."

I rolled my eyes, but he couldn't see that. I went and did it. Looking out into the darkness, I wondered if Bill was sleeping. I played with myself and built up some warmth. I never got warm with Raymond – that was just the consummation of me being an adult. The real satisfaction could only come from myself. It was just what women went through and I was glad I had finally made it.

There was no light on in the other window, but I imagined him looking out and watching.

Do you like me, Bill? Am I pretty enough for you? Or do you like something different? Bigger breasts? Raymond had promised to get me super-big boobs to enhance my video presence. Something inside me wanted our neighbor to like me for who I was. But I knew men always wanted big tits or they couldn't cum. Except for my husband, but he was strange anyway.

Boys in my school were different – they wanted anal sex and boob size didn't matter so much. They wanted to see tit-pics and the more exciting shots of bottles shoved into the ass. They always wanted anal.

I hadn't done that.

Raymond promised it would happen, but not by him. He wanted someone with a super-large cock to do it. I wasn't sure about all that, but he assured me that women had massive orgasms when doing anal. It made me excited to try it.

I finished myself in the window wondering what Bill's cock looked like.

CHAPTER 6

Bill

I had kooky neighbors. Well, one, for sure. I couldn't figure out Cindy. Mostly, I didn't care.

Mostly.

I found myself describing a ghost in my latest story having her features – and the ghost was sexy. Haunting, teasing, and tempting.

When I read back over a week later, I realized the depth of how I had transferred my impression of Cindy into the story.

I took a break to think about that. I scooped up Pyper and some dolls and went out back. I set her down to play on the patio. She was really good about moving around; she would stay on the patio and play. She might get up and walk around a little, but otherwise maybe just stand in place and jump.

I don't know where three year olds got so much energy.

I hauled the mower out of the shed. The lawn didn't really need it, but it was easier to mow if I didn't wait two weeks. I scowled over at the neighbor's yard. The grass was so long it was hanging over and had waist-high clumps standing up.

Fucking pigs. Well, maybe not Cindy...

I yanked the cord twice and the mower roared to life. The vibration through the chrome handle bar reminded me of how long it took to mow the damn lawn. I scratched at my beard and shook my head.

I could be writing more of my story...

However, I had come out to mow the lawn as a way to shake myself from molding a ghost in the form of Cindy.

I looked up at their bathroom window and almost fell over. Chills ran down my back as Cindy stood there in all her naked ghostly glory.

For a second, I thought I really was seeing a ghost. Talk about creeped out.

I looked away, then looked back. She was still standing up there, visible down to her knees. I started pushing the mower, but found myself glancing up every few feet. I began to get uncomfortable in my jeans.

Knowing I was only going to make my predicament worse by looking, I shoved on the mower and put my head down. Screw this.

I finished the lawn in a sweaty mess. Bits of grass tickled my grimy forehead.

I glanced up.

Still there.

I put the mower away as my cock began to harden again. The girl was watching me, naked. Barely legal, she had no fear of me seeing her nakedness.

I hadn't been with a woman since...

And it was severely telling on me right now.

I scooped up Pyper and her dolls and went inside. I needed a shower.

I shut her door and carried the baby monitor with me upstairs. I was looking forward to a nice, cool shower and a secret little stroke of my aching cock. Not to cum, but just to squeeze that tension in my shaft.

Is she still up there? I paused in the closet area leading to the master bath. I looked at the large curtained window that looked over to their bathroom.

I had tried to tell Danny the window was too big, but he said he needed the light and the window only showed the sink, not the toilet or shower.

That didn't change the fact the asshole would stand there buck-ass naked brushing his teeth. Seeing that once with his dick wiggling back and forth was enough for me to avoid ever looking out the window again.

My window was big, too, but not as big as theirs. Still, if the drapes were opened, someone over there could see everything I had, too. Down to my upper thighs, anyway.

Was she there?

The curiosity made my shoulders itch.

I tried to peek and then wondered why I was being secretive. I pulled back the curtain.

She was there and looked startled, but she didn't move away.

I met her eyes and gulped.

I might have kicked her and her greasy husband out of my house, but I hadn't done it to hurt her.

I studied her nakedness, letting my eyes drink in that sexy form. It had been too long. It hadn't been long enough.

Guilt warred with my cock and my cock was stronger.

She drifted a hand around her hip and down her front. Fingers moved over her bald pussy.

For a moment, I regretted not taking Raymond up on his offer. But, no. Too freaky for me. Besides, I was getting a free look right here.

My erection strained at my jeans. I deliberately, slowly, moved my hand over to my bulge and shifted it.

She smiled and it was a sunny display of sincerity.

I knew her husband wasn't home; his car was gone. Still, I glanced towards the front, but saw nothing.

You want to play?

I unhooked my belt and her smile broadened. She looked genuinely excited.

Well, shit. If a woman wants a look, why not? Here, look at this. I slid my jeans down and off, standing in my briefs. My very bulging briefs.

She had the most endearing reaction to my display: she clapped her hands and clutched them together – a smile so bright I thought I'd go blind.

But this wasn't right. She was married and I didn't care if he was a greaseball or not, she was his wife. What was I doing? I let the curtain fall back into place.

Exactly what was I doing?

I showered, washing away the grime and trying to stroke away the tension in my erection.

That just made things worse.

But I did come out clean.

Is she still in the window?

My erection bobbed and throbbed as I moved into the hall to get fresh clothing. On the left were the closet doors with drawers of socks and underwear and t-shirts. On my right was the window.

Curiosity clawed at me like a feral cat.

I had to know.

I moved the curtain and looked.

She was there, looking over into my backyard. She looked over at me having seen the curtain move. Again, a smile.

I stood there, heart beating rapidly and wondered if I should move my body from behind the wall into view.

As if hearing me, she made an eyebrow gesture that said she wondered what I

was wearing. Or if I'd show her my underwear again.

I moved into full view.

Her eyes went wide and she dropped her mouth open. She wasn't panicked, however. She stood still and just stared.

CHAPTER 7

Cindy

I could not believe my eyes. He was gorgeous. I had a hard time seeing his cock until I realized it was hard and pointing at me. My mouth dropped open as I finally deciphered what I was seeing.

I had expected to see him hanging limp. But I saw nothing – until I recognized the bulging head. Then I knew it was pointing straight at me.

Heat flashed up my pussy and warmed my entire body in a series of delicious shivers. I had seen Raymond's dick. Seen plenty on the internet. This was more personal and... so... hot.

He was hard and that erection was because of me; I was sure of it. Something tickled way up inside, squirming with the force of recognition – yet I couldn't decipher it.

What was I feeling? What was this strange twisting up in my chest?

He moved away from the window and the curtain fell. I reached a hand, smacking my fingers against the glass. No, don't go...

I wanted to get dressed and rush over there. But he had been so mean, kicking out me and my husband. So cruel.

Raymond didn't know it, but I cried about it. It was as if I had met my own real father and had been rejected to my face. Except he wasn't my father.

I stood in the window, sometimes for an hour or more, looking around, hoping to see Bill. He had come out today to mow his lawn. The thrill at seeing him was accompanied by a fear he would flip me off or start yelling.

He did neither, though he ended up ignoring me completely.

Wasn't I pretty enough to look at?

But his display just now removed those doubts from my mind. Maybe I could hook him in. Maybe my husband was right. I wanted Bill interested in me – and not just for my husband and his business, but for me, too.

I wouldn't tell Raymond that. He wasn't jealous so much as he was controlling. Possessive. Demanding. Sometimes he made me feel like I was back in school.

But this was adult life and I loved it. He took his videos of me in pigtails with bright ribbons in my hair. He had me shoving things in my pussy and blinking a lot like a little girl.

He said the money for those was good, but he needed more. That was why he had started talking about have a male prop or two and why he had approached Bill next door.

The fall of our neighbor's curtain was followed by a long spell of not seeing him again.

Would I only see him on Sundays when he mowed? The following Sunday he wasn't out there, but I wasn't at the window. It was a big day for me in that Raymond would be filming me with a male prop he had found.

He spent quite some time telling the guy what he wanted. Basically he was to stand still. I was to blow him until he was ready to cum, then he was going to shoot it all over my face.

He had me braid my hair in pigtails again, and I wore these pink little girl glasses.

The guy was not bad looking, but I didn't really care because it was just an adult thing to do to make money. I didn't care for Ty any more than he cared for me.

But when I had to kneel in front of him and touch his cock, I was wishing it was Bill. His cock had looked a lot nicer. Bigger, but not gigantic. I stroked Ty and imagined Bill instead.

Is he over there right now?

I glanced around at the camera equipment and lights. Would Bill fit right in here?

When I took Ty's cock into my mouth, I pretended it was our neighbor.

Raymond was giving instructions. "Suck him real slow, make it wet with slobber."

Yeah, yeah. I looked at the camera like I was supposed to. Look at me, sucking dick. Hi everyone! I made it; I'm an adult.

Raymond nodded approvingly. "Perfect look."

Of course it was; I knew what I was doing.

But would Bill like it? Well, I wouldn't be sucking Bill like this, no. It would be more...

I began blowing Ty like I was fucking his mouth.

My husband got mad. "No, no. Stop that. I can't have you looking like you know what you're doing or enjoying it. Ty, just face-fuck her. Treat her like she's ten years old and doesn't know what a dick is."

I sighed.

"Cindy, try to look scared."

Yeah, yeah. I rolled my eyes.

"Fuck," my husband muttered. "Have to edit that out."

I sighed again as Ty rammed my face and then pulled out to squirt all over it.

All in a day's adult work. Beat sitting in math class.

CHAPTER 8

Cindy

Weeks passed. Two, exactly. Bill hadn't been out to mow his yard. No matter when I stood in the window, he didn't look out. I stood in the window less and less.

I didn't think he was going to be enticed and I told my husband that.

Raymond was livid, demanding that I keep doing it. Bill was a source of money. Easy money and I needed to understand that.

I didn't care so much about the money; I wanted to know why he had exposed himself to me but then nothing? Was he mad at me? Did he not know I was in the window every day looking for him?

Maybe Raymond was disappointed. He had stopped making love to me. When I asked if we were going to do it, he grumbled about me beginning to look mature.

Well, of course I was. Duh.

The second Sunday was almost gone when I saw the curtain twitch in his window. I had stationed myself there around this time every Sunday, waiting to see if he'd mow his lawn.

I was as shocked the curtain moved as I had been the first time. I thought he had been mad or disgusted with me.

His face peeked through, saw me, and pulled back as if stung.

The curtain went straight.

This was too much for me.

I pulled on my shorts and shrugged into my t-shirt. I stomped downstairs as if trying to stomp bugs.

Raymond was looking over some papers – his business notes, he called them. "Where are you going."

"Next door."

He looked surprised. "Oh, good. Try to look sexy."

Sexy? I was mad. "What. Ever."

He was making a snide-sounding remark as I left that I didn't catch.

I marched across our driveways.

I stomped up his porch.

I banged my fist against his door. It didn't sound very loud.

I was about to bang again when he flung the door open. Though angry, his look was curious and searching. "What do you want?"

"You haven't mowed your lawn."

"So?"

"It's getting long."

"So?"

I firmed my lips. "Why aren't you mowing it?"

A shaded look passed over his eyes and he looked away for a second. He looked back, sharper than ever. "What the fuck is it to you? Your lawn looks like a jungle."

"We're not talking about my lawn."

He shook his head and ran his hand back through his hair. "Go home, Cindy."

"Why are you mad at me?" I was shaking with my outrage. Or maybe it was fear.

He exhaled in disgust and turned away.

You can't leave me standing here; we're talking. "Can I come in?"

He stopped, looked back, and flung up his arm. "The screen is unlatched. I don't fucking care."

I went into the house.

He sank down onto his recliner and put his head into both hands. He sat there, holding the sides of his head as if trying to stop it from exploding.

I was startled by a burst. "Brush! Dirt! No, no no." His little girl was sitting at the entrance to the hall, holding a Barbie with wild hair and a hairbrush.

It was a wood handled brush with yellowish-white bristles.

Something in my memory jogged, jerked, and jutted into my conscience. What is this? I took a step towards his daughter.

CHAPTER 9

Bill

She's here, in my house. What am I going to do?

I didn't want to look at her because I did want to look at her.

I didn't want to talk to her because I did want to talk to her.

She began humming something, faltered a little, then picked it up again.

I raised my head and listened, the melody tickling at my memory.

Bittersweet Symphony. The Verve.

I looked around and froze.

My heart slowed in my chest and my temples began to pound in my head.

She was sitting behind my daughter, brushing her hair. Gentle strokes. Small handfuls of strands at a time. Cindy's eyes were large and glassy with her own reveries.

Memories? Dreams? Hauntings?

My throat constricted as I watched her brush Pyper's hair. I swallowed and swallowed, trying to force my voice to work. I croaked, "Why are you here?"

She didn't immediately respond. Her head tilted to the side as she brushed a little slower – deep in thought, face blank, lips parted. She shook herself out of it and looked around, but not at me.

She looked at the door and scowled.

Her words were sharp. "Because I want to be here." She looked petulant and frowned down at Pyper's hair. She brushed faster, renewing her efforts.

My daughter held up a naked Barbie in one hand and a naked Gi-Joe in the other.

I think I blushed.

Cindy didn't seem to notice. She went back to humming.

And there was something so peaceful and serene about this strange girl brushing my daughter's hair that even I relaxed.

Wanting to regain my initiative and balance, I said, "I didn't want to mow."

She had put the brush down. She was pulling sections of her hair back in deft moves. "No, you didn't want to have to see me."

I did. Very much. "You shouldn't stand in the window naked."

"I'll do what I want in my own house."

"Someone might see you."

"You mean, you might see me. I disgust you."

You don't disgust me. "You're distracting me."

"You going to cry over it?" Her fingers were still moving, twisting.

"No, I'm just not going to mow my lawn." I stared as her fingers twisted with speed through my daughter's hair.

So much alike, Cindy sat behind my daughter, hunched over in almost the exact posture as Pyper hunched over Gi-Joe - she was trying to put a ballerina skirt on him. With almost that same intensity, Cindy was fiddling in Pyper's hair.

She began humming that melancholy melody again.

I didn't know what to do with her. She was in my house, invading my sacred space.

And... I liked it.

She finished what she was doing and patted at the result. It was a braid that started above the temples on both sides and wound around the crown of her head to the back, then braided together.

It was... adorable.

Cindy lifted her and set her on her feet.

Pyper immediately came over and showed me the Gi-Joe problem. "Joe wants a skirt."

I chuckled. "In today's military, he just might." I tugged the Barbie skirt and made it fit. "There we go."

She mimicked me. "There we go." She brought it back over to her tiny pile of dolls. She proudly displayed Ballerina Joe. "Sunbitch."

Cindy snorted, coughed, then laughed.

There was something so clean and innocent about her laughter. And so attractive. So...

I said, "Bedtime."

Pyper looked up at me with intense eyes. She held up one little hand. "It's bedtime already?"

Ten minutes one way or the other. "It's bedtime."

My daughter sighed. "It's always bedtime. Every day and every day." She was picking up dolls.

Cindy said, "I'll help you."

Pyper adapted. "You carry this one. And my brush."

I herded both of them into Pyper's room. I opened the drawer and took out her night dress. "Go to the bathroom first."

She hung her head. "Okay, daddy." But then hopped out of the room.

Cindy drove me insane with tension. She moved about the room, touching the dollhouse, the snowglobes on the shelf, the Doctor Seuss books.

I felt weak inside. But a torrent of torment coursed through my limbs turning me jittery. My eyes were on her form as she circled the room looking. Her hand rested on the crib.

I had taken the front of it off long ago and just used it as a bed.

Cindy's fingers touched the pillowcase and felt the material between her fingers.

My heart hammered in my chest and pounded a tattoo inside my temples.

Pyper came bouncing back in and hugged my leg. I lifted her and kissed her cheek. "Night night."

"Night night."

Cindy gave my daughter a smile and waved her fingers at her.

I picked up the receiver and turned it on. Clipping it to my belt, I indicated the door to Cindy. I shut it behind us.

She turned to me in the yellow light of the hall and looked up at my face. Her eyes went wide in fright.

I grabbed her, lifting her, and throwing her over my shoulder. She screamed and kicked as I carried her upstairs.

CHAPTER 10

Cindy

I was afraid for my life.

He's going to murder me, too!

I screamed.

My butt exploded with pain as his hand slapped down onto it.

"Shut up," he grated.

I beat against his back with my fists.

"Knock it off."

I was tossed down onto his bed with a bounce.

His eyes were on fire, intense with heat, and his features twisted into a grimace of... rage? I wasn't sure.

I gasped, "Are you going to kill me now?"

His grimace turned to confusion. "What the fuck?"

"Like you did your wife. Pushed her down the stairs? Buried her in the basement?"

His face took on a look of dismayed confusion. "She fell off a ladder at the store. I wasn't there."

I nodded slowly and squinted. "Uh huh."

He flicked out a hand, pointing. "The newspaper article is over there." His voice had turned to steel.

I looked where he pointed. He had a desk with a computer in the corner. Behind the monitor and higher was a white board with notes and details. To the left of his chair was a bulletin board. On it was pinned a newspaper page – a daily reminder of something that had happened he could never forget.

He stared at me for the longest time.

I stared back, growing defiant. Finally, I spat, "You hate me, don't you?"

His features crumbled and he raised his hand to his forehead. "I don't hate you."

"Then what is it you want? You won't talk to me. You cuss at me. You treat me like dirt."

"I..." He shook his head, looking lost.

I watched him struggle with what to say.

A small breath escaped his throat. "I can't... breathe around you."

Everything went still: me; him; the air in the room. I knew this was something important – something huge. I shook my head, not understanding.

"I see you... and I need you."

Deep inside me, something hidden moved. It was a quiet thing, bursting with power and ability. I didn't know what it was and it scared me. "I'm scared..."

He reached for me. "Don't be." His hands grabbed my shorts and began tugging.

Instead of fearing for my life, my nipples hardened. I was jerked by his motions as if I weighed nothing. He can't breathe? I can't breathe! My chest heaved, trying to move air into starved lungs. Faster and faster I drew in air – until I was panting.

As if driven by my desperation to breathe, his hand moved faster. My t-shirt was snatched off. My shorts were pulled from me. My panties were yanked off with a

savage swipe.

In an instant, I was naked. I felt vulnerable as never before - not even the first time with Raymond so many years ago.

I tried to crawl backwards, but my arms and legs suddenly seemed so weak.

His hands grabbed my ankles and hauled me back.

I watched him remove his clothes as if there were fire ants in them.

I was frozen.

His cock wasn't. Throbbing faster than my breathing, it looked like an angry weapon – and it was pointed at me.

I became wet so fast I thought I might have had an accident.

There was no time for words, much less coherent thoughts. From one shock to the next, I found myself rigid in expectation.

He frowned down at me. "Why are you stiff? You look excited..."

I coughed in utter indignation. "I am excited."

"You look scared."

I was. I wasn't. I didn't know. But I did know.

I had automatically assumed the standard fuck position which pleased Raymond. "I don't... I don't know..."

He didn't appear to understand. "Relax your legs." He slapped the inside of my knee in a gesture of separation.

My legs jerked and opened a little.

He was impatient. Or angry – I couldn't tell. He dropped down and yanked on my hips with his hands. His face was down at my pussy.

I was horrified. No one had ever done that to me. Was he going to like it?

Frightened that he not, I squeezed my thighs together.

A look of annoyance crossed his face.

Am I clean enough? I wash...

His tongue touched my clit in a press of wet silk.

I gasped in surprise as the sensation was softer than anything I had ever imagined touching my pussy. The wriggle of his tongue as it moved radiated up from my pussy and resonated throughout my body. It was almost as if every cell tingled and tensed with titillation. I moaned out, arching my back.

His tongue moved, swirling, probing. His fingers touched and played at my entrance – the callouses of his fingers creating a rough contrast to the smooth feel of his tongue.

I think the bed began floating. Or the room did.

His fingers pushed in and his tongue left for a few seconds.

I squirmed and panted, my hands squeezing at my tiny breast mounds. But it still felt so very good – as if an unused muscle was getting gently stretched and massaged.

His tongue went back to work and I sighed louder and louder, my breathy groans rising in pitch as heat built and blossomed inside my pussy.

When I thought I was going to go berserk, he got up.

I felt like I was on the edge of orgasm – a huge one. I trembled at the precipice and whimpered – wanting it and needing it. But it remained elusive.

He was smiling down at me with knowing eyes.

Jerk! He knew I was close. It wasn't fair that a man could get a woman so worked up and leave them hanging.

He drove his masculine weapon into me with such determination that I cried out in surprise and shock. My pussy was wedged open and stretched by his cock and

forced to take his shaft. I felt it spreading open and his thickness sliding into and filling me.

I felt like my pussy was a rubber band stretching and straining to accommodate his invasion.

He was way bigger than my husband. His erection was a solid pole causing so much pressure as it moved into me that I held my breath.

When his hips nudged mine, I realized he was in. I had never felt anything so deep, so full, so hot. It throbbed in me and I felt it solid in there as my pussy answered each throb with a pulse of its own.

I was connected to him by his manhood and I had never felt anything like it. Sex with Raymond was... so very different. In one thrust, Bill had fulfilled me.

He started fast, the first few pumps hard and angry.

Standard fuck-fare with my husband.

But after the fourth thrust, he began slowing – moving with more hesitancy.

I opened my eyes to search for the why of it all. His eyes were on mine and plagued with some kind of uncertainty or doubt. I asked, "What?"

His eyebrows came down as if at a thought, then relaxed as he shook his head in another gesture of confusion. He probed slow, pushing deep – the confusion growing on his face with each thrust. His mouth was open in wonder.

I knew then I wanted him to want me – to need me and crave me. Something existed between us at this moment of sex that I had never felt before. It was as if a bridge had fallen into the right place across a chasm of indifference.

This act we were sharing was more than practiced moves: it meant something. It filled something deep inside, and not just in my pussy. With a will of their own, my arms came up and my hands slid over his solid arms. I moved my fingers up to his shoulders, feeling him.

I felt his skin through my fingertips and also the flexing of his shoulder muscles as he moved inside me. I wanted to feel it all.

He lowered himself, still looking uncertain, until his mouth met mine.

The boys and girls I had kissed in school were not like this. They had been stiff and silly. Bill's kiss was an exploration that moved with my tongue, dancing together in close movements of satisfaction and passion.

I was hooked.

He could kiss me forever.

My husband almost never kissed me.

I wanted more.

He moved me up the bed and rested on his elbows. He put one hand underneath my shoulders and gripped my neck from behind. His thrusts became long and deliberate. All the way out, then all the way in. He used every inch of his shaft and my pussy.

I loved it.

With Raymond, I had to stay still.

I couldn't with Bill.

And that precipice rushed at me as he filled me in such a complete way that I surrendered to the fall. Over the edge I went, crying out as I shook with the explosive bursts of heat.

I think I triggered him; I don't know.

He sped up and kept it in deeper.

I clamped on his shaft over and over until I felt his hot splashes inside me. I clutched at his shoulders and head as we completed something wonderful together.

He was looking at me, his face close, and his breath hot on my lips. It was a connection I had never felt before – something strong and durable.

I belonged on this bed.

But then reality intruded into my thoughts. I would have to go back home. I sighed in exasperation and barely contained my bitterness and sarcasm. "At least my husband will be pleased about this."

He got off me in an instant.

Wait, what? What did I do? Come back.

CHAPTER 11

Bill

Why the fuck did she say that? I frowned down at her, studying her expression.

Where she had just seconds before had the most blissful look on her face, she had replaced it with a bored look, and now confusion as she searched my face.

Is she over here because of her husband? Trying to sell me videos or something? Anger rose in me so abruptly that I clenched my fists and gritted my teeth. "Get out."

Her eyes went large.

"Get out!" I roared.

She reacted instantly, grabbing her clothes. Her lower lip quivered in fright and she stumbled down the stairs sobbing.

What a fool I am. Damned neighbors. "Hurry up."

She was getting her clothes on, tears streaming down her face. "I—"

"Shut up and get out." I was disgusted. Played for a fool by a greaseball neighbor.

She ran out of the house and I slammed the door after her.

Good fucking riddance.

I stood there, staring angrily at the door, my chest heaving in indignation.

Was I that naïve? Had I really been falling for her bullshit? That easily? It had

seemed so real and it had turned sour in a heartbeat.

I had liked it, struck by how perfect it had felt between us. It had been that way with my wife.

I whispered to her ghost, "I'm sorry, Kelly. I'm so sorry." I hadn't wanted to hurt her memory with something so cheap and tawdry.

Something so disgusting.

It made me want to kill greaseball.

It made me want revenge.

I went to bed and tried to ignore the smell of what we had done - so sweet on the surface, and so sour beneath.

I had been used.

My dreams were angry and sad – a mixture so wrenching that I awoke in the morning unrested.

I was lying in bed, staring at the ceiling. I could hear Pyper talking to her dolls in the bedroom.

Had Cindy's interaction with her been a ploy? Something about them together had touched and then wrecked my heart – melting it into meekness. The girl's tenderness had seemed so real and wistful.

Had that been an act? Or genuine?

Yet her sudden transformation on the bed hinted that all of it was likely an act.

I rolled out of bed wearily. Another day, another round of chores. Alone.

My daughter depended on me. My readers expected books.

I would put Cindy and the entire episode out of my mind.

I stripped off the bedding with a savage yank. It would get washed to remove the stain of what I had done. Could I remove that stain from my soul so easily?

I was still angry.

I still wanted revenge.

I suffered a knock on the door as I watched Pyper eat her oatmeal. It was a heavier knock. Not Cindy's.

Which was good, but I suspected her husband.

I was right. "What do you want?"

He seemed solicitous. "Can I come in?"

Fuck you. "Whatever." I unlatched the screen.

Greaseball brought in a stench of sickness with him that turned my stomach – not something I detected with my nose, but my soul. He tilted his head at me the way a superior person looks at someone being unreasonable. He said, "Cindy tells me things went well over here yesterday."

I scowled at him. "What do you want?"

He spread his hands. "What any red-blooded man wants: excitement. I'd like to bring her over again, maybe get some videos of it."

I just stared at him.

He pursed his lips and flicked his chin to the side. "You have a friend that might join you?"

I can't believe this guy. But I wanted revenge. I wanted him to know I wasn't going to be played. I wanted him stung at his own game. I said, "I might. Yeah..."

His smile was sly and ugly. He pulled a slip of paper from his coat pocket and handed it to me as he might a folded hundred-dollar bill. "Call me when you can get him over here."

CHAPTER 12

Cindy

Something was crushing my chest and I didn't know what it was.

Heart attack?

Ever since I had run from Bill's place, kicked out like some piece of filth, I had felt these pains. I had cried and I don't know why.

I had done what my husband wanted.

And yet, I had thought while I was doing it that there was something different and special about our neighbor.

It was as if my life was a basket of worries and his presence threw them all away. And it had started with his daughter. Something about her hair brush tickled my memory, but whatever it was had happened so long ago I must have been younger than her.

Had someone brushed my hair with a similar brush? Most hairbrushes now were plastic, though you could still find goofy wooden brushes in the stores. Sort of a retro-look, I guess.

Something had captivated me when I brushed her hair. I was consumed with the action and the braiding. Feeling myself braiding my own hair, in a way. Some link to the past? Had someone braided my hair after brushing it?

Certainly not my mom.

My father?

But I couldn't grasp whatever wisp of memory it was.

In any event, Bill had kicked me out so rudely and wrecked what I thought had been something beautiful. I had felt peaceful in his home – at home, where I didn't feel so comfortable even in my own house with Raymond.

What had been so different about Bill and Pyper that had made me feel so at home? So at ease? So comfortable and happy?

And then to be kicked out? I didn't understand. I had felt a bond between him and me that seemed so real and strong. Something solid that I didn't have with my own husband.

I had cried more and I don't know why.

Raymond didn't notice; I kept it from him. But he sure was pleased that I had made a connection. Goody for him, I guess. For me? I was confused and hurting.

Bill had done something with his harsh words I had never felt before and it was a crushing weight on my feelings.

It was with uncertainty and confusion that I prepared to go to Bill's with my husband late on a Friday night.

Was it going to be the same?

My life seemed to be nothing except when it came to our neighbor.

Raymond wanted me dressing in the little schoolgirl outfit. Pigtails. Short skirt pulled all the way up showing almost all of my thighs. Knee-length socks and bright tennis shoes.

This was going to be my big night – filmed with Bill and one of his friends. Sold the next day to certain bidders and sites. My husband was still trying to pass me off for fourteen in certain circles, but I didn't think that was going to happen for very long.

I looked cute.

Kind of silly with the pigtails, but it went with the outfit.

Would Bill like it?

Would he take me like he had the Sunday evening before? Would it be as good?

I crossed over the driveways led by my husband. He carried the camera bag.

I liked Bill and wanted him to like me. I wanted to feel that bond again. But he had been cruel. Were all men so mean?

Had there really been something special there?

Raymond knocked on the screen door.

CHAPTER 13

Bill

The fuckers were here.

I made a face at Rod.

His wife lifted an eyebrow at me.

Rodney and Jackie were the only friends I knew that would do something like this. They had accepted when I explained what a fucked up turd Raymond was.

I was ambivalent about Cindy. Was she a pawn? A tool? And how willing? For a small slice of time, having her in the house had been... special.

I let them in, suppressing a grimace of disgust at Cindy's outfit. I had no doubt Raymond told her to wear it.

The fucking greaseball.

Her eyes were immediately on mine, mouth pouting, and looking up at me from under her bangs.

I wanted to kick her ass. And I wanted to kiss her. The conflict made me uncomfortable. As she walked past me, my dick stiffened.

I shook my head at my confusing reaction and I saw her catch it. Her face fell.

No matter how things turned out, it seemed like I couldn't get my bearings straight around her. I couldn't decide if I liked or hated her.

I would have to write that into the sexy ghost in my latest story.

I introduced my friends.

Her husband bustled around, setting up a light stand and a tripod for his camera.

I motioned to Rod.

Jackie was talking to Cindy.

When my friend came over to me in the kitchen, I said, "We want the chip from that camera."

"Right." He was a sharp guy, squinted a lot. Quick to figure shit out. Not one of my best friends.

Of course, I didn't have any best friends.

I think he and his wife felt sorry for me. They had tried to keep me engaged on Facebook, but the website still seemed impersonal and cold.

I said, "Whichever of us is near it when he's done."

"Right." A quick nod.

We went back into the living room.

Raymond was acting like a big-time director. "All right, I'm glad the woman is here. We can start off with some lesbian action – older cougar on a little girl kind of thing."

I rolled my eyes.

If anything Cindy still looked uncertain.

Greaseball said, "We'll do a strip of Cindy first. Then everyone else get undressed and join in."

Rod and I shared looks. Jackie raised her eyebrow.

Cindy began moving when her husband pointed at her. A little sway side to side with her head down and looking up like an innocent little child.

He even had the tripod fully scoped up so the camera was aiming down at her.

Sick fuck.

I watched her strip and couldn't help the erection that built because of it. It wasn't the schoolgirl outfit, it was that raw force I felt just looking at her face.

I wanted my hands on her again.

Rod even licked his lips.

We were going to use her like she'd used me. Stupid greaseball thought he could whore out his wife?

Idiot.

Cindy was stripped naked and posing with one foot cocked in crooked. She was so good at it that it made me question for a few seconds if she really was of legal age.

Raymond motioned to us and plucked at his shirt.

I got undressed. So did Rod and Jackie.

Cindy's eyes were narrowed, watching us – watching me. Her eyes flicked over to Jackie and back to me.

I didn't care what she thought. I nudged Rod. Then I went and stood next to his wife. I slid my arm around her naked waist and she gave me that eyebrow. I winked and motioned to Cindy.

Jackie's face went blank and she gave the barest nod.

Rod was running his hands over Cindy's small boobs, but she was trying to look at me. Her eyebrows said she was not pleased.

I didn't have anything for Jackie. She was nice and all, sure, but nothing there. I just wanted to see how the girl would act.

Jealousy was on her face as plain as anything.

While it satisfied me to see it, I was also confused. What was she jealous over? That I was close to Jackie? What did she care? She was with greaseball and had not a speck of claim on what I did or who I was with.

In pure spite, I kissed Jackie's temple. I kept my eyes on Cindy.

The girl scowled so fiercely I thought her face would break. She finally looked away and down at Rod's dick. She began stroking it.

Raymond motioned.

She dropped down and began sucking my friend's cock.

I moved away from Jackie; I had seen what I wanted.

CHAPTER 14

Cindy

Rod pulled me up.

I had been rehearsed many times on how these videos should go, so I was ready for changes as they came.

That Jackie woman was lying back on the couch. He pushed me down to start licking her.

I had never licked another woman. Remembering what Bill had done to me sent shivers of memory down my spine. Would I be as good?

Rod mashed my face into her pussy. I think my nose went inside. I struggled against him and got my mouth up and open.

He entered me from behind as I tried to lick.

This wasn't easy.

None of it was easy.

Especially seeing Bill and not being able to touch him – and I longed to touch him. Everything in me trembled when I looked at him. It was a strange sensation within me where I felt wrapped in a huge fuzzy blanket around him. My throat would tighten and I found it difficult to talk and breathe.

I was happy just to be inside his home again.

Would he ever look at me without disgust? I had seen his scorn and hate when I had come into the house. His head shake was filled with loathing.

How could I...? How could...

Rod was really ramming me from behind.

It was only my second sex with a man apart from my husband. Bill had been my first. I didn't count the blowjob with Ty. He hadn't stuck it in me.

Despite knowing my husband wanted this and this was how we were going to make money, I still felt cheapened. Tarnished and wilted, maybe. It felt out of place and as if it just didn't fit.

I wasn't turned on by any of this.

Licking that Jackie woman was humiliating. She had been standing next to my Bill with her nakedness. I wanted to bite her clit.

I think I was alone in my feelings. He was no more my Bill than Rod was mine, either. Why did I feel so jealous of Jackie? Why did I want to be around Bill when I was already married?

Why did he make me happier than Raymond?

It was a question that had a startling impact on me as I licked this woman's pussy.

For that brief time while I had been here before, things had seemed... perfect. Idyllic. I hadn't had a care in the world. Even his daughter was adorable. And Bill had been so... comfortable. It was as if I moved perfectly around him, and only him. Everywhere and everyone else made me feel awkward.

Was tonight's meeting a chance to get close again?

Was that state of bliss I had before obtainable again? Or did Bill hate me? For a time, things had gone so well, then he had turned cruel. Would he be cruel again?

"Get out of there." Bill's voice cut through my thoughts in a flash of panic. Then I realized he was talking to his friend.

I sat up as Rod pulled out, ready to take whatever visible clues they gave.

Bill pushed me back over.

Rod got underneath Jackie and had her sit on him, face out.

I felt Bill's cock push inside. It felt little different than Rod's except that it was thicker and longer. I wanted more – needed more. I needed to see his face. Was he scowling? Without seeing his face, I couldn't determine if we were having the same kind of encounter we had before.

He pushed my face down from behind. Rod's cock was up along the line of his wife's pussy. I found I could lick both, so I figured that must be what they wanted.

In this arrangement, I didn't feel so bad. Sucking Rod's cock and then licking up his shaft to her clit was... fun, I liked it.

But I still wrestled with how Bill and I were feeling. I couldn't imagine loving someone and being blind.

Loving someone...

I clamped on Bill's cock, squeezing. I heard him groan.

Is he liking this like last time? I was determined to see. I twisted my head around as best I could and moved my eyes to look back over my shoulder. I could see him moving and the look of intense concentration on his face.

His hand gripped my head and twisted it back to his friends.

I wanted to please him, so I returned to licking and sucking. With much more fervor.

Rod finished first, squirting up onto my face and up my nose. I jerked back in surprise. Jackie, though, gripped his shaft and jacked it towards me.

I had it on my face already, I didn't need any more.

Behind me, Bill began pumping harder.

My husband moved around me, but I ignored him. I really didn't care if he got

the best camera shot or not.

It was Bill I cared about.

It was Bill... I loved.

But I couldn't see him. When he slapped hard into me from behind and shot his cum into me, I was nowhere near excited enough to finish.

He pulled out and a surprise sting of pain seared my butt cheek as he delivered a solid, single spank.

His next words, though, made me twist over in dismay.

CHAPTER 15

Bill

I pulled out, slapped her ass hard, and said to Raymond, "Did you get what you wanted?" I couldn't keep the sneer out of my voice.

She had felt good; I couldn't help enjoying it. At the same time, greaseball had made me sick.

Raymond mounted his camera back on the tripod as if my question was unimportant.

I shot a glance to Rod and nodded.

Greaseball made a show of inhaling and holding it. He didn't answer.

My friend got dressed and watched him.

Cindy sat on the couch looking uncertain, and it made me angrier at her husband. It might have come through in my face because when I looked at her, she dropped her eyes and started crying.

Raymond was wrapping the light cord and dropped it in the duffel. "I think..."

I don't give a shit what you think. I pulled on my jeans, then moved to stand so he was between me and the camera.

He turned to face me with a smug smile. "I think that was worth four hundred dollars, don't you?"

"You want to give us four hundred dollars for starring in your video?" I knew he wasn't. But I wanted to have all of his attention.

He swallowed and firmed his lips with a tiny headshake. Then he smiled, all oily. "No, of course not. You're going to pay me four hundred for the privilege of having fucked her."

Rod had the camera. He flicked the hatch and extracted the memory chip.

I said, "Nah, I don't think so."

He said nothing, just spread his hands back and forth as if trying to reason with a simpleton.

Jackie was dressed and tossed Cindy's things at her.

She looked around but settled on me.

Me.

Out of anyone else in the living room, she looked to me with a question in her eyes.

She didn't look at her husband. She didn't look at Rod who had taken the memory chip in her plain view. Neither had she said anything. And she didn't look at Jackie except to catch her clothing.

She looked at me and it broke my heart.

Raymond said, "Okay, okay... Two hundred dollars this time. But next time—"

I turned my eyes to him and fixed him with a stare. "No."

His eyebrows rose and his head leaned back a little. "You know, I have the video here. How many of your relatives might like to see it? Hosting sex parties on an underage girl?"

I gritted my teeth. "I thought you told me she was eighteen?"

"Oh, she is. But she sure looks underage, doesn't she? Would your mommy know the difference?"

His condescending tone infuriated me. I advanced on him. "How about you take two hundred punches to the face?"

He twisted away from me, flinching. He eyeballed Rod and then grabbed his camera to pack it away. He was shaking with fear and outrage. "I gave you good service here tonight—"

I kicked his duffel. Not too hard. "Shut up."

He finished packing the tripods. "All right, all right. Look, free this time, okay? It's on me. But next time you're paying. I'll make up the loss selling the video."

Rod held up the camera's memory chip. "Nah, we don't think so."

I advanced on him and he flinched again. I said, "Get out of my house or I will beat your face into a bloody pulp. Are you getting me?" I mimicked his condescending hand motions from a moment earlier.

He was red in the face, but swallowing. It wasn't so much rage as abject fear. He lifted his duffel and snapped, "Cindy! Let's go."

She looked at me.

Again.

Pleading.

She looked at no one else.

I stood firm against Raymond and that meant having to watch her go.

Again.

CHAPTER 16

Cindy

I couldn't hold back my tears and my ears burned so hot from the embarrassment of getting kicked out of his house once again.

The walk back to our house was filled with my husband ranting and cussing about...

I tuned him out.

I didn't care.

It was on the steps of our porch that I realized I didn't care about anything Raymond wanted. A wash of icy realization froze my back and made my knees wobble.

Passing into the house felt like I was entering school once again, locked away inside a building for most of my waking life.

I didn't want this; I wanted something different.

How could I have thought my husband was some great man? Because he had a car? A wife and home? Because he had left her for me after he had taken my virginity? As if dumping his wife was some kind of compliment to me?

A success?

If this was success, why did it feel so hollow?

And why did I feel so full of life around Bill? Was that feeling I had love?

If this is what love felt like, how was I supposed to go on? Even my fingernails ached to be with him.

Yes, I loved him. No, I did not love my husband.

What I had thought was love was... what? Had my feelings just been happiness to finally be an adult? Out of school? Free? Liberated?

And yet, now I felt chained and imprisoned. Caught and captured, unable to free myself from something I so wrongly chose.

I wouldn't have known any better, though, were I to go back and do it all over again. I wouldn't have known Bill.

In fact, it was only because of Raymond that I knew Bill at all.

Was I on a dead end street?

I sure felt like it.

When Raymond came to bed, I rolled to the edge. I didn't want him to even touch me. But he was too disturbed about what had happened next door and he left me alone.

No ten year old girl rape-play tonight.

Bill hadn't needed that. He had... made love to me. I could describe it no other way. It hadn't just been an act of sexual gratification and freedom from adult rules, it had been something deeper and more personal.

There was something awakened inside that would not go back to sleep and it gnawed at me so terribly that I thought I would burst apart if something didn't change.

I needed to be over there, not here. It was the only prescription for this interior ailment.

My days descended into a depression so total that I refused a new video with Ty where he would have sex with me as a little girl.

I didn't want to have sex with Ty. I didn't care for Ty and didn't care if I ever saw him again.

Raymond was pissed.

Fuck him.

He shook his finger at me. "You became my wife and you will do as I say."

"Fuck off."

His lips quivered with tension. "You better correct your attitude young woman —"

"Or what? You'll give me detention?"

He grabbed a handful of my hair and yanked. His face was beet red. He let go, though, and straightened his coat. "Rethink your priorities while I'm gone."

Well, I did. Real hard. But it wasn't hard.

Not at all.

I didn't want Raymond or his life.

After he left, I heard the mower start up next door.

Jumping with jolts of electricity in my limbs, I raced upstairs to the master bathroom. I stood there, plastered to the window watching the man I loved.

Did he love me? Would he ever? Could he ever?

Bill was having a tough time mowing – the grass was a little too long. He kept shaking his head and pushing the mower.

Pyper appeared at the edge of the lawn, watching her father's back. She stood there, still as a statue and just watched. In her arms, a doll and a brush.

I wanted to run down there and over to the girl. I wanted to brush her hair and make her feel loved. It was a strange echo of something inside me I couldn't remember.

That formerly hidden emotion I recognized as love drew me back to watching Bill.

Would he look up at me? Would it be a sign if he did?

Palms to the glass, I yearned to push through it and fly.

Please don't hate me. Please look up and see that... I... love you.

He had mown one row to the end of the yard. He swung the mower around through the thick clumps of uncut lawn. He looked up.

Time stopped for me and so did my breathing. My nose was running and I wiped at it frantically. That's when the tears let loose.

So hot they fogged the window, the wet rolled down my face staining my cheeks with regret. I was here and he was there. My shoulders shook with sobs I couldn't contain.

He scratched his beard while staring up.

I wasn't naked; he wasn't staring at that.

He leaned over and shut off the mower. Straightening, he met my eyes again. His shoulders drooped.

Was he mad at me? Disgusted still?

He shook his head and looked over at Pyper. Then he looked back up and motioned for me to come.

The pulse pounded in my head as I blinked in disbelief. Had I really seen it? Or was the gesture distorted in my tears?

He motioned again.

I spun and sprinted. I crashed down to my knees at the bottom of the stairs – unable to keep my footing after trying to run down them. The sting was nothing that hurt, but it was a reminder to get up and move.

He had beckoned.

I didn't want him going inside and miss him. I didn't think he would appreciate me pounding on his door after getting kicked out twice.

I went out the back and left the sliding glass door open. Outside, though, I came to a stop. Had he motioned for me to come over?

He stood there, holding Pyper in his arm. He beckoned to me again.

I walked across the yard until I was near. I wiped at my eyes and cheeks and stood several feet away, looking at them.

Pyper said, "Are you going to brush my hair?"

I tried to smile, wondering what he felt about me brushing her hair. "If your daddy lets me."

His face saddened and he gulped. Then he walked to me. He put his arms around me.

I had ached to hug him, but it was he who hugged me. I clamped my arms around him, trembling with relief and fear.

I was relieved that he hadn't summoned me just to send me away.

I was afraid of the hug ending.

I was afraid of what my life would be like without this.

CHAPTER 17

Bill

I took her inside. The poor girl was shaking so badly I thought she'd go into shock. I kept her in my arm, holding her close.

She seemed to want to be there, but I was going to make sure.

Frustrating my immediate plans, she knelt down and hugged Pyper when I put my daughter down. She said, "Yes, I'll brush your hair."

The brush was offered so close to Cindy's face her eyes crossed looking at it.

They sat down right there on the floor.

Well, fuck if my heart didn't break again. I dropped down onto my ass and rested my arms on my knees.

There was such a look of serenity and longing in Cindy's eyes as she began brushing that I almost didn't want to say anything.

But I had to. I had to know.

"Were you only over here because of your husband?"

She paused, mid-stroke, before continuing. "I saw you that first day we moved in. You've been inside my head ever since."

I tried another angle. "When we were up in my room and... we had done it, you mentioned your husband would be happy. What did you mean?"

She had a stunned look on her face. "I did? I remember not wanting to go back

over there. But he kept pushing me to be over here. I was probably just being sarcastic."

And I had kicked her out because of it. "I'm sorry; I thought you were being flippant about what we had done. That his happiness was the only reason you were here."

Her eyes went wide. "No..."

"I misjudged you."

She brushed a little more, eyes watering. "Did you really think I was only here to be a whore?"

"I'm sorry."

She wiped at an escaped tear. She whispered, "I don't want to be a whore. It had seemed so different at first, but..."

I waited.

She looked up at me with glassy eyes. "When I'm here, I feel so wanted. So peaceful. When I'm gone, I miss you and your smile. I miss even doing this with your daughter."

"Raymond is only going to get worse."

"I know. The people he deals with..."

"Is he into child porn?"

She grimaced. "He says he isn't..."

"Trading in underage pictures? Videos?"

She nodded. "Oh well, me, yes. That started a few years ago."

"So he is."

"He likes to say it isn't. It's just artistic expression."

"I'm sure he doesn't sell your pictures to legitimate porn sites."

"Some, yes. But they want proof of my age. But the other men... He carries a shotgun in his trunk in case things go bad."

I sighed. "You know he'll turn to looking for younger girls again?"

"He's already said I'm looking too mature."

I shook my head. "You don't have to stay with him, you know."

"I know. And I don't want to, either."

I checked the clock. "Nap time, Pyper."

She looked up at me. "Again?"

"Every day and every day."

She held up her hands, a naked Barbie in each. Her shrug was amusing for the wild display of doll-hair and legs.

I got up. "Come on. Cindy can brush your hair after."

My daughter blew out her cheeks. "Okay, okay."

I put her to bed and closed the door.

Cindy was watching from the hallway. "Why did you wave me over?"

It wasn't time to deny anything. It was time to admit. I took my first, faltering step of courage. "Because I can't stop thinking about you."

She was clasping her fingers together, trying to hold them still and doing a bad job of it. She just looked at me and swallowed.

I went to her and stopped in front of her. "I want you, but you're married to another man."

"I don't want to be married to him."

"Then why are you?"

"Because it seemed so easy and it was like a dream come true."

"And now?" I studied her face; she was embarrassed – ashamed.

She said, "Now it's a nightmare."

"Divorce him."

"I don't know how."

I laughed. "I can show you."

She looked to the side and glanced up at me and then away. "And then what?"

I swallowed hard, knowing what I wanted. I said, "Be mine."

She looked up at me in startled hope. "Yours?"

I repeated it, feeling better for having said it. "Mine." My pulse raced and my temples throbbed.

She jumped at me, hugging me. "I don't ever want to leave."

I lifted her and carried her upstairs. I was already hard, unable to control myself at the slightest touch of her.

I had to have her and I wasn't going to wait for a divorce.

Her long black hair, her bangs, her cheeks, her bright brown eyes – all of it. I had dreamed it and breathed it for days and weeks. She wasn't going to be ignored – my mind... No, my heart wouldn't allow it.

I helped her out of her clothes and stripped mine. I was already hard and fully erect. The sight of her naked was an aphrodisiac that left me no choice.

I had to take her. Hard.

Maybe that was my intention. The pressure inside to have her was so strong that was all I could imagine.

But entering her robbed me of all that pressure. Once again, I felt the sublime silkiness of her channel as I slid my eager erection into her. Right where I belonged.

Just like before, I was stunned at the fit and feel. I stayed there, impaled inside her, and just enjoyed the feel of my pulsing cock getting squeezed by her pussy.

We stared at each other in a wondering sort of way. Words didn't have to be spoken to convey what we both felt.

I shared with her and she shared with me. It was a mutual melding that was so perfect that neither of us broke the synchronicity of our sex.

Small moves, gasps, and a mutual awareness between us had us making nearly identical moves.

I broke the perfect spell by coming down to kiss her. Connected now in two areas, I was released. The pressure returned and I drove my hips into hers, sliding my shaft deep.

My hand grabbed her around the back of the neck and pulled with my thrusts.

She started groaning in the kiss and her hands roamed over my back. Those touches were like spurs.

I couldn't kiss her anymore. As if racing for the finish, I galloped at her touch – pumping into her as I had initially thought I would. I cried out with the effort.

Her eyes glazed over and then rolled up into her head. Her lips quivered, and then her legs jerked under me. Her face crumpled in ecstasy and her voice burst forth in rapture.

Her fingers were claws, digging in and clutching me.

I gave a last mighty shove and buried my shaft deep. I released my explosive bursts inside her – right where they belonged. Flashes of light accompanied the powerful pulses as I squeezed my eyes shut.

CHAPTER 18

Cindy

I was once again in the arms of the man I loved.

I had no thoughts other than the full-blown bliss I felt everywhere on my body.

This was where I was meant to be.

This was where I belonged.

I fell asleep with him: it was a wonderful feeling of peace that swept away my worries.

I was awoken as he moved and sat up.

Yes, there was sound on the baby monitor. Pyper was saying, "Do you want a dress, too? Okay, I will find you one."

So sweet. I wonder if she's talking to Gi-Joe?

He scrubbed his face and looked back at me. His eyes caressed my skin. "That was..."

I offered, "Wonderful?"

He nodded with slow certainty and his smile confirmed it.

We went downstairs after a few minutes.

Bill opened her door and Pyper skipped to the bathroom. "Good girl," he muttered.

I wanted this to be my home. "What should I do?"

His face clouded over in thought. He looked one way, then the other, then shrugged. "Stay here..."

"What about Raymond?"

That disgusted look that had so scared me came over his face, but it wasn't directed at me. "I'll deal with him."

"How?"

"I'll tell him." He walked into the living room and to the kitchen. He picked up his phone and thumbed it on. He tapped and considered. "I think a text is all he deserves."

I stood there suppressing a giggle. "Cruel."

"Like I said, it's all the greaseball deserves."

"I won't argue."

He tapped for a moment. He said, "I told him you want an annulment and that you're with me."

I began to feel nervous.

He laid a hand on my shoulder. "Don't be nervous."

"Am I doing the right thing?"

"You know you are."

No matter how I tried to settle my nerves, I was nervous. We went over to the house after we sent the text and gathered my few belongings.

He frowned the entire time. "This is all you had?"

I shrugged. "Just my clothes, really. Mom never bought me much and she was glad when I left."

He just shook his head. "Two boxes, huh? Well, let's not hang around."

We went downstairs.

He called out, "Pyper." He set down the box and pulled out his phone. He used the flashlight app. He looked around where we had left her, checking under the coffee table and behind the couch. A lone Barbie was on the floor in the living room. "Pyper!"

From outside, a car door shut.

Bill dropped the phone and charged the front door. "Pyper!" He raced outside.

I dropped the box I was carrying and followed. I picked up his cell phone. My heart hammered with fear as I reached the front door.

Outside was Raymond's brown car. He was getting into it as Bill rushed him.

My eyes went large with terror. What's going on?

Raymond slammed the door but Bill yanked it open. With a roar, his fist slammed into my husband's head.

Raymond went over.

Bill shook his hand in pain. He yelled at me, "Call 911!"

I almost dropped his phone, my hand was shaking so bad. I barely tapped it.

I was horrified when I saw Bill on the passenger side remove the seatbelt and lift Pyper into view. She looked scared.

"Nine-eleven, please state your emergency."

"Uh, I think my husband tried to kidnap..."

"Ma'am?"

"I think he tried to kidnap the neighbor's daughter. Bill knocked him out. I think."

"What is your name and what is the address you are calling from?"

I twisted around, not remembering. "Um, 1113 Sparks Drive. I'm Cindy Cren—I mean Cindy Bigelow."

"Are there any injuries, do you know?"

"I don't know, should I check?"

The woman on the other side was talking, voice distant. She came back. "Ma'am? We're sending a patrol car."

I stayed on the phone while she asked more questions.

Bill was hugging his daughter.

CHAPTER 19

Bill

"Cindy, take Pyper." I unloaded my daughter into her free arm. "Go. Inside the house." I pointed to my front door.

She looked scared, but immediately moved. She carried Pyper as if it were natural. A slight hitch on her hip and they were away.

"God, I love her."

I glanced back at the car. Raymond wasn't moving. I headed into the house to collect Cindy's two boxes. For some reason, I didn't want anything of hers in the house.

What if the police arrested Raymond and locked up the house or something? I wanted it done with.

Stacking the two boxes, I lifted. So light, even if the boxes were bigger. They were awkward, though.

I went out the back and crossed the yard. I set them down on the back patio and went inside the house.

"Cindy? Pyper?"

My daughter came running to me, looking as if nothing had happened.

My heart was still thundering like a sledge hammer. I wanted to take a crowbar out and beat the man to death. It was really the only way.

Cindy called out from the front door, "He's moving!"

I didn't have a crowbar handy.

She cried out in panic, "He's in his trunk. He's got a shotgun in there!"

Oh. Fuck. I scooped up Pyper. "Get upstairs!" I ran, reaching the stairs before Cindy even turned from the door. I raced up the steps as if my daughter weighed nothing. Adrenaline pumped through me making every movement seem effortless.

I deposited Pyper on the bed as gently as I could. My poor girl bounced.

I yanked on the nightstand drawer and snatched my gun. It was a Ruger P-90, .45acp. Smooth, sleek, deadly.

It was my insurance policy against situations unimagined.

Like this.

I hadn't fired more than twenty rounds through it since I bought it.

I slammed into Cindy in the hallway. She went down and I went on top of her. "Fuck, I'm sorry. I'm sorry."

She didn't appear fazed at all, but her eyes were wild. "He's got a gun!"

I was already up and running for the stairs. "That's all right, so do I."

"No, Bill!"

I reached the bottom of the stairs and faced my destiny. At the front door, it all became so simple and clear.

I never had a chance to raise the gun.

EPILOGUE

Cindy

I screamed, "No!"

Sobbing hysterically, I stumbled down the stairs.

I heard Pyper call behind me, "Daddy?"

At the bottom of the stairs, I saw him standing in the open front door, gun hanging useless in his right hand.

But he didn't look frightened.

I had a silly flash of old Obi-Wan about to get struck down by Darth Vader's lightsaber.

I ran to him and grabbed onto his arm.

And then I saw.

Raymond, shotgun ready, but turning away from Bill.

Two policemen were behind him, guns drawn, and bodies low in a combat squat.

One yelled, "Gun-gun-gun!"

They were yelling at him to drop the gun. One was pointing and ordering, the other was covering and talking into the mic on his collar.

Raymond was still turning, but he wasn't listening. He brought the shotgun around.

Sharp pops exploded in my ears as Bill huddled me into his arm and crouched.

Air and a fine haze of smoke erupted from the two officers.

Raymond jerked as if yanked by ropes. The shotgun clattered to the walk. He toppled over in a heap, sort of on his side in a ball.

Sound rushed back in on me as the two officers advanced, shaking guns pointed at Raymond's body.

I was free.

Suicide by cop, they called it.

But I was free.

Thank you for reading Exposure. I sure hope you enjoyed it and would greatly appreciate a review of any ranking.

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