

THE INTERVIEW

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A job interview changes his life

Incest/Taboo

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I suppose I should start this from when I first noticed things were not going well at home. My Dad seemed to be spending more and more time at work and business trips involving nights away had become far more frequent. I knew that his secretary accompanied him on these trips, but she always had, so that had never seemed to be all that significant to me at the time. While he was away there was just Mum, my little sister Joanne and me. Although Mum seemed distracted at these times, I just thought it was because she was missing him being there and having to make all the decisions about what happened in the family alone.

I was in my final year at University when I first noticed that things were worse than I had realised. I suppose I had been too much wrapped up in my exams and hanging out with my friends until then, but one night I came home a little earlier than was usual. I had gone into town with Steve, my best friend, but getting off the bus he had tripped and hurt his arm. The bus driver called an ambulance and we were dispatched to the Hospital. Luckily nothing was broken, but he was still in a lot of pain, so after being fixed up at 'Casualty', we decided the evening was going nowhere and we took a taxi and came home. As I opened the front door I heard raised voices in the lounge. Mum and Dad were having a row. This was odd, because they very seldom rowed and certainly not in front of us children. I know I was out, but Joanne was in bed and she was a light sleeper. I looked up the stairs and she was sitting on the top step, crying.

I must have still been in the 'taking charge' mode from helping Steve, and explaining to his parents what had happened, so I pushed open the door to the lounge and said loudly "Pack it in you two, you are upsetting Joanne." Then I went up the stairs, picked my sister up and put her back in bed. I stayed with her until Dad came up and took over. Joanne had always been a 'Daddies Little Princess' and as I felt I was no longer needed I went back downstairs.

Mum was in the kitchen and she made light of it, saying it was just one of those family things, all couples have rows but it had got a bit heated and they hadn't realised they had been so loud they had woken Joanne up. I could see she was still angry, but she hid her feelings well and that was the end of it. By morning everything seemed back to normal, but when Dad told us he was going to be away all the next week, I could feel the atmosphere in the room change.

Things at home seemed to go back to normal, but looking back with the benefit of hindsight I can see now how quiet Mum was getting at these times, but I honestly can't say that I gave it too much thought at the time.

I think it was over that Christmas and New Year that I really noticed the change. Mum and Dad were hardly speaking by then and when they did the effort to keep things civil was obvious. It was as if the light had gone out of their relationship and what really worried me was that nobody was talking about it. For as long as I could remember, if we had a problem, we would sit down together and talk it out, but now everyone was retreating into their own corners and nothing was allowed to be mentioned. I did try to get them to talk about what I could feel was happening, but Dad just got

angry. He said it was something he and Mum had to work out for themselves and none of my business. Mum just ran upstairs and locked herself in the bathroom.

During my final year at University, there had been a 'Recruitment Event' where companies looking for graduates made contact with possible candidates for positions they wished to fill. No concrete offers of jobs were made, it was all dependent on final grades, but useful initial contacts were made with possible future employers.

Dad was away again when I was moving out of the house I had shared with four other students in my final year so Mum drove over and we cleared all of my things from my room into the back of her car. I sensed she was upset, but didn't want to say anything because whenever Dad was away on one of his business trips these days she was always a little touchy.

One of the other guys in the house bumped into her as she was carrying one of my bags out to the car and as he passed my door he looked into my room, where I was packing more things into a suitcase. "You're a dark horse" he said, "Where have you been hiding her? All that 'I'm here to work not play' and 'There's nobody special in my life' was just a bluff. No wonder you sloped off home at every opportunity. So! The girlfriend from back home finally shows up to help you move out. I don't blame you for keeping quiet about her though mate; she is a real 'honey'."

"Will you push off Dan" I laughed, "I'm sure my mother will be gratified to know you think she is a 'honey' although somehow I don't think my Dad would be quite so impressed."

"Your Mother? You have got to be joking" Dan gasped, "Honestly John I thought she was your girlfriend. She's really your Mother? – WOW!"

My results were even better than I had dared to hope for. I had gained an honours degree, passing out in the top 5% of my year. Graduation day arrived and the whole family came. For the first time in ages we felt like a family again. Dad and Mum were actually speaking to each other without the undercurrent of hostility that had been there for the last year. Even little Joanne seemed to want to be around her big brother, which didn't seem to happen very much these days, she was going through a stage of hating all boys, whoever they were. The only exception to this was Dad, who in her eyes could do no wrong.

Contacting the companies from the recruitment fair I had very promising responses from three of them. The one I really hoped would be interested was a large international drug company in the North Midlands. Their letter was the last of the three positive ones to arrive. They wanted me to come up to their main research facility, where I would be the guest of their recruitment team for three days. The company would pay all of my expenses, including travel and accommodation. I would be shown around the research and production facilities so that I could get some idea of things they were working on, then assuming I was still interested in the position there would be a day of interviews and assessments. I could then expect to hear if I had been successful within two weeks, following the usual security checks and references.

I telephoned the number on the letter and said I was very interested in applying for the position, and that I was available to attend whenever it suited them. The lady asked me to hold while she checked on available dates. When she came back she suggested a date a couple of weeks ahead. She also suggested that I arrive on the Sunday so that my tour of the facility could begin on the Monday morning. She said they would write to confirm the arrangements, and if I would keep all tickets and receipts, travel costs would be reimbursed when I arrived.

The letter of confirmation arrived in the post a couple of days later, with details about the hotel I had been booked into for four nights, to include the Sunday and Wednesday nights. The letter explained that Wednesday would be quite a full and stressful day, so suggested that I might like to stay the extra night and then travel home on the Thursday.

When Dad read the letter he said that was very considerate of them, most firms would have booked accommodation for just the Monday and Tuesday nights. If they were being that considerate they must be fairly sure I had the expertise they were looking for. The letter gave some information about the company, the starting rates and grades in the research department; where they were hoping to employ me. He was really impressed with the salary package they were offering and said that it was plain, with that and such a long selection process, they were only interested in the absolute 'pick of the crop' of graduates.

I booked train tickets and Mum drove me to the station. Dad was packing for a four day business trip to France and couldn't spare the time. Mum was, as was usual these days when he was going away, rather quiet. I asked her if she was alright but she said it was nothing, just she was feeling her age as 'her little boy was flying the nest'.

I hugged her and said "I'll be back on Thursday and if I get the job I will only be a couple of hours away by car. You can't get rid of me that easily, I am the bad penny that always turns up. Anyway" I said, tickling her ribs, which always made her smile, "What's all this feeling your age rubbish? Do you remember when we were clearing my things from my digs, when you were taking a bag to the car you nearly knocked one of my house mates down the steps?"

Mum looked puzzled, "I think so" she said.

"Well that was Dan" I told her, "You know, the one I told you about who has a new girl every week and all of them gorgeous. He thought you were my girlfriend and called me 'a dark horse' for keeping quiet about you. When I told him you were my mother he didn't believe me at first, then he just said 'Your mother – WOW!' You might be feeling your age but you certainly don't look it Mum, you are a very attractive lady and I'm not just saying that because you are my mum, it's a fact. Dan doesn't give out compliments when talking about girls unless he really means them and he thought so too."

"You've got your dad's gift for flattery" said Mum, smiling all over her face, "Just like him you could charm the birds out of the trees. Go on now, don't miss your train or I will have to drive you all the way there; because this is the only one today."

I didn't even think about it, it just came out. "Why don't you?" I said, "Joanne is having a sleepover tonight with Caroline. Dad is packing and will be going in about an hour anyway. I can phone him and tell him I missed my train, so you are driving me up to my hotel. Then we could have dinner together at the hotel. What else have you got to go home for? Is spending an evening alone in an empty house watching TV all that exciting? Come on, we don't spend enough time together these days and it would be really nice, just the two of us having dinner together."

I could see Mum was wavering. I think the comment about the empty house was making her seriously consider what I had suggested.

"An hour, maybe an hour and a half and Dad will be gone until Friday" I said, "There's nothing you have to be here for. You can phone Caroline's Mum, let her know where you are going and she can ring you on your mobile if she needs you. Tell her the same as I tell Dad, I have missed my train and

you are taking me up to Shropshire for my interview. She's looking after Joanne anyway tonight so it's not a problem. Come on, have an evening out with me and I'll buy you dinner."

"You know" said Mum, "I think I will. What have I go to rush back for? Your father doesn't give a damn if I am there or not and I am just going to be sitting in an empty house watching TV till I go to bed. Get back in the car, dinners on you, I could do with an evening out, I never go anywhere these days so let's do it."

As we pulled out of the station car park the train was just pulling in. I rang home and when Dad answered I told him we had been held up on the way to the station by the football traffic (which we had, not badly enough to cause me to miss the train but he wasn't to know that). I told him I had missed the train so Mum was going to drive me up to Shropshire.

"I had to bribe her with the offer of dinner" I said jokingly, "But with Joanne at her friends tonight anyway, she would just have been sitting at home alone anyway. I would have been eating alone in the hotel as well, so I suggested if she drove me up there she could check in for the night and we could have dinner together. Then she can have a drink and she can drive back tomorrow."

After I hung up I set up the 'Sat-Nav' (avoiding the motorways) and said to Mum "There's no big rush. Once we get clear of town if we keep our eyes open for a nice country pub, we can stop for a drink while you phone Caroline's mum. Then it's a pleasant drive up to Shropshire followed by a nice relaxing evening together."

"I hadn't agreed to stay overnight" Mum said, "But I admit it does sound like a good idea."

We had been driving for about 20 minutes when I spotted what looked like a lovely place for a drink. I pointed it out and Mum pulled into the car park. There was a nice open air area with tables, so Mum went to sit there while I went inside to get the drinks. Mum was driving so she had a fresh orange juice while I had a half of lager. When I got back with the drinks Mum was just putting her phone away.

"Caroline's mother was fine" she said, "When I told her I was going to stay for dinner, she suggested I should stay overnight as well. She said the same as you did, that I could then relax with a drink at dinner and not have to worry about driving back until tomorrow. She said Joanne would be fine, they loved having her and she could stay with them as long as I wanted."

I was delighted. "It's the sensible thing to do" I said, "I just assumed you would stay because, after dinner it would be a bit late to start the drive home and anyway, you would still be going back to an empty house. Staying over at the hotel you can have a drink with your meal, we can have a pleasant evening and have breakfast together; then when you are ready to go home, take a nice leisurely drive back.

"I have nothing with me for an overnight stay though" Mum said, "I have a few basics in my handbag but that is really only an emergency repair kit for my make up."

"That's not a problem" I said confidently, "We have already passed one out of town supermarket. The next one we see we can pop in and get whatever you need. It's only for one night and those places sell everything you are likely to need."

Finishing our drinks we drove on. Sure enough, Just over 10 miles up the road there was a retail park with a selection of shops. Mum led the way into an M&S and headed for the toiletries and makeup, while I wandered into the clothing section where there was quite a selection of ladies

nightwear and lingerie, some of the things on display were very nice indeed. I was daydreaming about what they would look like with someone beautiful inside them when I was startled by a tap on my shoulder.

"A penny for your thoughts" Mum whispered into my ear, "Or maybe they are worth more than a penny" she said with a naughty grin on her face.

"They most certainly are" I said. I was quite certain I was blushing, "But those are private so they are priceless."

"We are looking for things for me, for an overnight stay, in case you have forgotten" she said with a giggle, handing me the car keys, "Go and sit in the car while I see what else they have which is suitable."

She was away a little longer than I expected and when she came back to the car she had a smile on her face. Opening the boot she put several M&S bags in, before getting back behind the wheel.

"I think I have everything I need" she said, "But I would love to know what you were thinking about just now." She looked at me with a mischievous grin on her face, "I mean, if my little boy is developing an interest in ladies lingerie, perhaps I should know about it. You were quite engrossed, lost in your own thoughts looking at some very pretty but rather naughty things in there."

"I was just waiting for you" I said, "I hadn't really noticed the things on the display." I know it sounded lame, but it was the best I could think of at the time.

Mum looked at me and giggled, "Oh Yes? Of course you were" she said, "But I have seen that look before. Your Dad used to have that same look in his eye when he came home with some very pretty, but not very practical presents for me." For a moment although the smile stayed on her lips; it slipped from her eyes. "He doesn't buy me things like that anymore though."

As we carried on towards Shropshire, the two things Mum had said began to come together in my head. "Your father doesn't give a damn if I am there or not" and "He doesn't buy me things like that anymore." They were obviously related and I thought I had a chance to find out what was going on.

"Mum" I said, "Can I ask you something? I have tried to understand what is happening between you and Dad, but when I mentioned it, you locked yourself in the bathroom and Dad got angry and said it was none of my business. It is my business because I care about you and it looks to me as if something is driving you apart. Will you tell me honestly what is going on? You said earlier he doesn't care if you are there or not and just now; that he doesn't buy you presents anymore. This sounds pretty serious to me, so don't you think that is something to do with me as well?"

For some time Mum didn't answer, then she pulled off the road into a lay-by and stopped the engine. For a few moments she sat without speaking, then she said "There is no easy way to say this" she said, "So I am just going to say it. I think it's time it was brought out into the open and you knew what was going on anyway."

"I don't think you know your fathers secretary do you? Well your father definitely does. He knows her very well indeed because he has been having an affair with her for over a year now. The kind of presents I was talking about he now buys for her. Sales trips that involve nights away, he used to send other salesman to cover, he now does them himself and he always takes her with him. She is a very pretty girl and he keeps pictures of her on his phone. I found this one when he accidentally left

his phone at home one day, but I had already realised what was going on anyway. There are even more on his computer."

She handed me her phone where a picture on the display showed a pretty girl lying on a bed in just her underwear, smiling at the camera. "I transferred this one onto my phone to show my solicitor but there are many more. I have copies of them all. She looks so sweet doesn't she? As if butter wouldn't melt in her mouth. One of the other photos shows that your father's erection certainly does; and her mouth isn't the only place it melts. I don't know where or when this one was taken, I assume it was during one of their 'Business' trips, but I don't expect those knickers stayed on for very long after he took it. That slut even lets him take photos of them when they are having sex."

"So now you know" she said, "The reason for the atmosphere at home and why he won't discuss it. He is too embarrassed to tell you that he is a cheating rat. This is not the first time he has strayed either. I found out he was having sex with another woman from the office while I was pregnant with Joanne. I made him get rid of her when I found out. He swore it would never happen again."

"Those two affairs are the only ones I can prove, but I am quite certain they are not the only times he has been unfaithful. With the first one; he said it was because he couldn't enjoy sex with me because I was pregnant."

"I was pregnant with his child for God's sake. Then last week he finally told me that he wants a divorce. His secretary is expecting a baby and he says they want to get married. I wish her better luck with him than I had."

"His excuse this time was that it began because I wouldn't have sex with him anymore. But I stopped letting him have sex with me was because I found out he was sleeping with her and I refuse to play second fiddle to a cheap tart like her."

I was stunned. I had been so blind. All of the evidence had been staring me in the face and I couldn't see it. I reached across and put my arms around Mum, holding her and feeling her whole body shake as she cried into my shoulder.

As she got herself under control, I gently kissed her forehead. "Tonight we are going to forget about him" I said, "You are with me and are my date for the evening. You are beautiful and unless we tell them, no-one is ever going to believe you are my mother, so tonight I just want them to see us together and know I am the luckiest man in the town because you are with me."

She looked into my eyes for a moment. "You really mean it don't you" she said, "You are not just being nice because I am upset; you really do think I am still an attractive woman."

"No" I said, giving her hand a gentle squeeze, "I don't 'think' you are attractive, 'attractive' doesn't nearly do justice to how lovely you are. You will probably be the most beautiful lady in the restaurant tonight. I am sorry if I have caused you pain by asking what was happening, but I really did need to know what was going on. Thank you for telling me, but now can we try to forget this, at least for tonight, and we can try to get back to, what was going to be, for me anyway, a lovely evening out with the most beautiful lady I know."

"Yes, let's forget it for tonight" Mum said, "But you may as well know that on Friday while I was out, I wasn't only shopping. I had an appointment with a solicitor as well. He can have his divorce, but not because he wants it, it's because I do. I am sick of his lies and his running around and I want out of this marriage, but it is going to cost him. When he learns just how much; I think he will wish he had kept it in his pants, especially as he is now going to have a new baby to provide for as well."

She started the car again and we continued on our journey. The mood was more sombre now, but I couldn't help noticing that when I had hugged her, Mum's dress, which was quite short anyway, had ridden up and it was now over half way up her thighs. She made one cursory attempt to pull it down but without success so it stayed there. By the time we were approaching our destination it had ridden even higher and I realised she was wearing a pair of stockings instead of her usual tights. I think stockings are so sexy; it was a real effort for me not to keep looking at her legs. Mum seemed more relaxed now that she had confided in me about what was going on at home and she seemed much happier.

We parked in the hotel car park, which didn't look all that full. I was pleased to see I had been booked into a rather grand looking 4 Star hotel, and not one of those impersonal new 'Motel' type hotels that seem to be springing up everywhere. Mum made no attempt to open her door to get out of the car so I went around and opened the door for her. I did try not to look when she was getting out, honestly I did, but I am a man, with a man's instincts and desires, so the 'gentleman's reward' of a momentary flash of Bare thighs and panties as she swung her legs round was gratefully accepted.

I got my case from the boot together with the bags of shopping Mum had bought when we had stopped. She had that naughty grin on her face again as she took her bags from me. "No peeping" she said, "That's a surprise." I must have gone red because she giggled and kissed me on the cheek.

At the hotel reception I checked in. The receptionist didn't comment about there being two of us when she checked us in, although I assumed the company would have only made a single booking for me. Mum asked what time dinner was served. The receptionist handed her the room key and said "Dinner is served from 6:30 until 9:00 Mrs Roberts. Your room is 211 on the 2nd floor. The lifts are to your left. A table has been booked in your name, but it seems that someone has slipped up because this is down as a single booking. The room is a double anyway, so that's not a problem, but dinner is only booked for one. I will check into what has happened." Then she said "There is a message for you Mr Roberts." She handed me a letter with the company logo on the envelope.

I was about to explain about Mum coming with me and ask for a second room but Mums hand on my arm stopped me.

"There's no mistake" she said, "The booking is correct. It was a last minute decision for me to come, so please don't concern yourself. If you could just inform the restaurant there will be one extra for dinner and if it could be billed separately, together with any bar or other extras, we will settle the bill in the usual way before we leave. The receptionist then asked for and took a swipe of Mum's credit card and that was that. Mum took my arm and led me away from the desk towards the lift. As we waited for the lift I asked "Why didn't you book a room while we were there?"

"Let's get you settled in first" replied Mum, "We can worry about that later."

The room was spacious; with a double bed and a sofa-bed. It was really clean and bright with a proper en-suite bath room, with a shower over the bath not a shower cubicle. There was a desk and two chairs. The desk had power connections and a LAN port for direct connection to the internet as well as the 'Free Wi-Fi' option. I put my case on the stand provided and had begun to unpack when there was a knock at the door. Mum opened it and standing outside was a maid.

"Sorry to disturb you Mrs Roberts" she said as she entered, "We were only expecting one guest so the room was only made up for a single person. You will require these." She put extra towels and pillows on the bed and an extra cup, with additional drinks beside the kettle. She then repositioned

the pillows and put the towels in the bathroom. "I hope you enjoy your stay" she said as she left, closing the door behind her.

"I think they have made certain assumptions about our relationship John" said Mum, "Perhaps it would be simpler if we didn't try to explain about needing another room. I'm sure you can put up with us sharing for one night."

My mind was going round in circles, with most of my thoughts definitely headed towards the gutter. "Of course, if that's alright with you" I said, "I can sleep on this" indicating the sofa-bed, "You can have the bed."

"Thank you John" she said, but that mischievous grin was back on her face, "A gentleman to the last Ummm! Well almost a gentleman anyway, your father would never have been caught looking as I got out of the car."

I must have been as red as a beetroot. She had spotted me looking up her dress as she got out of the car, but now I was totally confused. She didn't seem at all concerned, she was smiling and those giggles made me think she wasn't at all upset I had sneaked that look up her dress. She obviously knew how far her skirt had ridden up and she had waited for me to open her door. I began to wonder if that view of her panties had not been entirely accidental. It almost seemed as if, with her divorce looming, she was testing how much teasing she was comfortable with. Was she using being here with me to check out how far she should now go before she said 'Stop'?

"I'm sorry Mum" I said, "I honestly didn't mean to look but when you were getting out of the car I couldn't help myself."

She hugged me, "I would have been more concerned if you hadn't looked" she said, "With the amount of leg I was showing, I would have been worried you might be gay if you hadn't. Especially as you say you don't find me completely repulsive." She hugged me and chuckled "You must admit John, you were studying that lingerie very carefully and at least I now know I'm not too old to arouse some interest from a man."

"There is one thing though" Mum said, "We have been booked into a double room, which I don't think they would have done if they had realised I am your mother." She giggled again, "They probably think you are my 'Toy Boy'. Perhaps while we are here it would prevent embarrassment if you stop calling me 'Mum'. You know my Christian name, so from now on I think you should use it. Try to remember I am Sarah, not 'Mum' ok?"

"If you think that would be best M.... Sarah" I said as I stepped back a little. The closeness of our bodies, with the added intimacy of using her Christian name was sending my fantasies into overdrive and the resultant 'natural response' was about to become little embarrassing. Once again that naughty little giggle told me she was not unaware of my condition..

Leaving the room we took a tour to see the facilities available at the hotel. Mum [Sorry] Sarah, was very impressed. There was a spa with beauty and massage treatments available at what I thought were very reasonable prices, well for a place like this anyway. There was a gymnasium and a large indoor pool, with a hot tub, which the sign said was free to hotel residents. The company had certainly not 'penny pinched' on my accommodation for these few days.

"This is very nice indeed" she said when we wound up in the bar for a drink. "I am tempted to stay for the whole time you are here, and then I could drive you home again on Thursday. I can't though; I have to get back for Joanne. It's a shame; I could really do with a few days being pampered in a

place like this. As you have noticed, life at home has been quite stressful for some time. It would be lovely to be able to relax." I nodded my agreement and as it was a lovely evening; suggested we take one of the tables outside on the terrace.

Once she was seated I asked her what she would like to drink. I was a bit surprised when she asked for a double brandy with one cube of ice. I hadn't expected that as she didn't usually drink very much, but if that was what she wanted, who was I to say she couldn't have it?

While I was at the bar an idea began to form and the more I thought about it the better I liked it. When I put our drinks down on the table I excused myself and went through the bar towards reception, as if I was going to the toilets. Once I was out of Mums sight I took out my phone and dialled Caroline's mother's number.

When she answered, after identifying myself I asked if she could do me a huge favour. I asked if there was any chance Joanne could stay with them for a few extra days. I explained that where I had been booked into was not just a hotel but a Health Spa as well, and that as Mum had been rather stressed out recently she could do with a break.

I said, "She could really do with a few days away to relax and feel pampered. As she is already here and this place looks the ideal place for her to do that, I thought it would be lovely if she could stay and relax for these few days and we could then drive back together on Thursday. I know it's a bit of a cheek, but would it be possible for Joanne to stay with you until we get back?"

I heard her call the girls and put it to them and from the excited reaction I could tell there was no objection from them.

"Well" Caroline's Mum said when she came back to me, "They seem to think it's a good idea, and if nothing else Joanne will keep Caroline busy so I can get on with the jobs around the house that I have to do. I love having her here anyway, so it sounds to me like a win-win situation all round. Of course she can stay. You tell Sarah I said she is to have a great time and I will want a full report of all she got up to when she gets back." I thanked her and promised to phone as soon as we got home.

Hanging up the phone I returned to the bar terrace, where I saw that Mum was no longer sitting alone. In my short absence a man had joined her and was making what to me looked like a determined attempt at picking her up. I drew back my chair and as I sat down I said, "Sorry to have been so long Sarah, who is your friend?"

"This is Peter" she said, "He was kind enough to offer me dinner tonight, but I told him I was already spoken for. Peter, this is John, we are here together."

Peter looked a little embarrassed. We exchanged the usual pleasantries and then he excused himself and left, looking a little disappointed.

"I don't know" I said, "I leave you for two minutes and when I return you are surrounded by admirers. What more proof do you need that you can still attract male interest, you certainly attracted Peter and he looked very interested."

Mum grinned, "He was wasn't he" she said, "But he's not really my type, I've already got one just like him. A businessman who, as soon as he gets out of sight of his home, forgets where his responsibilities lie and starts to think with what's in his trousers. I certainly don't need another with the same inclinations."

"Good for you" I said, "Anyway forget him, I have just been speaking to Caroline's Mum" I said, "It's all arranged, Joanne can stay with them until we get home so there is no reason you can't stay here and take advantage of the facilities for the few days we will be here. I will be away during the day, but you can shop for anything extra that you need, I expect you will need a swimming costume and a few extra clothes and while you are out shopping, you could get me a pair of trunks too. Then we can relax in that hot tub together. Book a massage, avail yourself whatever treatments you want, use the pool and the hot tub. Caroline's Mum says she wants a full report when you get home, but she said you are to have a great time, relax and enjoy yourself for a few days so I think you should put it all on your credit card, Dad can afford it."

Mum looked at me without speaking for almost a minute. Then she said, "But I can't stay, I have an appointment with my solicitor on Wednesday morning."

"Well, phone them and re-schedule it for Friday" I said, "You are the one paying for his time so he is working for you; not you working for him. You said yourself how nice this place is and I think you will feel so much better after three whole days being pampered and cosseted here. What's to stop you? One phone call in the morning to re-schedule an appointment and what else do you have to rush home for? Joanne is with her best friend for an extra couple of nights, which they sounded really excited about. Caroline's Mum is happy to look after them and she thinks it's a good idea too. You will still be home before Dad gets back from Paris, but what if you are not? What if you have stayed over with me at this very nice Spa and Hotel in Shropshire? He's just had a week in Paris with his secretary. Remember, he thinks I missed my train because of heavy traffic, so you drove me all the way up here for my interviews. The hotel is lovely with a Spa and everything, there is no-one at home so instead of sitting at home in an empty house; you decide to stay here for a short break and we then travel back home together. He can't say anything about that, can he? Everything is covered and you have only yourself to please, so why not?"

"But four nights away together, sharing a room as well" said Mum, "What would people say?"

"We are 100 miles away from home and anyone who knows us" I said, "So unless we tell them we shared a room; who is going to know? When I spoke to Caroline's Mum, she never mentioned the room because she would automatically assume we would have booked into separate rooms. If the situation was reversed would you think to ask her where she slept? Of course not! When we checked in, you told the hotel we would settle the additional 'extras' on 'our bill when we check out' so logically they expect you are going to be staying for four nights anyway. Did they seem bothered about that? Of course they're not. No more than the hotel Dad checks into with his secretary will be bothered about them. They arrive and check in as a couple, pay the bill and check out as a couple just like we and thousands of other hotel guests do every day. As far as the hotel is concerned, as long as they are discreet, whatever happens between a couple in private is their own affair."

As soon as I said it I could have kicked myself. I realised I had equated us sharing a room with what Dad and his secretary were doing. For four nights, we would be sharing a room too just like they were, although I didn't expect we would be amusing ourselves in the same way as them because our situation was completely different. Reminding Mum, other than doing that; just like they were, we were going to be sharing a room, could be the thing that decided her to ask for her own room. I didn't think she would leave and drive home tonight, because she had already had a drink, but I really wanted her; not only to stay, but to stay in my room with me. I almost held my breath as I waited for her response.

For a few moments Mum didn't speak. Then she held out her glass "I think you had better get me another one of these" she said. I nodded and took the glass to the bar and ordered another double

brandy for her and a half of lager for myself. I could see she was weighing up her options as I sat back down. She was gazing off into empty space, her thoughts elsewhere. Then she seemed to make a decision. Her eyes re-focused and she looked at me. "You are right of course" she said, "Unless we tell them, who would know?"

She took a drink of her brandy. Then she said, "You are here for an important interview which is crucial to your future. I am just taking advantage of the opportunity to have a few days away in a beautiful Spa, relaxing." For a moment she looked almost unsure of what she was about to say, then she continued, "You have an important few days ahead, I can rest during the day but you are going to need a proper night's sleep so you are not sleeping on that couch. The room was booked for you; so you are having the bed. I hadn't thought through how us sharing a room would be compared to your Dad and his secretary, but I can see how it would look to anyone else, so if I am going to stay with you in your room, this must be kept strictly between us, it is never to be mentioned to anyone. Are we agreed?"

I couldn't believe it, she was going to stay, "We are agreed" I replied.

"Well then" said Mum, "As long as that is firmly understood I think I would really like to stay."

I noticed Peter had re-entered the bar, but he was no longer alone. He was with another lady, who I thought was probably a little too young for him, but she seemed quite content with his company. He went to the bar and ordered drinks and they were soon deeply engrossed in their conversation. I grinned at mum, "I think your conquest has found someone else to accompany him to dinner."

She looked across at them, "She's welcome to him" she said, then she giggled, "We all have to make a living where we can." Then she looked at me and said with a grin, "I think there are some lemon slices on that bar. Can I suggest you get a few and suck the juices from them?"

I was puzzled "Why should I do that?" I asked.

"It might at least wipe that silly smile off your face" she said with a giggle. Then she blushed, "And you can put those naughty thoughts about what your Dad is doing in France right out of your head young man, I am not your secretary."

"Mum! I never for a moment ..." I began, forgetting for that moment I was not to call her Mum, before that mischievous grin and chuckle made me realise she was teasing me again. I looked around but no-one had heard my slip, so no harm was done, although Mum's raised eyebrow told me she had noticed. "Sorry" I said, "I will be more careful." Then I bent down and placed a quick kiss on her lips, "But there is no way I am letting you sleep on that couch. Either I sleep there or we share the bed. It's alright; I'll put the bolster from the couch down the middle so your virtue will be safe."

Mum giggled and then she did a very theatrical 'disappointed pout', "You're just a spoilsport" she said, picking up her glass and taking another sip. She winked at me as she studied the contents of her glass, "This stuff definitely softens the edges of perception and eases the conscience. If you had told me at breakfast this morning that before dinner I would be 100 miles from home and I was going to spend the next four nights sleeping with my rather handsome 22 year old son, I would have told you that you were mad." She giggled and took another sip of her drink. "But I think that is what I have just agreed to. This stuff does some very odd things to a girl's sense of what is respectable and acceptable. With that in mind, perhaps I should be a little more forgiving when I think about your father's secretary. A couple of these definitely change the rules and moves the goalposts further apart. Maybe it had a similar effect on her legs."

I leaned over and gently took the glass from her hand. "I think that your goalposts have been moved quite far enough for one day" I said, "I don't want to be accused of taking advantage of you when you have been drinking."

Her naughty grin faded and I couldn't help but notice her knees moved a little apart as she leaned forward and I had another momentary glimpse of her panties. Taking my hands in hers; she looked straight into my eyes and said, "If I can take that as a promise, perhaps it would be better if I stayed sober, then no-one will be able to accuse you of that."

I couldn't believe I had really heard what she had just said. As the implications sunk in I was genuinely shocked. "M" I was about to say 'Mum', when her finger touched my lips to silence me.

Suddenly all pretence of being slightly drunk had gone. "Mum isn't here" she whispered, "She is 100 miles away and you are here with Sarah." Her eyes held mine as she smiled and continued, speaking quietly. "In case you didn't notice, I allowed my skirt to ride up far more than was decent as we drove here. I then waited for you to open the car door for me, to make sure you could get a good look up my dress, which, if you need me to remind you, is where you have just looked again. What colour panties am I wearing John?"

I gulped and whispered "White M... sorry, I mean Sarah."

"So you did notice then" she said, smiling, "John, I know you have a 'thing' about ladies in stockings so I bought these hold-up stockings, took off my tights and put them on in the changing room at that M&S store. Why didn't I ask for a second room when we checked in? I know that places like this don't do single rooms so I knew that when we got to your room it would be a double. When the maid brought the extra pillows and towels, did I tell her they wouldn't be needed because I intended getting my own room?"

"No Sarah" I said quietly.

"Did I ask her to make up the sofa bed for one of us to sleep on?"

I took a big drink emptying my glass of lager. My throat had suddenly gone very dry. "No, you didn't" I said.

"I am not completely naive John" she said, "That just confirmed what the hotel staff expected, we would both be sleeping in the bed. We would be sleeping there together. Sleeping together, in a double room, with only that double bed made up for use. Why would they have assumed that John? What relationship do they think exists between us?"

"They assume that we are lovers" I whispered, hardly daring to think what I had just said.

"Good boy" she said, "I was beginning to wonder if you would ever figure it out. Now, as we explored the facilities I mentioned several times how nice the hotel was, that the Spa looked very good indeed and how much I would like to stay here with you. At last the penny dropped and you did what I had been hinting you should do ever since we arrived, you popped out to phone Jenny, that's Caroline's mum. Doing that one thing not only made it possible for me to stay, but confirmed what I already knew, that you wanted me to. I didn't exactly put up very much of an argument against it, did I?"

"No Sarah" I said.

"I had already decided to reschedule my appointment, but the suggestion had to come from you, it sounded so much better that way. I told you that your Dad is sleeping with his secretary and wants a divorce, but I didn't object when you made the obvious comparison between them sharing a room and a bed and us doing the same. I knew you wouldn't let me sleep on that couch and even told you that you mustn't think about what Dad would be doing with his secretary in their bed, which almost guaranteed that you couldn't help but be thinking about it. Good grief son, I even told you that I haven't had sex for over a year."

"I am not blind; I have seen the way you look at me when you think no-one is watching. How, when no one else is around, you always find some reason to be as close to me as you can get, how you use any excuse to put your arm around me or hold my hand. Your father has been so wrapped up in his own affair that he hasn't noticed, but I have John. At first I thought it was something you would grow out of, but if anything it seems to be getting even more intense."

"I have been dropping huge hints ever since we arrived that if you made an approach you would not be rejected. When you told me that you found me attractive I thought 'at last he is going to admit how he feels about me', but every 'Come On' I sent out, you blushed and ignored. I can't think what more I can do. The only way I could put out a bigger 'WELCOME' mat for you than I already have, is to do what I am going to do now."

"Your agreement that our arrangements this week are never to be discussed with anyone else is still binding. I consider this conversation to be part of that agreement. If it is ever spoken about to anyone else I will deny it ever took place."

"Time is not on my side, we are only here for four nights and all my hints don't seem to be working very well, so I think it best if I lay my cards on the table. Just so there is no misunderstanding I will spell it out for you. For the past year I have been having a torrid affair with my washing machine on the spin cycle and I actually need something better than that. I don't want or need another cheating, lying rat like your father, so that 'Peter' had no chance at all. I could quite easily find someone like him at any time if that was what I wanted, but I don't. What I do want, more than anything else I can think of right now, is for you to get into that bed beside me tonight and to hold me. Heaven help me, but the fact is, the one I really want is you."

"Now, it's not too late for me to go to reception and ask for another room, but you gave me the impression you were quite happy for us to share that room. A room which, may I remind you, has just one double bed in it. There is no need for you to put that bolster in the bed between us because if you get into that bed beside me tonight, I will tell you now if you do it will end up on the floor."

"I am now going up to the room to tidy up and get ready for dinner. If you want the sleeping arrangements I have just outlined, to be how we sleep for the next four nights; you have 30 minutes to come up to the room. If you do, I want you to knock three times on the door and wait."

"If this is not what you want to happen, I will accept that I have misread the situation and I will meet up with you back here in the bar and we will go in to dinner together. There is no need for embarrassment, when I come back to the bar I will have already been to reception, checked myself into another room, and this conversation never took place."

She took a quick look around and then she stood up. She adjusted her skirt, deliberately giving me another lovely view of her stocking tops and panties as she did so, then she smoothed down her dress, leaned down and kissed me. She whispered, "I do love you John, much more than I really

should. I know what I have suggested is considered very wrong, but we both know it does happen and, heaven help me, I would love it to happen between us. I am not drunk, I am fully aware of what I am suggesting. So now you know my feelings, but it takes two and this has to be your choice. If you don't want this, just stay here. This conversation never happened and it will never be mentioned ever again."

As she straightened up and stepped back I came up out of my chair and stood before her. Looking directly into her eyes, I gently took hold of her upper arms, firmly guided her back to her chair and sat her down. My right hand slid down her arm and took hold of her left hand, while with my left hand I slid her glass, which still had some brandy in it, across the table, replacing it in front of her. "It would be such a shame to waste this, wouldn't it" I said. Then, without taking my eyes from hers I went down onto one knee and kissed the back of her hand, which I was still holding in my right. Then, with my eyes gazing in adoration into hers, I slowly clenched my left fist and gently, but quite deliberately, knocked three times on the table.

Mum just sat for a moment and stared at me. "Are you sure?" she asked, "You do realise what a huge step I am suggesting here?"

I took a deep breath. "You have laid your cards on the table and told me what you would like to happen between us" I said, "Please stay for a few more minutes and let me do the same."

I got to my feet and returned to my seat, facing her. "When you sent me out of M&S today, yes, I was looking at that lingerie and I was daydreaming" I said. "The thoughts you offered me a penny for you can now have for free. I was imagining how much more beautiful those things would look if you were wearing them. Since long before I went to University, every girl I have ever met or gone out with, I have compared to you. While I was at University I was approached by several of the male students and one of the lecturers as well, all hoping to have a sexual relationship with me. They thought I was gay because I appeared to have no interest at all in girls. I politely refused them and explained away my apparent lack of interest by saying 'This course is about my future and I need to concentrate on that for now, there will be plenty of time for girls after I graduate'. The real reason for that apparent lack of interest in any of the girls around me was, quite simply, none of those girls could even hold a candle to you. My ideal woman is you. It has always been you. I think you are perfect."

"Mum! Just being in the same room as you makes me feel good. Good about life, good about everything, because to me you are everything. I was trapped, I love you, but how could I tell you that? You are my mother and still married to my father. You're completely out of my reach. Even watching you from afar was a huge risk because how I felt about you must have showed and if anyone noticed I was sure I would be sent away. Just being near to you and not be able to touch you is sometimes like torture for me, but not to be allowed to be anywhere near you at all would be a thousand times worse."

"For the last year I have been aware that things have not been right between you and Dad and they appeared to be getting worse. Today you told me the reason for that and that you are going to divorce him. Have you any idea how that piece of information has completely messed up my head and my emotions. Yes, I love Dad too, but that love is nothing like what I feel for you. What I cannot understand is why he would do what he has been doing. He holds the greatest prize in the world in his hands and he is walking away from her; and for what? For a pretty piece of skirt that wants him now, but will probably want someone else in a couple of year's time. He must be - No! He is a fool. In his place it would have taken a team of wild horses to tear me, kicking and screaming in chains, from your side."

"On the drive here I had to force myself not to keep staring at your thighs. When you were getting out of the car I had to hold onto the door because my knees almost gave way when your legs opened and I saw your panties. Ever since we arrived I have been silently begging you, in my head, not to get a separate room, to stay with me in mine. Even though I never dared to hope what you have just said could ever happen. Sleep on that couch? I would sleep on the floor at the foot of your bed, or even in the bath if it meant you would just stay there in the same room with me."

"You ask if I am sure? Only in my dreams have I even dared to hope there could be some kind of future for me with you. In the past, when the longing for you has become more than I could bear, I have locked myself in the bathroom and inhaled your special perfume from the used underwear you had left in the laundry basket, just so that, for those few moments, I could pretend that I was close to you, holding you in my arms."

Even as I said it I realised how creepy that sounded, but I was beyond being embarrassed, she had to know how I felt about her.

I continued, "Yes, I did see those signals, every single one of them, but what if you were just teasing me? What if I had taken you in my arms and told you how I felt and those signals hadn't really been saying what I didn't dare to hope they were? Sarah! - Mum! - My love! I think you can say with absolute certainty. YES! I am sure. I have never been more sure of anything in my whole life."

Sarah looked at me without speaking for what seemed like an age. Then she pushed away the glass "I don't think I want to finish that" she said, "I think we should go up to our room and get ready for dinner, don't you? This has been something of an eventful day and I have a feeling that after dinner; we might both feel like an early night."

I was shaking as I picked up the glass of brandy and said, "If you're sure you don't want it, I think, after all that, I need something to steady my nerves."

A word of warning here, to anyone out there who is, like me, more accustomed to drinking lager than spirits. Knocking back a double measure of neat brandy in one gulp is not the same as knocking back the same amount of lager.

Mum almost fell out of her chair laughing as the spirit hit the back of my throat and took all of the breath out of my body. I will draw a veil over my embarrassment, but I assure you, it was not the urbane, sophisticated moment that I had envisaged when I picked up that glass.

She was still chuckling when we got to the lift. I pressed the button for the 2nd floor and as the doors closed Mum put her arms around my neck and we had our first real lovers kiss. The elderly couple waiting for the lift on the 2nd floor looked surprised to find us still like that when the doors opened. Mum giggled as we stepped out of the lift, still holding my hand. "Sorry" she said to the lady, "We were married yesterday afternoon and last night was spent in the airport, waiting for a standby seat, because our flight had been cancelled. Some sort of security alert, so they can stuff Florida, we're stopping here."

As our room door closed behind us I took her in my arms. "Mrs Roberts" I said, "You are a very naughty lady. Fancy you telling that poor old couple lies like that."

"Aren't I though Mr Roberts" she replied as her hands began to undo my trousers, "But I can be much naughtier than that. Dinner can wait for a few minutes; there is something I want to check up on here first."

We did make it to dinner, although it was more like 8:15 than 6:30. Sarah's 'check' didn't take very long, but I had some 'checks' of my own I desperately wanted to make. I can confirm that her juices taste much sweeter when warm and fresh from source; than when dried onto a piece of cloth. Her response to me finding that out; confirmed that she had been waiting for someone to do that to her for quite a bit longer than she had found comfortable. Of course, there were other checks I wanted to make Purely in the interests of accuracy you understand. Well I had to be absolutely sure that things fitted together well, so it only seemed reasonable for me to check twice! Well, I am, after all, a scientist. All results have to be verified and confirmed.

Luckily there was a clean, dry, face cloth in my wash bag. When folded three times and placed in those very pretty, lacy white panties, at least she wasn't leaking onto the floor as we entered the dining room.

As we went down in the lift Sarah suggested I take the smile from my face. I did try, but for some unknown reason it just wouldn't stay away. Perhaps it was because I couldn't help wondering how Dad was getting on in Paris. I was willing to bet it wasn't as well as I was doing in Shropshire. He could keep his 20 year old pregnant secretary. What his affair with that secretary had cost him was now mine, his loss was definitely my gain and I had a lot of time to make up.

Part way through our main course Mum said she was going to go into town to do some shopping in the morning. Then she leaned close to me and whispered "There are three more nights after tonight and if you intend to continue at the rate you've started, I had better buy at least a dozen or you are going to run out. I also need a good chemist. I think I had better look for a 'morning after' pill, or after your earlier exertions, you might be getting a little brother or sister and how would I explain that to your father? When we get back I think I had better have a word with our doctor as well, about going back on more reliable protection."

Now it was my turn to tease, "Only a dozen" I said, "Do you feel a headache coming on dear? Never mind, I noticed there is a vending machine in the 'Gents', so I will pick up some extras for tonight. Mind you, that 'more reliable protection' is a good idea, I would love to see the look on Dads face when after four nights away with me; those little strips of pills suddenly re-appear on the bathroom shelf. Do you think he will make the connection?"

Mum thought for a few seconds and then she said "Maybe the bathroom isn't such a good place to keep them. Maybe in my underwear drawer would be more discreet; I don't want Joanne asking what they are and why I need them. I told your Dad last week he had better make arrangements to find himself somewhere else to stay. He said he is going to sort it out when he gets back from Paris. They are going to need somewhere bigger than that little flat she has when the baby arrives, anyway."

In case you are interested. Sarah and I are still very much an item. I did get that job and we moved to a nice cottage in a lovely village not too far from where I work. Joanne still misses her Dad a bit, but she sees him two weekends a month. The 'love of his life' was very keen for them to be married before the baby was born but luckily for Dad, the divorce hadn't been made absolute in time. The real irony of this was, his ex secretary must have been seeing someone else whenever Dad wasn't around, because when her baby arrived, while it was a beautiful baby girl, she did have quite a noticeable "sun tan". Even though it wasn't really necessary, a DNA test proved that Dad was not the father of her baby after all. All I can say is "Nice one Dad! You really did well choosing to go with her, didn't you? Anyway, thanks for everything." As we relaxed in bed together one Sunday

morning when Joanne was away visiting him, Sarah said "He's made his bed, now he can lie on it; I'm not taking him back."

Of course, we live together quite openly. Sarah is a divorced mother, living with her son, who works at the big research establishment just outside town and her daughter. I overheard two women talking in the local shop and one of them, said "He's such a nice boy and he really loves his mother." If only she knew how true that was and how much, not to mention how often, I really do love her. We chuckled about that for weeks.

Those two weekends a month are the only times we can really be together, but that's OK. We do get some intimate little moments together when Joanne is out. I don't think Joanne knows anything and we both want to keep it that way, but she is a very bright girl, so how long we can keep it from her is a question neither of us can answer. At least she no longer hates boys, I think it's Robin who is in favour at the moment.

When Mum had 'that talk' with her, she told her that she wasn't to do anything stupid and ruin her life, but knowing that 'boys will be boys' Mum had her put on 'the pill' just in case. Joanne did ask why Mum still takes those same pills, because, as she mentioned, Mum never goes out on dates with men. Mum told her it was to do with controlling her monthly cycle.

Sometimes when Joanne looks at me I wonder if she suspects. Since she walked in on us one evening when Sarah had fallen asleep in my arms on the sofa, she seems to make a lot more noise than strictly necessary when unlocking and opening the door, but unless she actually asks we are saying nothing. All villages are hotbeds of gossip, so our doctor, who is a very understanding lady, puts the prescriptions for their contraceptive pills on separate forms and Mum collects those from the big chemist in town, not the little one in the village.

Dad's reputation has been more than a little tarnished in Joanne's eyes since the divorce and he has never regained the 'superhero' status he used to enjoy in her eyes. At least he doesn't have to pay for the upkeep of a new wife and that other baby, but he still has to support Mum and Joanne and as she wants to go on to further education, he will be doing that for some time to come.