



# Open House Hotwife

First Time Hotwife With Her Older Boss

**Tinto Selvaggio**

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By Tinto Selvaggio

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## **Book Description**

*I always wish I'd had the courage to get my leggy Latina wife, Kim into hotwifing when we were dating. Or when we first got married. She was relaxed about my fantasies back then. Like, whenever we were out together, and I'd ask her to, she'd flirt with other guys.*

*But every time I watched her do it, I couldn't handle my jealousy. Not the right way. I was too young and immature. I'd always stop things before they could go too far.*

*And then the kids came along, and Kim focused on life as a stay-at-home mom.*

*Now, though, our youngest too has started school, and my wife's going back to work. She's been offered a job in a swanky car showroom. Somewhere I'm sure a pretty 29-year-old like her will get plenty of attention.*

*So I'm kind of hoping the thrill of her feeling desired by other men again can lead to me getting what I've only ever dreamed of. Kim as a hotwife.*

*But we've both got a whole lot more to lose now. Even if I really could control my jealousy.*

*So if she did meet the right guy, would I really encourage her to take that risk?*

*And would my wife even do it?*

*This is a c. 34k+ word full-size ebook novella of hotwife sharing erotica. An adventure, written from the husband's point of view, it contains explicit descriptions of sexual action and other activity including wife sharing, voyeurism, and cuckolding. Only mature adults who won't find that offensive should read this.*

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## Chapter One

### Gabe

For a new upmarket department store, the sound system in this place sure is tinny. It's that 'I Wish it Could Be Christmas' song again. Must be the twentieth time it's been played since I arrived here to check the merchandise.

Customers swarm like starved piranhas between the bottle-green 'Harvey's' store branding and around the displays of clothes. But that's Friday afternoons for you. I wait for another group of shoppers to struggle past with their shopping bags before I can get close enough to one of our navy hoodies on a glossy black fiberglass mannequin. I smile and let a lady pass from the other direction, too. She smiles back, but I focus on the task. I straighten an arm of the hoodie, so that our signature orange stitching looks perfect on the display.

"Is there anything you need me to do with the Amen-D headwear, Mr. Porter?" Melissa, one of the menswear department assistants, indicates several glass shelves of hats.

I scan the area beyond her for my firm's small, but color-coordinated collection of blues and black beanies and lids with our logo amongst the other, bigger labels. "I'll take a look at them in a second," I say and turn my attention back to the hoodies and a different headless mannequin. I run a hand down the soft cotton of one of our newest lines, the sepia brown one with the shooting star design on the back. "These all look great," I tell her and take a small step back to examine the display some more. "Maybe just keep a special eye on re-stocking the newest ones? They seem to be moving fast."

She nods, and her blue eyes look right at me. She's twenty-something, probably a few years younger than my wife Kim, and with blond highlights in her brown hair. She moves a little closer to me. The staff badge with her name on catches the light from the nearest in-store Christmas tree. "Uh-huh, I noticed how well they're selling," she says with a coy smile.

Is she flirting with me?

I'm not the greatest at picking up the signs. My buddies always tell me that. Always tease me about 'How the hell?' I managed to get together with a girl like Kim.

*Assholes.* I smile to myself.

I smile at Melissa, too, but move to the headwear section. I wonder what she - or my buddies for that matter- would think if they knew what really *does* it for me.

Kim with some other guy.

*If only.*

Or at least, Kim, when she starts her new job, flirting with a few guys, like I think Melissa could be trying to do with me right now.

I clear my throat and concentrate as the shop girl helps me straighten the hats. My mind has been on Kim a lot today. She's at home, Christmas shopping online without either little one tugging at her arm or demanding snacks every five minutes. For the first time in years. I told her she should have gone to the mall. But she's kind of gotten out of that habit since she had the kids. I picture her on our couch, no makeup and dark hair piled messily on top of her head, wearing those worn gray sweatpants she refuses to throw away. *But still as hot as hell in them.*

"Mr. Porter?" Melissa's voice snaps me back.

*Crap, was she talking to me?* "Sorry, just thinking about inventory," I lie with what I hope is smoothness. "Can we take a look at how the thermal Tees are doing now?"

Melissa leads me across the sales floor, but yet again, I'm mentally fast-forwarding beyond this hectic holiday period to January. And *not* to the new year sales. Rather, to when Kim starts the new part-time job at Eastgate Auto, the high-end German car dealership in the city. Wealthy owners and buyers of flashy BMWs, Porsches, and Mercs. All checking out the hot new Latina receptionist when they come to browse new motors, or to get their vehicles serviced. Successful business guys. Confident types who drop six figures on cars without blinking. Men who'll notice my wife's curves, legs, and her full lips, and who won't be intimidated by the boldness of those avocado green, almond-shaped eyes. One or two of the more interested customers,

who, once they've seen her for the first time, might even arrange subsequent visits to coincide with when my wife is working there.

My gut flutters as we reach the t-shirts where all the designs are perfectly merchandised.

"We've had to restock these twice already today," Melissa indicates a display of our black tees with the minimalist logos.

"Brilliant," I nod, "This all looks great as well," I smile at her, but not in a way likely to encourage flirtation. I hope.

She tells me about our sales patterns across all the Amen-D clothing ranges, and I listen and make a few notes on my phone. Then finally, I thank her again and sign out of the store before heading to the parking lot for my car. I check my watch. Two more stores to audit, then home.

Not for the first time as I drive, I try to imagine what I might be able to encourage Kim to wear for work once she's settled in at the dealership. Possibly a tight pencil skirt and semi-sheer blouse, the latter cream-colored, maybe, to complement her olive skin.

*I could buy her a nice new outfit as part of her Christmas present.*

I stop for a red light, and my pulse quickens at the prospect of Kim and me getting back to the way we used to be before the kids. When we'd go to one busy bar or another, somewhere no one knew us, and she'd be dressed up all hot. She'd sometimes agree to sit on her own, several feet from me, until some guy or other hit on her. It never took long for her to get an approach. And it was always *me* who lost my nerve first and who broke up any conversation.

Not that anything would have ever happened beyond talking. Kim always stressed that to me beforehand. And I don't think I'd have wanted it. Not really. No matter how we'd sometimes talk dirty about it later in bed, imagining an approach going further.

And no matter how good the sex between us was when we did.

Lately, though, after her being so focused on little Harrison, Leah, and our home for so long, excitement about Kim getting out more and mixing with guys on her own again has made my fantasies about her wilder than they've ever been. Almost like my desire for it is coming out of 'hibernation' or something.

But I need to calm down about this. Focus on the here and now. Concentrate on Christmas coming up and the busiest sales period of the year. I need to do what I can to hit that fucking year-end sales target. I'm still some way behind.

A cold wave of reality washes over me. January is still weeks away. And even then, who's to say anything will happen with her job that somehow helps spice up our sex lives? What if all the years of midnight feeds, diaper changes, and now school runs have changed that part of our relationship forever? She's a mother now. Responsible. Devoted. Maybe those playful teases are a thing of the past, relegated to the same forgotten dusty corner as spontaneous date nights or lazy Sundays of sex in bed.

Later, almost at the same moment as I turn my key in the front door lock at home, small feet thunder down the hardwood floor.

"Daddy's home!" Leah shouts, her seven-year-old voice squealing through the house.

Seconds later, when I'm still barely through the door, two little bodies collide with mine. Leah wraps her arms around my leg while the smaller Harrison raises his hands to be picked up. He's got chocolate smeared around his mouth, so he can wait down there until I change into my sweats.

"How are my two favorite people in the world?" I ruffle his hair and try to make progress down the hallway with Leah still clinging to my left trouser leg. I peer down at dark curls she's inherited from Kim.

"I made a volcano at school today," Harrison announces, and he's given up asking to be lifted.

"Isn't *Mommy* one of your favorite people in the world, too?" Leah gazes up at me with big green eyes and a frown.

“She sure is,” I grin at her. “Where is she?”

“In the kitchen,” they chorus, “Making tea.”

I inhale theatrically to make the pair of them laugh. The scent of garlic and tomatoes wafts from further in the house. “What’s she cooking?” I whisper, like it’s a big secret.

“Pasta,” they whisper back in unison.

I follow them into and through the living room, where the floor is scattered with coloring books and toy cars, to find my wife in the kitchen, stirring sauce at the stove.

Even in baggy sweatpants and an oversized sweater, she still manages to look good. Especially - and as always - her prominent butt. And the length of her legs. Even in *those* pants.

*‘Wow. Dancer’s legs,’ I thought to myself, that very first time I saw her in a skirt.*

In front of me now, though, her dark hair is pulled back in a messy ponytail that exposes the graceful curve of her neck. She turns and smiles at me, and I feel a familiar tightening in my chest.

“Hey, you,” she says as I get closer, and she rises on bare tiptoes to kiss me. She tastes like she’s been sampling the tomato sauce.

“Smells good in here,” I say when she’s turned back to the stove, and I wrap my arms around her waist from behind. I breathe in the coconut scent of her hair, and the back of her body is soft and warm against mine. Especially the fullness of her rear pressed against my groin.

The kids tug at me again, though, and when I peer down at their expectant and upturned little faces, shame slices through me. Here I am, surrounded by the family I love, and that loves me, but most of the day again, I’ve been harboring fantasies about my wife with other men.

“Can we do Lego before tea?” Leah asks.

“You’ve only got fifteen minutes before it’s ready,” Kim gets me off the hook without turning around. “Daddy needs to get out of his work clothes first. Don’t you, Daddy?”

“Yes, Mommy,” I say and pat her ass.

“Hey!” Leah frowns up at me, “Don’t do that to Mommy’s butt.”

“Mommy’s *big* butt,” Harrison mumbles and wanders through to the living room.

“Mommy’s *lovely* butt,” I whisper into her neck and head for the bedroom. ‘*Kardashian butt*,’ I tease her sometimes, about her famous namesake.

The meal still isn’t ready by the time I’ve changed, so I join the kids in the living room, where we work together on a model cat that my daughter wants to finish. A cat that, a few minutes later, and out of nowhere, suddenly gets demolished by Harrison with his dinosaur action figure. The attack results in tears and recriminations from Leah.

After I’ve quelled the commotion, from my position on the floor, I catch glimpses of Kim moving through the kitchen. She bends to retrieve a colander from a lower cabinet, and her pants stretch tight across her behind. It’s only slightly fuller now than when we first met, even after carrying two children. She’s no less desirable. In fact, to me, her whole body is *even hotter*, in a lot of ways.

I return my gaze to the pieces of the model cat and attempt to resurrect it with Leah. My shame about the intensifying fantasies with her job on the horizon, though, is a little stubborn tonight.

But I’m a *good father*, I remind myself. A devoted husband. Fantasies are just that: daydreams to amuse myself. They don’t diminish my love for Kim or the family. If anything, they heighten my feelings for my wife.

“God, you’re a beautiful woman, Mrs Porter,” I whisper later in our bedroom. I’m sitting on the chair at the side of our bed, pulling my socks off as Kim too undresses in the soft glow of our twin bedside lamps. Outside, rain taps gently against the window, and it feels like a cozy cocoon around our wood-walled bedroom.

She rolls her eyes but smiles too, as if she appreciates the compliment. She tosses her oversized sweater onto the floor next to her discarded sweatpants, where they're presumably both ready for the laundry, "You're just saying that because I'm naked," she says.

"*Partially* naked," I correct as she undoes her cream-colored bra and sets her ample, olive-skinned breasts with their dark nipples free. "And I say you're 'beautiful' because it's true."

"The kids went down easy tonight," she yawns and pulls a baggy faded red t-shirt over her body before peeling down her panties from underneath it and casting those aside, too. "I think school is wearing Harrison out."

"He's only been there two months," I murmur, and down to only my shorts now, I slide into bed just ahead of her.

Kim settles in beside me, her skin warm against mine, but she yawns again and turns out her light right away.

*Crap.* She's too tired to even *read* tonight?

I move closer to her in the single lamplight, my cock hardening in my shorts, and all trace of any shame or guilt dissolved now we're alone as I trace lazy circles on her arm. I *love* the silkiness of her skin on my fingertips.

"You're not *too* tired, are you?" I ask.

"Uh-huh. Are you horny *again* tonight?"

"I can't help it," I say and kiss her full on her lips, "My wife is too hot. And I've been thinking again all day about the effect she'll have on other guys when she starts her job in the new year."

"I'll have to talk to you about that in the morning," she says and yawns again.

"You should go back to bed for an hour or two after you've done the school runs," I say and lean over her, kiss around one of her ears, "While you still can. Before January."

“My body clock is too used to being on the go all day with the kids,” she murmurs, but her eyes close, then as I continue to kiss her neck, her breathing begins to deepen.

“I was imagining you coming home and telling me about some guy hitting on you at work,” I murmur into her ear and inch the bottom of her t-shirt up her strong thighs.

“Me and my Mom bod?” Kim gives me a sleepy smile.

“Any of the other moms at the school gates would die for a bod like yours,” I say and expose her belly, then her full boobs. I suck on a nipple and it crinkles hard between my lips.

“Mmm, not *any* of them,” Kim moans, and one of her hands reaches for the front of my shorts.

“All the ones I’ve ever seen,” I say because it’s true, and because I want to keep her confidence high ahead of her starting the job. Otherwise, there’s no way she’d consider wearing anything vaguely provocative there. “Their husbands would die for a wife like you, too.”

“Mmm,” she moans with her voice dropped to that husky register that drives me wild. Her fingers delve into my shorts as I reach down between her thighs. I suck on her tits some more, then stroke her shaved slit with the underside of one finger, and she purrs.

Her hand grips my cock and begins to work it gently.

“I was imagining you going to work in a tight skirt,” I say around her ear and push two fingers into her heat.

“Uhhm,” her head rolls back on the pillow, and she squeezes my dick. “Were you now?”

“Yeah. A real *short* one too,” I murmur and stroke her stiffening, little clit, “With a semi-sheer blouse. None of the male customers was able to take their eyes off you.”

“Uhh, I’d probably get fired,” she smiles with her eyes still closed, but then I touch her clit again and she gasps.

“I doubt that,” I say and lean right over her; I concentrate on establishing a gentle rhythm with my fingertips inside her.

She strokes me, but the tempo of her hand is jagged and broken, presumably as the waves of her pleasure interfere with her pace.

I kiss around her neck and ear some more, lick her there, and she moans. Then, as my slicking fingers move steadily, her breathing and panting grow faster.

*She's going to cum soon.*

“I want it inside me,” she moans and releases my dick.

I ease my glazed fingers from between her legs and sink my body between her thighs. I stab myself into her, and her thighs rise and cling to me. Her arms pull me to her.

We slap together, but I hold back and I hold back, hard though it is, and she's getting close, she's gonna cum.

“Uhh, Kim, fucking hell, Kim,” I moan and visualize the thighs that clench my sides are locked around someone else.

Her climax starts seconds before mine, and frantic though I am, I hold a hand over her mouth so she doesn't wake the kids.

Afterward, with my arm around my flushed wife in the lamplight, I'm drained but relaxed and happy too that she didn't close down any conversation about other guys. Then I remember something she said earlier.

“What was it you wanted to talk about in the morning?” I ask.

“The car showroom job,” she clears her throat, “I turned it down after all.”

The words hit me like a bucket of ice water. “What? Why? I thought you'd agreed on your start date and everything?” I sit up straight to stare at her.

“I had,” she shrugs and sits up too, pulling her t-shirt back over her. “It’s just that Dad offered me more flexible hours to work for him. Same hourly rate. And in a small branch where there’ll be less pressure.”

“Working for your *Dad*?” I shake my head and fail to keep the disappointment from my voice.

*What are the chances of flirtatious encounters to talk about in bed if she’s working for her fucking old man at Moreno’s Real Estate agency?*

“But you were excited about the Eastgate job,” I say, “Which ‘small’ branch?”

“Millfield,” she says and yawns. “Can you put your light out now, Gabe? I’m really tired.”

*‘Millfield’? It’s a backwater. Full of fucking retirees.* “Millfield’s not on my way to work like the garage. I wouldn’t be able to drop you off on the way to my office.”

“You won’t need to,” she says, “It’s only ten minutes and two stops on the train. The station’s only round the corner from here, isn’t it?” She snuggles down again on my chest and gestures at the lamp.

“But you wouldn’t have to commute on your own if you were at the garage,” I say as I switch out the light.

“Being independent again will do me good,” she says against my chest, “Isn’t that what you always say?”

“Independent? Working for your dad?”

*And after the way it went when she worked part-time for him before the kids? She and her Dad Carl are too fiery, too similar.*

“I want to find myself again,” she says, ignoring my thinly-veiled accusation, “We both know that, don’t we? This way I can ease myself back into a work environment, without all the pressure of a totally new firm somewhere mad busy. And if I can do well, I’ll show Dad that my sister and brother aren’t the only ones he can be proud of.”

*Again with the sibling rivalry.*

“Your Dad’s already proud of you,” I stroke her face, “You’ve given him and your Mom two great grandkids. No one expects you to be the same as Rosa,” I shake my head and visualize Kim’s driven younger sister who started up her own successful Digital Marketing business, “Your sister doesn’t even have kids.”

“Seth does,” Kim shrugs her shoulders and closes her eyes, “and my baby brother manages Dad’s flagship branch too, doesn’t he?”

“Yeah, and he’s got a wife at home looking after his kids for him.”

“Don’t be annoyed,” Kim murmurs in the dark and squeezes me, “I’ve told Dad and the garage what I’m doing. And the good news is I can start next Monday. Just think of all the extra money between now and the New Year.”

## Chapter Two

### Gabe

I stop trying to argue with Kim about turning down the car showroom job and working for her Dad instead, and I let her go to sleep. But for a long while, I don't follow her. At some point, she rolls away onto her other side in the dark. Then, when she has, the space between us on the mattress feels a whole lot greater than the few inches it is.

I don't want to accept that I might have been right. That I was kidding myself to imagine we could ever go back to doing some of the hot things we did together all those years ago. Before the kids. But I need to face it. Life is different now. And certainly our sex life together is.

Saturday morning is spent standing in what feels like an endless queue when we take Leah and Harrison to see Santa at the mall. The afternoon involves me doing a couple of chores around the house, but when Kim again insists that she's made up her mind about the job at her Dad's real estate agency, I brood some more about that. Especially while I'm trying to fix a dripping shower head in our bathroom.

My own 'selfish' reasons aren't the only ones why I wish she'd change her mind back. I know only too well how much her old man can upset her. Like the way he's always made it plain that Kim never measured up academically to her younger brother or sister, either at school or college. And the way he's made her feel at times about being 'just' a stay-at-home Mom. He can be a tactless asshole with his comments, and my wife could be walking right back into more of that.

On the sofa together Saturday evening, once the kids are in bed and I'm scrolling through the movie options on Netflix, Kim snuggles closer to me.

"So, have you come to terms with your wife starting work on Monday?" she asks me.

"I'm just still surprised you'll be working at your Dad's," I shrug and glance at her. "I don't understand why you'd put yourself under that microscope."

“He never goes near that branch,” she says, “Mom says he’s only ever at head office these days. And then only once in a while. When he’s not on the golf course. But if I can do well at Millfield, he might get to hear about it. And I want to prove I can do it. To him. To myself. And to you.”

“To *me*?” I stare at her and half laugh, “Kim, what do you have to prove to *me*? You’re the best wife any man could have. And you’re a fantastic mother.”

“Maybe, but I want to do this,” she says and gazes right at me with those big green eyes, “and I want you to support me.”

“So who will you be working with there?” I ask with the TV remote still in one hand.

“There’s another couple of part-timers,” she shrugs, “Older women who do a different day or two a week each. And the branch manager, Malcolm John.”

“Malcolm?” I ask, a little more interested now, at the prospect at least of Kim with a male boss.

*Are you really that desperate, Gabe?*

“He’s about the same age as the women, I think. Late forties, I guess. He’s been with the business for a lot of years.”

“You know him?” My chest tightens. My overactive imagination swiftly and wildly concocts some fantastical, shady reason that Kim might want to work for her Dad’s firm at that particular branch, with that particular boss.

“Dad said I met him when I was a kid. But if I did, I don’t remember him.”

“Right,” I say as another stupid ‘fantasy’ gets quashed.

“Cheer up,” she says with a smile, and she kisses my cheek. She takes the remote from my hand. “I can still tell you those stories you’ve been looking forward to.”

“Stories?” *Does she mean what I think she does?* My pulse races.

“You know, if I catch some handsome house hunter checking me out,” she whispers, “Or if some divorced dad keeps finding reasons to drop by the office...”

“*Retiree*, more like, in Millfield,” I murmur, but her teasing has done its work, and my dick thickens in my pants.

Kim laughs and scrolls to the movies on our ‘Watch’ list.

On Monday, on the drive into the office, the highway stretches before me like a ribbon of asphalt. Rain speckles my windshield, not enough for continuous wipers but enough to blur the edges of everything. It matches my mood. I’m neither stormy nor clear, just a little unsettled. I reach for my travel mug and take a sip of lukewarm coffee, but grimace at the taste. Cleaning out the coffee machine was one job I didn’t get around to over the weekend. And I really should have.

The radio drones on about holiday shopping trends this year, and I probably should be paying more attention. But rather than think about the seasonal implications for my job, my mind keeps circling back to Kim’s first day at hers today.

Maybe I overreacted to the whole idea. Maybe working for her father is, like she says, exactly what she needs. A gentle re-entry into the workforce with a firm that’ll be totally sympathetic to her family commitments. And the flexible schedule, where she gets a say in what days she works each week, will be better for the kids. Especially if one of them gets sick or has a school event, or whatever.

Who knows anyway? Maybe she’ll get pissed off pretty fast with working there and soon start looking for another position somewhere else. I suspect a town as dull as Millfield would bore anyone under 60 out of their mind inside a week. And if that happens, then she might actively want something and somewhere a whole lot more ‘exciting’.

I signal and change lanes, passing a slow-moving truck. I’m pushing it for time. I’ve got a budget meeting for next year with the directors and the online team at nine o’clock.

*At least Kim's happy to enter into the fantasy with me again.* I should be pleased about that. And I *am*. Plus, who's to say? Maybe she *will* get hit on by a single or divorced house hunter. Or maybe old Malcolm, her boss, might like the look of his sexy young part-timer.

*Assuming he's not shit scared of her old man.*

Traffic on the way home from the office is thicker than ever, and I arrive home later than I expect. My tea is in the oven, and Kim is in one of the bedrooms drying the kids after their baths.

"So how was your first day?" I ask in Leah's bedroom as Kim plugs the hairdryer in and positions our daughter down between her legs, Leah's in her PJs and little pink dressing gown.

"OK," Kim says and puckers her lips for me to lean over and kiss her. She's changed out of the conservative A-line skirt and knitted blazer she wore when she left this morning, and she's in faded jeans and a baggy sweatshirt. Her face still bears traces of light eyeliner, which these days, I'm not used to seeing her wear at home.

"Only OK?"

"I'm just tired after it," she says, "But it was good to get out into the world again for a full day," she shrugs, but doesn't look overly enthused about her time there. "The office is smaller than I expected," she raises her voice above the hairdryer now as she gets to work on Leah's dark mane. "Just two desks and a tiny kitchen."

"Was it busy?"

"Not at all," she shakes her head, "That was another thing that surprised me."

*So no 'Handsome house hunters' then?*

I resist making that comment out loud. And I refrain from saying 'I told you so' about how quiet the branch was. "Well, I guess it *is* Monday," I say instead. "Business will

probably pick up as the week goes on. But I don't know how busy the real estate market might be at this time of year."

"No," Kim says and feeds a lock of Leah's hair through her fingers. "One of the other women was in today as part of my induction. I learned all about the CRM system, and how to answer the phones, and I got a virtual tour of all the active properties."

"What's See-ar-em?" Harrison asks from the far side of the room, where he's quietly playing with a red toy car.

"It's how the customers get managed in Mommy's job," Kim calls back to him.

"What was the other woman like?" I ask.

"She was lovely," Kim smiles for the first time since I got home. "Hopefully, the staff trainer is similar. I've got a session with her this week, too, when she visits the branch."

"And Malcolm?" I ask after the freshly-dried Leah has run off into Harrison's bedroom with her little brother, "How was he?" I keep my tone casual, even though I am kind of curious. And maybe a little 'hopeful' too.

"Grumpy," Kim says and unplugs the hairdryer, "From what little I saw of him. He was out at property viewings most of the day. And then when he did speak to me, he seemed very particular about how things get done."

Great. Sounds like *he* can be ruled out of any 'storytelling' or fantasy play.

*Not exactly the exciting new start to her job I was hoping for.*

## Chapter Three

### Gabe

Wednesday mid-morning in the city, and the coffee shop buzzes with a real pre-holiday vibe. Baristas in Santa hats call out orders over the din of conversation and Christmas music. Fake snow frosts the windows, and garlands drape from the ceiling. I've got twenty minutes before my next customer meeting. The new branch of a boutique chain that opened last month, here in the mall.

This coffee shop uses my favorite - Miscela d'Oro - and I inhale the rich smell of a double shot Sicilian espresso, then cradle the little cup in my left hand. The warmth seeps through the ceramic into my palm as I read a routine business email on my phone.

It's Kim's second day at the estate agency today, and she's got her session with the staff trainer at some point too. Hopefully, that might help her feel a little more positive about the job. It's one thing for me to feel a sense of disappointment about where she's ended up working, but I don't want her to hate it, too. Not when she was so looking forward to starting work.

But that miserable boss of hers seems to have put a downer on things. *You'd think he'd want to make her feel welcome when she's the big boss's daughter.*

Maybe I'll ask my Mom and Dad to babysit Saturday night, and I'll take Kim out. Celebrate her first week. And things will probably get better for her in the job as time goes by.

"What did you expect?" I mutter, closing up the email and now feeling sorry for myself again. That your wife would come home with tales of attempted seduction and temptation after her first few days? That working in some small-town real estate office would seriously magic up any of the erotic scenarios you've imagined?

A young couple at the table nearby breaks into laughter, and they lean into one another, their fingers intertwined on the tabletop. New lovers, maybe. I remember the

urgency and excitement of that. When Kim and I couldn't keep our hands off each other, when every touch felt electric.

I guess we still have plenty of good moments, 'great' ones even sometimes, but it can feel predictable. Maybe that's why my fantasies have grown over the years. Because they ignite uncertainty, danger, and a jolt of the unknown back into our relationship. The thought of Kim being desired by another man, but ultimately choosing me anyway?

Fuck knows.

There's no sense dwelling on it. Life is what it is. I should keep my focus on my career and on being the husband and father my family deserves. Stop nurturing impossible scenarios. *Be grateful you've got a wife who'll make shit up once in a while to entertain you in bed.*

I drain the last of my coffee, savor every last dreg, and then check my watch. Tonight is gaming night with the guys, our regular ritual of FC and beer, and it's at Rob's place tonight. Always a great way to blow off steam and take my mind off things.

My phone vibrates with an incoming WhatsApp message just as I'm rising from my seat. Kim's name appears on the screen.

*'Hey. Can you pick up kids from school and start dinner tonight? Been invited for drink after work. No worries if not. X'*

I stare at the message, reading it twice to make sure I got it right. I didn't expect this on day two. *Out for a drink? With who?*

I'll tell the guys I can't make Gaming night. My pulse quickens as I type a reply.

*'No problem. Who with? Not miserable Malcolm?'*

The three dots appear, disappear, then appear again. Then, finally, another message materializes. But it's a laughing emoji. It's followed by: *'Tell you later. Won't be late.'*

I set my phone down with my mind racing.

*Why didn't she say who?*

But maybe she *couldn't*. Maybe she was too busy to go into detail.

*Or maybe not saying was just her way of teasing me. Winding me up.*

But who *could* it be? I'm sure there's only her and that Malcolm guy in the office today. Unless it's the staff trainer, whatever her name is. She was due to make an appearance at some point this week.

*Is that the sort of thing a female training person would do? Take a new recruit out for beers in the evening after work?*

Maybe, if the woman knows Kim's dad and wants to help my wife settle into the job.

If it *is* her boss, though, some middle-aged guy, even if it's all purely professional, then in a less formal, more relaxed setting, surely he'll cast his eye a little more closely over Kim?

*Unless he's gay.*

Conflicting emotions wash through me as I make my way out of the coffee shop and into the mall. Cautious excitement, arousal, but jealousy and mild anxiety too.

*Isn't this the sort of uncertainty and insecurity I wanted, though?* Kim interacting with other men, having experiences she can tell me about and tease me with through her 'stories'.

I weave my way between shoppers, with my laptop case over my shoulder, conscious that I'm wildly overreacting. But my overactive imagination is already spinning elaborate scenarios.

*Will this turn out to be nothing more than an innocent work drink? Or could it be the start of something more?* Malcolm might be a whole lot older, but that hardly means he'll be blind to Kim's beauty. And alcohol has a way of lowering inhibitions, opening doors to conversations that would never happen in the office. *Maybe he lets his hair down and*

*sheds that 'grumpy' boss demeanor as he schmoozes his attractive new office junior when he's got her in a social setting.*

"Take it easy," I tell myself as I check the GPS on my phone and approach the new boutique on foot. Maybe if Kim had ever shown the remotest interest in one of my buddies (or any other guy over the years, for that matter), then I wouldn't give a second thought to her going out tonight. "It'll be nothing more than a discussion or review of her work progress anyway," I mutter, "Or a conversation about some property listing or other". *The guy knows her father, for fuck sake.* I shake my head and smile to myself.

"You sure Kim won't mind us invading?" my buddy Rob asks later, as he unloads a six-pack of beer onto my kitchen counter. He didn't seem worried about it when one of the other guys had the bright idea of switching tonight's session to here instead of me having to pull out completely. None of them did. They all piled in on the suggestion and left me with little way to back out.

"Dude," Benny yells from one of the armchairs, "Gaming nights are sacred. Even Princess Kimberly knows that."

"Yeah, except for when you pull out of them because *your* wife says so," one of the other guys tells him, and everyone laughs.

"Kim's first week in the new job," I explain to Rob when he asks, "Her boss has been a bit of an asshole so far. Hopefully, some socializing with her coworkers will help her feel more at home there." I try to make it sound like she's not out just with her boss. Which, of course, she might not be. And I try not to make it obvious that the very same possibility has been on my mind since she first messaged me hours ago.

Zak, one of the other guys, who's got a boy in Harrison's class, must overhear, because he asks me how Kim's job is going. I give him a brief outline as the console gets loaded and someone rips open a big bag of nacho cheese Doritos.

*If the kids get a whiff of those, they'll soon abandon their tablets in Leah's room and come through here for their share.*

“Her boss a dude or another woman?” the newly-divorced Mike asks as the screen on the wall TV loads.

“Some miserable old guy,” I shrug.

“Oh, really?” Mike raises an eyebrow and exaggerates suspicion as he exchanges a look with Rob that I pretend not to notice.

“It’s just work,” I say, maybe a little defensively, but then add, “It’s her old man’s firm, isn’t it? Her boss knows Carl as well.”

“Are we playing this fucking game, or what?” one of the other guys moans.

“Just work,” Mike keeps up the mock-suspicion as the FC music starts, “That’s what my ex-wife said about her ‘Marketing dinners’ too.”

I laugh at his attempt to goad me.

“Duh, your ex ain’t Gabe’s Mrs though dude,” someone says to more laughter.

“You should be so lucky,” someone else mutters, but the game has started.

Mike holds up his hands and controller in mock surrender. “I’m just saying. Some women get a taste of freedom after being home with kids, and it can go to their heads.”

“Enough with projecting your trauma onto someone else’s healthy marriage,” Zak tells him and throws a Dorito at his head.

I force a laugh, but Mike’s words have hit some kind of nerve. Not because I believe Kim would ever do what Mike’s wife did and up and leave with the kids. I certainly don’t. But because maybe there’s a grain of truth about the ‘taste of freedom’ part. A couple of days into her new job, and she’s already extending her hours beyond the workplace. And possibly with another man.

*She’s told me she needs to ‘find herself’ again, hasn’t she?*

And the most unsettling thing about this is, part of me is thrilled at the unlikely possibility of Kim wanting 'freedom'.

But she probably had no choice other than to accept the invitation. I mean, it's her first week. She'll want to make a good impression, won't she?

The group of us falls into our usual rhythm of gameplay, trash talk, and beer. I try to focus fully and progress through the knock-out competition, but my mind keeps wandering to Kim.

*If it's her boss, where did he take her? Is she seeing a different, possibly more attractive side to him than the one she's complained about so far? Is she letting her guard down and maybe showing him another side of herself? Something other than the professional one she'll have tried to present so far at the office? That young, warm, and sexy Kim 'Moreno' I first got to know?*

"Earth to Gabe," Benny nudges me with his foot and gestures at the screen, "You're on again."

"Right, sorry, yeah," I mutter, gazing back at a virtual rendition of the Maracana stadium.

"You okay?" He asks. "You seem distracted tonight."

"I'm good," I grin. "Just a little tired. Work's always crazy this time of year in retail."

"He's worried about that wife of his out with her boss," Mike has another pop and, in response, gets a cushion over the head from someone.

The front door opens a little before 8:30 PM when I've settled the kids in bed and I'm watching two of the other guys play.

"Hey, Kim," someone says as I get to my feet.

"You guys behaving yourselves?" Her voice carries beyond me to the others as she closes the front door and slips her long coat off. I texted her earlier to warn her we'd

have company. Her hair is a little tousled and her face flushed, but she's as beautiful as ever, and that always makes me proud in front of any of the guys.

"Don't we *always* behave?" Someone asks her back as I peck her cheek.

She smells good, too. *Maybe like she freshened her perfume a bit as well.*

"Do you want me to heat your dinner?" I ask her.

"You carry on playing," she shakes her head and smiles, "I'll do the food myself after I get out of these clothes."

I watch her stride through towards the bedroom, and two of the guys do as well, even though she's only wearing her conservative A-line skirt and blazer. Her legs still look great even in low heels.

"How are the new work colleagues?" Mike asks her when she returns, changed into faded jeans and a thick gray jumper that hugs her boobs.

"They're good," Kim calls back, but diverts left toward the open-plan kitchen. "Tonight was only one, though. So 'colleague', singular. The company staff trainer. A woman called Bea."

"Bea?" I repeat, disappointed but a little relieved too.

"It was nice," Kim says, and appears right in the living room again. This time with a tumbler of water in one hand, "We had a good chat, and she gave me all the office low-down." Kim shoots me a strange little smile.

The microwave pings, and Kim turns back to the kitchen.

"Dude," Benny whispers and leans toward me on the sofa, "How come your Kim always looks so fucking hot?"

I just laugh, but despite my conflicted disappointment about who she was with tonight, I flush a little too.

*What would he or the others say if they ever found what went on in my head about my 'hot' wife?*

“So you got on well with Bea?” I ask later and slide under the covers next to Kim. The guys left a couple of hours ago, and any excitement about Kim being out without me tonight dissolved pretty quickly after she told me who she’d been with.

She looks right at me with those big green almond-shaped eyes, and then with a smile, she snuggles closer in her baggy pink t-shirt. “I feel a lot better about the job after spending time with her. Turns out she’s been with Dad’s firm for a few years too.”

“Well, that’s good,” I say. And at least I *think* it is.

“She knows exactly what it’s like going back to the workplace after raising children,” Kim says, with one side of her head on my chest now, “She did the same thing.”

“So is she a similar age to you?”

“No,” Kim laughs, and her head moves side to side on my chest. “She’s more like Malcolm’s age. But very glam. She does her makeup so good, and wears all designer clothes.”

“Right.”

*Kim sounds almost in awe of her.*

“She was talking to me about clothes, too.”

“She doesn’t expect you to buy designer outfits too, does she?”

“No,” Kim laughs again. “She just says in our business, women should lean into their assets to get a real edge.”

“Meaning what?”

“She said I have an incredible figure, and should play it up a bit more,” she shrugs, and the movement causes one side of her t-shirt to slip away from her shoulder and expose the flesh there.

*The other woman sounds like a lesbian.* But I like what she’s saying.

“She’s right,” I say, and have trouble swallowing.

“I knew *you’d* like that,” Kim smiles up at me, and then rolls her eyes, but kisses my chest.

“Is she married?”

“Uh-huh,” Kim nods, and one of her hands slides down my belly to the front of my shorts.

*Great. She’s horny. Not unusual for her after a few glasses of wine.*

“Bea said that when I’m ready to show properties, then a few what she called ‘well-chosen’ outfits would make all the difference to sales. With buyers and clients alike.” Kim gives me that dirty smile of hers as her hand disappears into my shorts.

My cock firms right up, and I groan. “I’m surprised at your dad’s trainer giving you advice like that,” I gasp as my erection is gripped, “Uhh, sounds a pretty dated attitude. Uhh, although I like it.”

*Is she making this up? Telling me a ‘story’?*

“Bea’s ‘old school’ I think,” Kim whispers as she masturbates me, “But she must be highly thought of in Dad’s firm. She knows what works.”

“Uhh,” I groan again and close my eyes to concentrate on the sensations. *Kim’s always been so good with her hands. The best.*

“She said if I dressed to highlight my best features, I could wrap Malcolm around my little finger, too.”

“Malcolm?” My eyes snap open, and I try to make sense of what she’s now saying.

“She was asking how he’d been with me.” Kim gazes right back up at me from my chest, her hand still stroking me.

“What did you say?”

She *is* making this up.

“I told her he doesn’t say much to me.”

“What did she think about that?” I ask, and continue to indulge her with her game.

“She laughed and said he’s probably attracted to me,” Kim shrugs and smiles. Her other hand cups my balls.

The statement, fictional though it undoubtedly is, lands like a stone dropped in still water, ripples of exciting but frightening implication shoot through me.

“What makes her say that?” I manage with my mouth drying up. But I tug at Kim’s t-shirt and she helps me drag it over her hips and up the olive flesh of her body toward her boobs.

“She said he doesn’t have a happy home life, she said his moodiness will be because he knows I’m the boss’s daughter and so off limits.”

*Should the staff trainer even be talking to Kim about another employee’s home life?*

“Er..., and you’re *married*,” I say as resentment tussles now with excitement in my gut at the phrase ‘Off Limits’. But I bare her tits and lean over her, sucking her dark, stiffening nipples. “Plus, you’re a whole lot younger than him, from what you’ve told me.”

“He’s old, but he looks after himself.” Kim gives me a sly smile from on her back now and maintains eye contact as she jacks me and fondles my balls.

*Is she saying he’s well-built?*

I groan again.

*Crap, her hands feel so good.*

“Fucking hell, Kim,” I grab my cock from her and use a knee to spread her thighs. Then I shove my shorts right down and push deep into her heat.

“Ooohhmm,” she moans, and the back of her head sinks deep into the pillows.

“Uhh, how did you feel when Bea told you that? That Malcolm might secretly be into you?”

“Mmm, surprised. Ooh, but I guess the taboo is exciting.”

“Taboo?” The word throws me off my rhythm, and I peer down at her.

“Mmm, don’t stop. You know what I mean. He’s worked for my Dad a real long time.”

*Oh, fuck.*

“So are you going to dress to show off this ‘incredible’ figure?” I goad her as I withdraw several inches, then thrust hurriedly back into her, “Like Bea says? Wrap him and your clients around your little finger?”

“Uhhmmm,” Kim moans, her eyes screwed shut as I grip her hips and smack into her. “Bea says he’ll be treating me differently from the other women in the office, uhhmm, be more demanding with me, criticizing, uhh, because he wants to create distance between me and him.”

“Oh, God, yeah,” I groan into her neck and jerk my hips, slap hard into her, “Because he doesn’t trust himself if he gets too close to my wife.”

“Uhhmm,” she moans, and her mouth is hungry, urgent as it seeks mine.

“I’d love you to tease him in the office, Kim,” I pant into her neck when my mouth is free of hers again.

*'Taboo.' That's hot.*

She pushes her hips back at mine.

“Dress to show yourself off to him, Kim. To clients, too. Oh, God, Kim, yeah, yeah.” I cum before she has the chance to, and I cling to her; my body in spasms of pleasure as she kisses my face.

## Chapter Four

### Gabe

The office is warm for so late in the year, and the white ceiling fan above my desk turns lazily, doing little to dispel the heat of my thoughts. Outside my window, the winter sun gleams weakly on car windshields in the parking lot - including my new, red company Mazda. In front of me, my desktop screen glows with unread emails, the cursor blinking impatiently at me like an accusing eye. The hum of the HVAC system always provides a white noise backdrop that usually helps me focus, but today it only reminds me how distracted I am.

I can't concentrate. Not with what Kim said last night, still spinning through my mind like some carousel I can't step off.

I mean, I still don't know how much of it was true. Even though she didn't retract *any* of it after sex when I asked. It's still possible that it's some fancy deception, designed to arouse me. She knows what I like, doesn't she?

Well, *some* of what I like.

Perhaps just parts of what she told me are true. She could have exaggerated others. Like what that Bea woman said about her boss being attracted to Kim, or him not being happy at home. Or the bit about him looking like he works out, or whatever it was she said. And I mean, even if he does think Kim's hot, and she thinks he's in good condition or whatever, for an older guy, nothing could ever happen there, could it? Not in her Dad's firm. Not when he's one of Carl's long-serving employees.

Even if she honestly *does* find the 'taboo' of that exciting.

For a moment, I consider the statement she made along those lines. But then smile at the naivety of my imagination over the last twelve hours or so. At how Kim has stoked it.

*But what about the supposed suggestion she dresses to ‘make more of her assets?’ Even that could be real hot. Knowing her boss might be guiltily getting turned on looking at my wife all day. And clients coming in to check her out that way, too.*

*Isn't that exactly what I wanted?*

My dick twitches under my desk. I'll soon find out if *that* part of what she said is true, won't I? If she starts changing her appearance for work. She's not in there today, so I'll have to wait for that, though.

The leather of my ergonomic chair creaks as I shift, trying to find comfort that doesn't come easily. The fabric of my suit pants feels constricting across my thighs today, too. I open another button on my polo shirt, but I'm not sure if it helps. The air in here feels thick, almost unbreathable.

“Gabe, what time will you have those revised Q1 26 projections for me?” My boss, company founder Jay, asks, and I jolt at the sound of his voice, nearly knocking over my coffee mug. He's standing in the doorway in one of our Amen-D t-shirts and dark jeans.

“Just going through my emails, then I'll get back to it, if that's OK? Will 11 o'clock be alright?”

*I could have gotten in earlier today, I guess, but it was late when I finally did get off to sleep last night.*

“Yeah,” Jay nods his head of shaggy hair. He slaps my door frame with his palm and then saunters away.

I could do a lot worse for a boss than him. He and his business partner have been patient with me since they recruited me. Jay knows I'm still behind with my sales target for this year. He could be an asshole about it, but he never really leans on me. That only makes me feel guiltier about it, though. And makes me all the keener to turn things around by the end of next month. If I can. But it's a big ask now.

I rattle off several email replies and then return my attention to next year's budget. This year's was already set when I took the risk of joining Jay's start-up, but next year's target will be pretty much down to me. So I'll definitely need to hit that.

My mind right now, though, still keeps circling back to last night. And not just to what Kim said.

There was something about having the guys around while she was out and the shit Mikey was chatting about it that unsettled me. It put me in mind of my ex, Ella, and some of the crap she tried to spread about me when we split. At my old college, before my family moved out this way. Telling her girlfriends about my 'weirdo' cuckolding fantasies and how she thought they meant I could 'secretly' be gay, or bi.

I managed to laugh it off with my then-buddies. I told everyone she just got pissed because we barely made out anymore. Because she knew she didn't 'do it' for me. But what she said hurt at the time. And the memory of it isn't something I like to dredge up. It's hard sometimes, though. Like when I'm making love to Kim and I'll wonder why having a beautiful woman like her in my arms can't be enough for me. Why is it that I have to imagine another guy with her instead?

At lunchtime, even though I've finished the budget revisions and given them to Jay, I return to my desk with a sandwich from the vending machine, instead of joining the online sales manager and others in the break room.

LinkedIn loads on my desktop, and I log in. Then I type 'Malcolm John' into the search bar. I can't help myself.

Several profiles pop up. I add 'real estate' and then 'Moreno's' to narrow it down. My heart rate picks up as I gaze at the screen.

*There he is.*

Clean-shaven head with a fairly square jaw. The latter softened a bit by some jowl. A hint of stubble, too. A smile that looks rehearsed, like it's masking irritation, not projecting natural charm. He's in a navy blue sports jacket and an open-necked white shirt.

*Thick neck.*

A sense of disappointment drops through me.

*But what did I expect? The guy is in his late forties, isn't he?*

His profile doesn't seem to mention his age.

I scroll through it. He's been with Moreno's almost since its inception. He's into rugby, which is a bit niche. And seems to have even played it at semi-pro level at some point. I click through to his 'recommendations', scanning the paragraphs of praise. 'Hard-working,' 'determined,' 'gets results.' One female doctor writes: 'Malcolm at Moreno's made selling my home a pleasure rather than the usual stress.'

*Yeah, whatever.*

I take a sip of bottled water and open another browser tab. Facebook, where I search for more personal insight on the man who *might* have been admiring my wife this week.

His profile there is only semi-private, and without a mass of content. Nothing very recent either. But there's enough to fuel my imagination.

A selfie of him grinning on the sidelines of some rugby or football game with a few other guys. Big arms in a t-shirt, but he looks a few years younger than in his LinkedIn photo. And he's got a bit of a belly on him there, too. A few of him suited and booted with several other guys, and one or two with a woman. She's fairly pretty, but not shapely like my Kim.

I take a bite of my sandwich, but the turkey is a little tasteless. I'm sure the label mentioned 'Cranberry sauce'.

Malcolm doesn't look like the type of man who ever featured in any fantasy of mine about Kim. Yeah, I guess he's masculine, and maybe physically imposing, but he's a whole lot older. Still, now that I've seen him, the guy who supposedly 'likes the look' of my wife, at least he's *real*, not just a faceless character that I have to try to imagine.

Something uncomfortable crawls under my skin, though. A strange mix of excitement and dread that I can't quite put a label on.

But the guy works for *her old man*. And he doesn't *look* stupid.

I don't even know why I'm wasting my time doing this.

I shake my head and close his profile. Click on the other open browser tab and LinkedIn again. I search there for 'Bea Whittaker', the staff trainer, then wipe grease or fat from my fingers onto a paper napkin.

Her profile shows a highly polished female, surely in her fifties, with sleek, jet black hair, heavy eye makeup, and the kind of smile that could sell ice in Alaska. She looks professional and poised, but with something kind of calculating in her eyes. Too many glowing testimonials about her to read too. She's been in real estate for a lot of years too, and at Moreno's for over eight.

Her Facebook, though, reveals a whole lot more than his.

Photos of her on her own and with other women at what look like expensive restaurants, glasses of red wine reflecting candlelight, on tropical vacations showing tanned limbs on white sand beaches. Always perfectly made up, and with an ample amount of what looks fake cleavage on show. Some of her with a guy around her age, too. He's not tagged, but presumably the husband.

"Meeting with Marketing in five, Gabe," Derek from finance pokes his head through my door, and I look up at him in surprise.

When he's gone, I check my watch, and I've been researching Kim's coworkers for over thirty-five minutes. Almost an entire lunch hour gone, consumed by this fixation.

I'm getting well ahead of myself. Reading too much into what are no doubt nothing but innocent comments. Building an elaborate fantasy on the flimsiest foundations.

"...and then the little fish swam back to his mommy and daddy, and they all lived happily ever after," I finish the story and close the cardboard book with a soft thump. The scent of oranges from the children's shampoo and the smell of their clean cotton pajamas fill Harrison's small bedroom as Leah climbs off the bed with me, and then I tuck Harrison in and kiss him 'goodnight'.

I follow my daughter to her pink room and wait until she's settled down before kissing her too and heading into the hallway, then downstairs.

Kim's in the kitchen at the sink and washing the dinner dishes. She's in tight light brown leggings with her oversized sweatshirt tonight, and the former hug every luscious curve of her lower body. They don't do anything to calm the fantasies I've stoked all day.

"You want a green tea?" I ask her and she nods her head and dark ponytail. She moves aside a little so I can fill the kettle, and as she does, her sweatshirt slips off one shoulder and reveals her olive skin and a bottle-green bra strap there. When I move away from the sink again with the filled kettle, my groin brushes against the soft warmth of her hip and sends heat pulsing through me.

*I hope she's in the mood for sex again when we get to bed tonight.*

"So will you be taking Bea's fashion advice tomorrow for work?" I ask and lean back against the worktop to look at her while the kettle boils.

She laughs and peers back over at me, "Seriously? That's what you're thinking about right now?"

"I can't help it," I shrug, but push back off the worktop and walk across to her again. "I'm just curious," I say and wrap my arms around her from behind. I nestle my rousing groin in the heat of her ass cheeks.

"Gabe, you're not curious. You're just dirty." She shakes her head, but I kiss the back of her neck, "And *obvious*," she adds.

"So what are you going to wear?" I whisper, my voice rougher than I intend.

*Let's see if she made the whole thing up, or not.*

"Probably similar to what I did earlier in the week," she shrugs, and then finished with the dishes, she dries her hands on a tea towel.

Disappointment floods me as she moves away from me.

“How come?” I ask, hoping against hope that my worst fears aren’t true. That she didn’t make everything up.

“Kettle’s boiled,” Kim’s almond-shaped eyes indicate.

“Yeah, right,” I say and head for the cupboard where the mugs are kept.

“I don’t have anything much different that I can still get into anymore,” she says from somewhere behind me. “Not since the kids. Nothing suitable for an office anyway.”

I peer back at her, and she’s pulling a couple of teabags from the tin we keep them in.

“I’ll take you shopping and we’ll buy something,” I say with my heart accelerating now.

“Before tomorrow?” she laughs.

“Well, not this late, no. But at the weekend,” I take the teabags from her and drop them into the mugs, then fill them with hot water.

“I’ve probably got something a *bit* shorter I could wear,” she says, and when I look up at her, she’s smiling over at me.

“I’m *sure* you have,” I say, and on fire now, I leave the drinks on the worktop and head back over to her. I pull her to me, “Tighter too around these?” My hands curve around her hips, squeezing her gently there. And then one of her cheeks.

“I don’t want to knock anyone sick,” she says.

“Are you kidding? Your staff trainer told you, didn’t she? Your body is amazing. Guys look at you as much now as they did when we were dating.”

“You’re biased,” she says, but I can tell she’s pleased by the way her lips curl up at the corners, and the slight flush on her cheeks.

“I’m observant,” I say and kiss her on those lips. Her mouth is soft, but this conversation has me anything but. I press my dick against her.

“And you’re obsessed with other guys looking at me,” she says and reaches down to squeeze my hardness.

“Mmm, my hot wife, driving her clients and old boss crazy all day.”

“I doubt Malcolm would even notice what I wore,” she pouts, but she’s still squeezing my dick.

“Now you *are* kidding,” I say and kiss her exposed shoulder, around her bra strap. “Your staff trainer seemed pretty sure the old guy’s noticed you.” I scan her face for any obvious sign that she made that part of her conversation up.

“Since when do you trust the opinion of a woman you’ve never met?” Kim laughs.

*Since she’s suggesting what I’ve been fantasizing about for years, I think but don’t say.*

“I wouldn’t trust everything Bea says,” Kim eases out of my arms for her drink.

“Why not? What do you mean?” I ask as I watch her pick up one of the drinks.

“She told me she’s had an affair,” Kim shrugs and lifts the mug to her mouth.

“Affair?” I say and pick up my own drink. “Well, maybe she has.”

“Yeah, but she said it was one of the best things that ever happened to her marriage.” Kim looks right at me.

I don’t know how to respond.

“She said her husband never paid her as much attention as he did once he found out what she’d been doing.”

“Right,” my head spins as I search for the right thing to say.

“I could never do that, Gabe,” Kim crosses an arm over her chest with the mug in her other hand, “I could never have an affair with anyone. You do realize that, right?”

## Chapter Five

### Gabe

Faint morning light filters through our bedroom blinds and paints stripes across one of Kim's bare shoulders. She's still asleep, her dark hair fanned across the pillow, lips slightly parted. The digital clock on my nightstand reads 6:47 – thirteen minutes before my alarm is set to go off. It's Friday, and she might be relaxed about being back in work today, but I'm far from it.

I should get up, start the coffee, and wake the kids. Instead, I lie here watching my wife, a ridiculous anticipation coiled in my gut like a spring wound too tight. The sheets rustle as I shift closer, inhaling the warm sleep-scent of her breath and skin, the faint coconut of her shampoo.

She said she's got 'something shorter' she might wear today. *What? Crap, I wish I could be there in her office to see how much attention she gets when people come in.* And what if her boss *does* have the hots for her? If he doesn't have meetings or properties to show, she could be around him *all day*.

The recurring thoughts send jolts through me and stiffen my cock even more. But the quivering sensation inside me is equal parts excitement and anxiety. Not least of all, with what Kim also said last night about having an 'affair'.

Of course, when she said she could 'never' do that, I reassured her I wouldn't want her to. I said the whole word conjured up images of 'emotional complications', and she agreed. But internally, that topic being brought up by her staff trainer made me question exactly what it is I might ideally ever want Kim to do. I've spent so long fantasizing about stuff like this, but now that even the smallest suggestions of it might actually be playing out in real life, I'm not sure how to feel.

*There's an older, more experienced woman on the scene now who Kim seems to look up to, and who my wife certainly wants to try and learn from, and that woman is advocating extramarital affairs. As well as my wife dressing more provocatively for her job!*

My dick throbs under the covers.

Is this really what I want? Kim dressed to provoke desire, and being around other men all day? My wife mixing with *loose* women like Bea?

Or is it just what I *think* I want?

The alarm blares suddenly, jarring me from my thoughts. Kim stirs and moans as she rolls away from the sound, the sheet sliding down to reveal the smooth curve of her back in a red t-shirt. I silence the alarm and press a kiss to her shoulder, feeling the warmth of her skin against my lips.

“Morning, beautiful.”

She mumbles something unintelligible and burrows deeper into the covers. I can't help smiling at her reluctance, but I ease the covers away from her some more and then slip out of the bed. The hardwood floor is cold beneath my feet as I pull on sweatpants and pad to the hall to rouse the kids before heading for the kitchen.

I don't need to leave home until later this morning when I go to a client meeting. So I can drop the kids off and let Kim concentrate on getting ready for work. *And so I can see exactly what she's wearing for the office.* Not that I admitted that last part to her, of course. I don't want her to get uptight thinking I'm watching her every move. Not when she's uncertain whether she can still get into the clothes she has in mind.

The quiet morning routine with the kids calms and grounds me a little. I get the bowls, milk, and cereals from the cupboards, grab the orange juice from the fridge too, and measure out the aromatic ground espresso. I finally got around the cleaning the machine out. The rich aroma of coffee fills the kitchen as the kids eventually arrive and the espresso machine gurgles and hisses. Outside the kitchen window, the suburban street slowly comes to life. A guy over the road warms up his car, an old woman walks a dog in the distance, and an early morning jogger darts past in bright lime green.

By the time I return to our bedroom with a mug of coffee for Kim and the steam from it rises in lazy spirals, she's sitting up, checking her phone. The sheet is pulled up to cover her breasts in her t-shirt, and her dark hair tousled around her face.

She takes the offered cup with a grateful smile, and her fingers brush mine. I resist the pressing urge to ask her exactly what she's wearing and instead, head back to supervise the kids' breakfast some more.

Leah asks for fruit too, so I cut a pear up for her. My mind is elsewhere, though, as she and her brother chatter about their day ahead. I hear the shower run, then when I'm sitting at the table too, with my coffee and phone, I hear the hairdryer, and after that, I think, the closet door sliding open and closed. Each sound ratchets up my anticipation.

But the whole while, a little voice in my head tells me I'm being pathetic. Overreacting. 'Your wife's just getting ready for another day in the office.'

The kids are finishing breakfast, milk dribbling down Harrison's chin and Leah arranging her remaining fruit pieces by size on her plate, when Kim emerges.

The loose, silky white blouse looks similar to one she wore on Monday, and that's a disappointment. The skirt, though is not.

It's a pencil skirt that stops a couple of inches above her knees. I've seen her in it before, and it's hardly wild, certainly by what she'd sometimes wear before she had the kids. But as she moves through the kitchen, the charcoal gray fabric hugs her hips and thighs more than it ever did; it follows every contour of her lower body.

*A big change from the loose ones she's worn to the office so far.*

"You look pretty, Mommy," Leah beats me to a compliment as she peers up at Kim.

"So do you, honey," Kim smiles at our daughter.

But my wife is at the sink now, rinsing out her empty coffee mug, and the skirt is like a second skin around her perfect ass. The fabric pulls slightly across the twin round domes, not enough to be unprofessional, but surely enough that no man with a pulse could avoid noticing.

*Crap.*

“You do look Good, Kim,” I clear my throat and am conscious of the kids’ presence. I gaze lower at the backs of my wife’s shapely calves in her dark, ultra-sheer pantyhose. She’s in low heels again, same as earlier in the week.

“I just hope I can sit down OK all day in this skirt,” Kim half-laughs and collects her black leather shoulder bag from the back of a chair.

I might be mistaken (or maybe it’s just wishful thinking), but she seems to have made more effort with her makeup today as well. My heart pounds. Mascara darkens her already long lashes, there’s a hint of blush on her cheekbones, and her lips are glossed to a subtle shine. She’s got small gold hoops in her ears, too. I don’t remember those earlier this week.

“You’ll be fine,” I say and smile.

Harrison jumps up from his chair and barrels into her legs, nearly toppling her, his spoon clattering to the floor. “Sorry, Mom. Can we watch cartoons before school?”

The spell breaks. We’re just parents again, herding children, gathering backpacks, finding missing shoes. I supervise the brushing of tiny teeth and then, after I’m properly dressed and the kids have kissed Kim goodbye, I usher them outside for the short walk to school with me while my wife finishes getting ready. I’ve told Kim I’ll drop her off at the station to save her walking. I want to speak to her properly before she goes into the office.

By the time I get back home, she’s in the hall mirror touching up her lipstick. It’s just a shade darker than natural, but I imagine it’s enough to draw attention to her full mouth. I watch her for a moment with my heart pounding, leaning against the wall, drinking in the sight of her.

“You know any ‘ass man’ won’t be able to resist looking,” I say, and come up behind her. I nestle my groin against her warm cheeks.

*Crap, I shouldn’t have said that. I don’t want her to feel self-conscious.* I just couldn’t help myself. Our eyes meet in the reflection; hers are dubious, mine dark with desire.

She caps the lipstick and drops it into her purse. “Come on, if you’re taking me. I don’t want to miss my train.”

Later, the diners’ lunchtime special is meatloaf with gravy, so I order from the waitress. The air smells of fried food and coffee and the faint bleachy scent of whatever cleaner they used on the floors.

The food arrives a few minutes later, but even after I go heavy with the salt and pepper, it’s still not great as I sit on the red vinyl seat and chew. I’m between meetings now with two different retail buyers. I only pulled in here at this roadside cafe for a break. I’m not even that hungry. Maybe there’s something else I *do* need, though. Something to help me calm down and focus on business.

I’m being ridiculous, though. Kim will come home tonight, and nothing different will have happened to her at work. She’ll probably say no one seemed to pay any more attention to her because she was wearing a shorter skirt. Or that it was ‘too tight and uncomfortable’. And then, before you know it, she’ll be back to wearing loose outfits again, and another dream will be dashed.

I shove my plate aside across the Formica as one quiet country song takes over from another in the speakers. I guess it makes a change from Christmas songs.

My phone sits on the table beside my plate, tempting me again. I want to text Kim, to ask how her day is going. But she’ll know what my question really means. ‘Has your boss noticed your skirt?’ ‘Has any customer or client followed you with their eyes?’

*Crap. I can’t do this all day.*

The Formica squeaks as I rise and check for the washroom sign. It’s been a while since I beat off during working hours. But I need to flush this hopeless obsession out of my system.

The diner is half-full, mostly truckers and local workers on their lunch breaks. I weave my way around the other tables and through the door with the silhouette of the man on it.

There are two booths on the other side of it, and both are empty, so I make for the first and wipe the seat down before I sit and start playing with my stiffening dick.

*'It's not the end of the world if Kim just has a day like every other today. It's a work-in-progress. These things take time. At least she's doing what that other woman said, and she's wearing something a little more daring. That's all I could hope for. Making more effort with her makeup, too.'* I stroke steadily and visualize the way my wife dressed this morning. My breathing grows shorter as I imagine some nameless, faceless client checking her legs out as she discusses some property with him.

*She's been told she'll be trained to show properties to customers, too. So at some point, she'll likely be on her own with other men too, alone in empty houses.* I jack faster, imagine Kim propositioned. Faster still, imagine some guy who returns to their office continually, who gets her to show multiple properties, *someone she gets to know well, someone she likes, someone who, with my encouragement, she ultimately can't resist.*

I cum hard into a ball of toilet paper.

After I've flushed it away and my breathing recovered, the concept of my wife with another man feels like something strange and sick, something from a whole other dimension. I cast it aside and try to do the same with my dark sense of guilt.

Back home that night and Kim is chopping vegetables for her Mexican sauce that she always makes in two different batches. A real spicy one for me and her, and a milder one that even the kids can't resist. She loves cooking, and she's great at it. Way better than even my Mom.

The rhythmic domestic sound of the knife against the cutting board, and the kids' laughter from the living room area in front of the TV, is somehow soothing, at odds with so many of the perverse thoughts that consumed a lot of my day.

Kim is barefoot and with her pantyhose off too, looks comfortable in our kitchen, but is still wearing that tight work pencil skirt. The blouse has been replaced with a baggy jumper.

“The skirt obviously wasn’t too tight to wear all day,” I smile and gesture at the lower part of her outfit. A less than subtle way, I guess, of bringing up the skirt and whether it got her any additional attention. The sight of my wife, both domestic and sexy at the same time, always does something to me. Right now, it makes me want to slip my hands beneath her jumper or even under the skirt, to feel the warm skin I know is waiting there. Skin, I’m hoping to enjoy a little later tonight. Along with some fantasy talk about her day.

“Better be careful,” I say when she hasn’t answered, “You don’t want to get food on your work clothes.”

She shrugs, pushing diced onions into the simmering pot with the side of her knife. The aroma of garlic and tomatoes fills the kitchen, making my stomach growl after a lunch I barely touched.

“I won’t need it until next week now,” she says, “And anyway, I was thinking I might look for a new outfit over the weekend.”

My pulse jumps at her casual announcement. “I said I’d buy you something to wear,” I quickly remind her.

“I know. And I’ll have my own money coming in soon,” she says with a little smile and stirs the sauce with a wooden spoon. “So I’ll pay you back.” Steam rises from the pot, bringing with it more of that rich, garlicky scent. But I can’t concentrate on my sense of smell.

I move behind her, arms encircling her waist, the way I like to do, easing her back against my chest. And her butt against my groin. The heat from the stove warms my face, the heat from her body warms everything else. “No need to pay me back. So what kind of outfit have you got in mind?” I say with my lips close to her ear.

She laughs and leans right back against me, her body relaxing into mine. “Something that fits my Mom bod better. But whatever I choose will be decent, Gabe.”

“Of course,” I press a kiss to her neck, just below her ear, ignoring my sense of disappointment but inhaling her scent; a faint trace of coconut shampoo mingled now with

garlic and tomatoes and the underlying essence that's uniquely her. "I wouldn't have it any other way."

At least she's prepared to *look* for a new outfit. *When we're at the mall, I can try to influence what she chooses.*

She turns in my arms, wooden spoon in hand, careful not to get sauce on either of us. A drop falls to the floor though, a dark red splash against the white tile. "Sure, you wouldn't have it any other way," she gives me a doubting look.

The kids' arguing voices drift over from beyond the sofa, along with the sounds of whatever cartoon they're watching. I take advantage of the certainty that little ears won't hear.

"So...did you see anyone notice your change of image today? The tighter skirt?" I try to sound casual, but my voice betrays me, deepening with desire. I can hear it, and from the way Kim's left eyebrow rises, she can too.

She rolls her eyes and turns back to the stove. "You mean, was anyone looking at my ass?"

"Yeah," I say, not trusting myself to say much more without giving away just how much the thought affects me. My hands rest on her hips, thumbs tracing small circles on the fabric of her skirt.

Kim adds a pinch of herbs to the sauce from the small container on the counter. The dried leaves crumble between her fingers, releasing their own scent into the fragrant air. "Well, I wasn't sure whether to tell you this because I knew you'd overreact, but I think Bea was right about Malcolm."

"What do you mean?" I turn her around to face me again. My heart thumps and my dick surges in my pants.

"It didn't take much to brighten his mood," she smiles.

"Your skirt? He was *nicer* to you?"

“Uh-huh,” she says and gives me another little smile, “a lot. But I guess he’s got to know me more, now I’ve been there a few days too.”

*I want to know exactly what she means.* I need to hear *everything*, but then the kids are over here with us and arguing about the TV, and the moment is lost.

I find that missing moment again when Leah and Harrison are finally tucked up in bed, and I all but drag Kim into ours. I close the door. I’m desperate to know.

“So what happened?” I whisper, “With your boss.”

“Nothing much,” she shrugs then laughs.

“Nothing?” Disappointment floods me again, and my shoulders sag, “But you said..”

“Not unless you count catching him checking my legs out several times.”

“He did? You caught him?” My dick stiffens.

“You don’t have to sound so surprised,” Kim pouts.

“I’m not. No way is that a surprise. You’ve got great legs. I’ve always said that. Did you say anything to him about it?”

“What *could* I say?” Her eyebrows rise, “He’s the boss, isn’t he? I guess he can look at his employees anyway he wants.”

“Oh, fuck, Kim,” I whisper again, my mouth gone dry, all moisture seemingly evaporated in an instant. I’m conscious the kids could still be awake in their rooms, but I’m horny as hell regardless. I reach for the guilty skirt and start to unzip it down one side of her hip.

“We’ll have to be quiet,” Kim says softly and looks right into my eyes.

“You’re the noisy one,” I whisper and ease her skirt down over her ass. I moan and caress the silky bare skin of her hips and buttocks, both sides of her white lace panties.

Then I ease a palm into the front of the underwear, and my fingertips touch the heat between her thighs.

“Uhhmm,” she moans, and her eyelids flicker.

I unzip myself with my other hand, and then she’s helping me get my dick.

“I have to go out with him to show a property to customers next week,” she moans into my neck.

“Malcolm?” I ask and push two, then three fingers into her, up to my knuckles.

“Uhhmm,” she nods with her eyes closed.

“How come?”

*Does the thought of this old guy turn her on? Or is she saying this and acting just to please me?*

Her Dad’s the guy’s boss, for fuck sake.

“I have to learn how to do it,” she gasps, and then my dick is in her small fist.

*‘Taboo,’ though, she said the ‘taboo’ of him excites her.*

“Mmm, what exactly is your boss going to teach you?”

“To show properties,” she gives me a dirty smile, and when the expression slides from her face, her lips remain parted, her breathing shallow. Her closed eyelids flicker.

“You’ll have to dress real sexy for that, Kim,” I say to goad her, to see how she’ll react as she strokes me.

“Mmm, you wish,” she murmurs.

“Damn right, I do,” I say, and she, with her eyes still closed, smiles. I pull her over to the bed and we fall on it together. Both of us frantic and dragging her panties down, and

then in almost one movement, I push her right down on her back and her legs spread, then I'm inside her.

"Uhh," she groans, and her fingers drag through my hair.

"It's so hot to know he was looking at your legs, Kim."

"Uhh, uhh."

"Did you like it too? Knowing your boss was checking you out?"

"Uhh yeah, like I had power over him."

"Oh, fucking hell, Kim. Yeah, like he was powerless to resist my beautiful wife."

"Uhh, he's shown someone around the property before, uhh, he said they've got mistletoe hanging there, mmm, said it's company tradition that junior employees have to give their boss a Christmas kiss."

My entire body tightens, and blood rushes south so fast I feel light-headed.

*She can't be fucking serious. Or surely he can't. This isn't the 1970s.*

But the thought is too much, and I slap furiously into my wife, gripping her hips and racing to finish. Kim's excitement picks up the pace, too as her warm body writhes and bucks beneath me, and she clutches at me. She groans and cries in my face and then my ears, she pants, she gasps, and I reach for her mouth with my palm to quieten her. And then she cums. We both do. Almost in the same moment.

"You weren't serious before, were you?" I ask when the shower in our en suite is running to warm the water for her, and I'm getting changed to go watch some TV. "About that mistletoe thing?"

"I'm pretty sure he was joking," she says with a laugh as she hangs her skirt in the wardrobe. "He might be a moody sod, but there must be a sense of humor buried somewhere in him."

I nod and try to appear calm while my mind races with the possibility that some lecherous old schemer might fancy his chances of using the festive season as an excuse to get a grip of my sexy young wife.

Even surely, at the risk of his own employment.

I glance at Kim removing her sweater and bra for the shower, and images swirl through my head of her being embraced by some thick-necked, bald, middle-aged, and married chancer who I've never met. The visual is too vivid. Kim looking up at him, nervous but excited too, trembling at his large hands on her waist, pulling her closer...

As she said though, it was almost certainly a joke. And like I keep telling myself, the guy works for her old man. He'd have to be mad to try and get involved.

But even so, if she's alone with another man, someone who she's caught checking her legs out, someone she finds 'exciting', and they're together outside the office environment, showing customers around some property or other. Who knows what might eventually happen?

*And the thought of kissing my wife must have crossed his mind. Otherwise, why else would he have even mentioned it?*

## Chapter Six

### Malcolm

The vague but acrid tang of sweat mingles with that artificial pine disinfectant scent as I lower the barbell to my chest. I feel the burn spread across my pecs.

“Eight...” I grunt through clenched teeth and lift again, arms trembling a little as I push through the ninth and then finally the tenth rep. I rack the weights with a clang that echoes through the half-empty gym.

*Thank God that's finished.*

I sit up on the cushioned bench and reach for my damp, black hand-towel. I wipe my face down with it, then glance around the gym.

Some young newbie strains on the pull-up bars of the dip station over the far side, and that tattooed girl with the cropped orange hair is swinging a kettlebell. This place never gets busy Friday evenings. Why would it? Most people have lives to lead.

I stare at my reflection on the mirrored wall. My broad shoulders and thick arms might look good, but that paunch around my middle remains stubborn. No matter how many days a week I come here. I straighten my back and pat my gut. Maybe this is as good as I should expect. I'm forty-six. Hardly a kid anymore. I peer over again at the guy struggling on the dip station. *Still, I guess I can hold my own against a lot of men ten years younger than me, even now.*

I grab my water bottle and head for the showers with that familiar frustration bubbling up again in my gut. Friday evenings weren't always like this. My wife Bethan and I used to have a life. There was a time I couldn't wait to get home to her.

In the changing room, I strip my soaked vest off and toss it into my sports holdall. Then I do the same with my sweatpants and shorts. Naked, I grab my towel and shampoo and head through to the showers. Plenty of other guys would have walked out on a marriage like mine by now. God knows I've thought of it. But I married Bethan for better or for worse. And lately, the dial has been firmly pointed at the latter.

But you have to live in hope, right?

I let the shower water run for a minute or so and then step under. I close my eyes and let the hot water cascade all over and soak me. The relief is deep. I let myself think again about Carl's daughter.

The resentment about her being dumped on me still hasn't subsided. If I *have* to stay at that damn branch, then it should be *me* who chooses my employees. Every single one of them. Not have his family members dropped on me at short notice. And certainly not ones with so little real estate experience.

*But then that's typical Carl Moreno, isn't it? When did he ever do anything other than exactly what suits him?* I'm still waiting on the equity stake I was promised years ago, when I first joined. How many times have I asked him? But with him it's always just 'a matter of timing', or 'Legal complications', or 'financial pressures', or whatever. And yet he's always somehow able to conjure up those 'above average' pay rises to keep me shackled to his company. He knows all about my gambling debts.

An image of his daughter filters back into my head as I soap my balls. It's not just the extra workload of having a new junior around the office three days a week. The time taken to get her trained up so that she's useful, and being told to keep her working hours 'flexible'. *Like Daddy's girl is royalty or something.*

It's more than all that.

My penis thickens between my legs. With the state I'm in most of the time, having a young girl like her so close doesn't help my blood pressure. Doesn't help my purity of thought either. I mean, that skirt she had on today. And if she carries on dressing that way... The girl has the kind of hips my mother would have called 'child-bearing'. And that thought, too, twists in my gut like a rusted knife.

I shouldn't even be thinking about her body. But I bet she's never had to worry about fertility. Not like some couples do. Carl told me she has two kids already. Must be nice, everything coming so easily for you.

I soap under my arms and then my groin some more and wonder what her husband must be like. Probably some boy with a silver spoon in his mouth, and who her dad

approved of instantly. Not some working-class kid who dragged himself up by his own grit and determination, only to get hit by the bosses' glass ceiling.

How would Moreno and his precious son-in-law feel if they knew I'd spent several minutes this afternoon watching that girl of theirs reach for files from the top shelf? Or that I've noticed only too well the way her blouse pulls tight across her chest when she bends low to reach for the milk from the office fridge to make coffee. And how that floral perfume of hers lingers in the office, even after she's left.

A smile spreads over my face under the shower.

*But this is no way to think.*

I believe in marriage. The sanctity of it. Even mine, as hollow as it's become.

Our house is quiet when I push open the front door. The air smells of furniture polish and detergent. She's been cleaning again. Light from the TV flickers from over in the living room area, casting blue shadows across the rug there.

"I'm home," I call out and drop my gym bag by the door.

No response. But I know she's there. I can hear some reality show playing. I kick off my shoes and pad through to her in my socks.

She's on the sofa, lying in a similar position to the one I left her in this morning. Her gray-streaked hair is pulled back in a messy ponytail, and she's wearing the same baggy two-piece pink sweatsuit from yesterday. Two cans of diet soda stand on the coffee table in front of her.

"Hey," I say, softer this time.

Bethan looks up, her blue eyes taking a moment to focus on me. "You're late."

"I'm always later on Friday nights," I shrug, "Gym. Same as Tuesday and Wednesdays."

*And what would life be like without that place to let off steam?*

“Oh, yeah,” she says, and her eyes return to the TV.

“Have you eaten a proper meal today?” I ask her.

She gestures vaguely toward the kitchen. “I had salad earlier. I’ll do you some dinner, if you like.”

‘Salad’ is all she’ll ever admit to. But her size and weight tell a different story. As do the empty chip and chocolate bags I’m forever finding around the house.

In the kitchen, there’s some chicken in the fridge, so I open it and then go back through to double-check she doesn’t want any.

She says ‘No’ again.

For a moment, I watch her profile illuminated by the TV. There was a time when she’d light up just from seeing me come home. When she’d have a meal on the table, or maybe we’d cook together in the tiny kitchen we had back then, our first. Laughing and bumping hips in that small space. That woman seems like a stranger now, buried somewhere beneath the grief and all the extra pounds she’s put on over the last few years.

“I thought maybe we could go out over the weekend,” I try. “Get some fresh air. Maybe take a walk. Check out some of the wilder Christmas decorations in the neighborhood.”

She doesn’t look away from the TV. “It’s going to be cold.” She grunts.

“So? We could wrap up, warm,” I shrug, “I’ll put my arm around you. Or if you don’t fancy the outdoors, let me take you to my gym. Just to try it. I’ll do you an easy plan and you can...”

“No,” she says again, and with finality this time, and not a glance in my direction.

The word lands like a slap. I clench my jaw and try to keep calm.

“Beth, you can’t keep on like this. It’s not healthy for you. Dr. Patel said...”

“I don’t care what *he* said.” Now she looks at me, eyes flashing. “I’m not going to be gawked at by your gym buddies while I sweat like a pig on some torture device.”

“Nobody would gawk at you,” I say and shake my head, “We get all sorts of people in there, and no one cares. Everyone’s too busy doing their own thing. And anyway, it’s not about how you look in there, it’s about how you feel. Don’t you want to feel better?”

“What I *want*,” she shakes her head and returns her focus to the TV, “is for my husband to stop treating me like a pet project he wants to fix.”

“Bethan, I’m trying to help you.”

“Did I ask for your help?”

Later, in bed after a movie together, she has her back to me, but I slide a hand over her wide hip, then press my lips to her neck. Almost as much to make her feel desirable and wanted as anything else.

Her whole body stiffens immediately. “Malcolm, no.”

“It’s been *months*,” I sigh, but immediately regret the accusing tone.

“Maybe if I thought it was *me* you wanted,” she says.

“It *is*,” I say and sit up to stare at the back of her, “I’m here with you, aren’t I?”

“You’re groping because you’re horny, not because it’s me,” her voice catches as she speaks. “We both know you’re thinking of those videos you watch.”

“That’s not fair,” I sigh, but feel the fight drain out of me.

“Isn’t it? You think they’re easy to forget? All those skinny women? Younger women? That sick bondage stuff?”

“It wasn’t sick, it was just a little consensual tying up and spanking. There was a time you used to..”

“I don’t want to talk about any of that.”

“Look,” I try to pull her around to face me, “This isn’t about other women. It’s about us. About you not wanting to even try anymore.”

“Try?” She sits up with her voice rising and big breasts shuddering in her long nylon nightgown, “You think I’m not trying? You think I enjoy living in this body? You think I don’t know exactly what I lost every time I miscarried.”

*‘We’ - what ‘We’ - lost.* But her mention of that word has silenced me. The invisible third presence in our marriage. The kids we now can’t ever have.

Now she twists away again and almost violently in the bed.

I listen to her still-rapid breathing beside me, and I wonder how we became strangers sharing the same bed.

*When did the adventurous young woman I married disappear? When was she replaced by a bitter shell who uses her body as a shield and a weapon?*

The digital clock on the nightstand reads 2:17 AM, its red numbers casting a demonic glow across the rumpled bedsheets. Bethan’s soft snores fill the silence as I lie flat on my back, hands folded across my chest like a corpse at a viewing. My body is exhausted from the gym, but my mind races like a hamster on a wheel; running furiously but getting nowhere.

Maybe if I hadn’t been so distracted by my job or by the gambling, then I’d have prevented this from happening to our relationship.

*But then again, maybe I threw myself into working and betting to forget my home life.*

I still love her, of course I do, but how many times have I suggested therapy? Either for her, or for us as a couple. I’ve tried patience, encouragement, and even tough love. Nothing penetrates the fortress of grief or whatever it is she’s built around herself.

A car passes outside, its headlights briefly illuminating the bedroom ceiling before sliding away, leaving me in darkness again. In that brief flash, I think again of Carl’s

daughter. Her smile, the sound of her embarrassed laughter when I teased her about mistletoe, her long, supple legs. The shape of that young body under her skirt and blouse. Being around her has stirred something in me that I thought was dead.

*Is it really wrong to want more than I have? Surely I deserve more than this.*

Fifteen years of faithfulness despite how difficult these last few years have been, and now here I am - lying awake but dreaming about my boss's daughter like some middle-aged cliché.

*Could the Lord really blame me if I sought elsewhere what's denied me at home? From some other willing woman. Perhaps one who feels as neglected in her relationship as I do. At times, I've seen other women look at me. Some females actively find bald men attractive. The thoughts slip in before I can stop them, insidious and tempting. Not that a happily married girl the age of Carl's daughter would be interested in a man of forty-six. But I'm a healthy male with natural needs: physical and emotional. Isn't it a God-given human desire to feel wanted? To touch and be touched, without either feeling like an obligation or a chore?*

I squeeze my eyes shut tighter, trying to banish the images of young Kim. I go to church every Sunday. I believe in my vows. For better or worse, in sickness and in health. This is just the 'worse' part, the 'sickness' part. It'll get better. It has to.

*But what if it doesn't? What if this is all there is for the next twenty years? A wife who can barely stand my touch, a dead-end job at a branch no one cares about, working for a man who's broken just about every promise he ever made to me?*

I turn away from Bethan and curl onto my side. But again, my thoughts circle back to Kim, to the curve of her hip in that skirt today, and my left fist circles my erection.

*Midlife crisis. That's what this is. Classic symptoms - fantasizing about younger, unattainable women, resentment about career stagnation, questioning life choices.*

Knowing what I'm feeling, though, doesn't make it any easier to bear.

The clock now reads 2:43 AM. In four hours, I'll get up on Saturday morning, shower, put on my game face, and go back to the branch. She won't be there to torment me tomorrow.

*But imagine if she were, and if she was willing.* I stroke gently so as not to wake my wife.

*And imagine the satisfaction of knowing she's Carl's daughter.* I moan softly to myself in the dark.

## Chapter Seven

### Gabe

The usual swarm of weekend shoppers at the mall is swollen because of the time of year. Christmas decorations twinkle overhead, and piped music is everywhere as Kim and I stroll hand in hand past storefronts. Luckily, we don't have to negotiate the crowds with the kids around our ankles. We dropped Leah and Harrison off at my in-laws en route.

Since we've been here at the mall, we've picked up one or two additional Christmas presents, but my pulse quickens every time I think about the real reason I wanted to come. To buy my wife clothes that will help her 'wrap her boss around her little finger,' as Bea put it.

*Although, if he's already checking her legs out and making comments about kissing her, then it sounds like Kim's already making progress.*

My dick shifts in my pants again at the recollection of what she told me last night. And at her willingness to buy something 'more comfortable' that will 'show off' her 'assets' next week. Including when she's out of the office with her boss. *And* my dick throbs too at what clothes I might be able to influence her to choose today.

"What about trying that place?" I point to a womenswear store with mannequins in the window wearing sleek, form-fitting dresses and skirts, as well as the ubiquitous and colorful party gear.

Kim eyes the display skeptically. "Hmm. I'm not having anything slutty though."

"Slutty can be good," I say in her ear, but try to keep my voice casual despite the heat rising up my chest.

Kim rolls her eyes, but lets me lead her into the store.

Inside, I hover near her as her fingers click through racks of dark skirts, and my pulse thumps. The thought of my wife dressing to deliberately attract her bosses' attention,

as well as catch the eye of male customers and clients, makes my stomach twist with that familiar mix of excitement and apprehension. Even if we both know that any ‘attention’ she gets would never go any further.

*The ‘taboo’ of her boss excites my wife, though. She’s caught him checking out her legs, and he’s obviously imagined kissing her.*

“In some ways, I’m still surprised your Staff Trainer even suggested different clothes,” I say as I gaze down at her ass in her tight jeans and imagine her boss doing the same if he were here.

Kim laughs and holds a navy skirt against her hips. “What? You think my dad wouldn’t approve of female employees using every trick in the book to win business? He’s not exactly ‘woke’, is he?” She turns to check her reflection in a nearby mirror.

Yeah, but it’s OK even for his *daughter*?

She smooths the fabric over the curve of her hip, and as she does, my balls bristle.

“This is nice,” I say, and from another rack select a short plain black dress in her size and with a neckline that looks like it might show cleavage too. “Why don’t you try it?”

“Gabe,” she shakes her head, “It’s nice not feeling invisible anymore, but that doesn’t mean I’ll be wearing a cocktail dress for work. And *that’s* a size 6. Not 8”

“Invisible? What do you mean by that? And I thought you were a size 6 anyway?”

“You know,” she shrugs, “There was never any point dressing nice when I was at home all day with the kids. And yes, I *was* a size 6. Before I got pregnant.”

“Oh, right,” I say as she chooses a skirt and blouse and drapes them over one arm and then continues to search.

I move further through the store and find a selection of pencil skirts, similar to what she’s been wearing this week. A lighter color might be good. Gray? *It would show off the contours of her ass and her hips even better than a dark one.*

My cock thickens in my pants, and I pick out a size 8.

Then I spot a short black design with a side split.

*Fuck.* They've got an 8 in that too, so I take both to her.

She's not sure about either, but reluctantly takes them with the clothes she's chosen, and disappears to the fitting rooms.

When she emerges in a navy dress a few minutes later, my mouth goes dry. The dress hugs every single curve, and stops mid-thigh to reveal a lot of her toned legs. The neckline is modest enough for any office, but she looks fantastic in it.

"Jesus," I murmur.

"Too much," she says immediately, turning away from me to a mirror and rotating my view of her prominent butt. "I'd feel like I was trying too hard," she tugs at the hem. Then, before I can counter with encouragement, she disappears back into the fitting room.

I wait some more, and she eventually emerges in a silky white blouse tucked into a dark pencil skirt, the latter as short and almost as clingy around her lower body as the old one she wore this week.

I gesture for her to turn, and when she does, although the blouse is loose, it shifts tantalizingly around her chest, drawing the eye to the shape of her tits.

"The blouse is really nice," I say with my heart thumping.

"I didn't like the color of that gray skirt you picked out," she says, gazing at her reflection, "But I tried the other one on quickly in there, and it looks OK on me. I think I'll get that, as well as this one and the blouse."

*The skirt with the split! She's getting the skirt with the split that will show more leg.*

Carl's living room smells like cinnamon and pine from the massive Christmas tree dominating one corner. It's as big as some we saw today around the mall. Classical music plays softly in the background. Carl's taste, not Kim's mother Jess's. The kids are already gathering their things, buzzing with sugar energy from the cookies their grandmother has no doubt slipped them before and after lunch.

"And just like that, we've added the whole group to our client base." Kim's petite younger sister, Rosa, is here too now, wearing a pale purple jogging suit and on her way back from the squash club. "From Q1 next year."

"Quite remarkable," Carl beams at her, then peers over at us from his dark green leather armchair. "You guys hear that? The Queen of digital marketing is at it again."

"Yeah," Kim says, and when her Dad turns back to Rosa, my wife rolls her eyes at me. "We heard. Sounds great." Her arms cross over her chest, and she stands alongside me in her angora wool jumper. The shopping bags from our mall trip sit at her feet. I place a hand on the small of her back, just above her jeans, to show her I know how she's feeling. And that I sympathize.

"Ready to round the 'troops' up then?" I ask quietly.

She nods, but her eyes remain on her chatting father and sister. The muscle in Kim's jaw tightens, and I've learned over the years that it means she's holding back her words.

I separate Leah and Harrison from the toys Kim's Mom and Dad keep here for them, and we get the kids into their coats, ready to leave. A phone rings before we do, though, and Jess tells the caller that Kim and I are here with the kids and just leaving.

"Can your Dad or I give you a call back, Seth?" she asks my wife's brother. But Carl hurriedly kisses the kids goodbye and then gestures for the phone. He waves goodbye to Kim and me and takes the call.

In the car, my wife is unusually quiet. She stares out the window at the early evening as streetlights flash across her face. The kids chatter in the back about their grandparents' Christmas tree and ask us when we're putting ours up.

“You okay?” I ask and reach across to squeeze the knee of her jeans.

“Fine.”

“Kim...”

She sighs and turns to face me. “It’s *all the time*,” she shakes her head, “I get one uninterested question asking how my first week in the job went, and then it’s all ‘Queen Rosa’ and her business, or Seth’s job when he calls. Nothing I ever do will be good enough.”

“Of course it will,” I half-laugh at the severity of her frown as I drive. “What you are already is plenty good enough for your Dad and Mom.”

“You saw how he was with the other two,” she says softly, “as usual.”

“Yeah, but you’ve only just started work. They’ve been in their jobs for years. And it’s not just the *careers* of his kids that he cares about.”

“You reckon?” she mutters under her breath.

I drive in silence for a moment, considering her words and how I can encourage her. “You’re learning about the business every day you’re there now, aren’t you?” I say. “Your Dad will soon see how good you can be at that job.”

“I don’t know why I even worried about what sort of impression I make there,” she says and glares ahead through the windscreen, “I doubt he’d care either way.”

## Chapter Eight

### Gabe

The soft click of our bedroom door feels like a sanctuary. The kids are finally asleep, their little bodies surrendered to dreams after their usual lengthy bedtime rituals.

I watch Kim from our bed as she hangs her new clothes up in her wardrobe and then takes off her jeans. She's shown me what the skirt with the split looks like when she's wearing it. My cock is still hard under the bed covers because of it. Even if, in an ideal world, the skirt would be shorter and the split several inches longer. Then, it would show *all of* her right thigh. But it does show some. And that's so hot.

She lets her long, wavy, dark hair down completely, then undoes her peach-colored bra, and her olive-skinned breasts bounce free. I touch myself gently under the covers.

"What?" she asks in an accusing tone, but looks over at me with a smile playing at the corners of her mouth.

"Just looking, and thinking there's no point you putting a t-shirt on yet. I'm only going to rip it right off you."

"You reckon?" she laughs and peels down her matching panties. The dark mood that came over her at her folks seems to have washed away now.

"Fuck, I love your body," I shake my head at her and beckon her to the bed in all her glory.

She laughs again and comes to me.

"And I'm thinking about the effect you'll have in your office in those new clothes we bought," I say, and pull her soft, silky warmth into my arms. My voice sounds steadier than I feel. "Especially the one with the slit up the side."

"Just because *you* chose that one," she says with my arm around her.

*Am I playing with fire? How much must her boss like the look of my wife if he's suggesting things like 'Christmas Kisses' to her, and in doing so, maybe even risking her reporting him to her Dad?*

Even if it was only said in jest.

And still her words about the 'excitement of taboo' echo endlessly around my head as well. As does her comment about him 'looking after' his appearance, or some such phrase. *I saw for myself online how well-built the guy is.* Even if he is bald. And she 'enjoyed' catching him checking her out, didn't she? It made her feel 'empowered' or something similar.

Now that we're alone at last, the insistent thoughts send equal measures of exhilaration and fear coursing through me. My heart pounds and my stomach clenches. I kiss her bare shoulder and feel her bare thighs against me. Flesh that Malcolm and others will get an even better eyeful of next week.

"I've been thinking again about that house viewing you have with Malcolm next Friday."

"You *have* been doing a lot of thinking, haven't you?" Kim's green, almond-shaped eyes peer up at me.

"And the company tradition," I swallow hard, "with mistletoe."

*Am I really doing this? Encouraging my wife to let another man kiss her?*

Kim laughs, the sound both somehow musical but maybe slightly nervous too. "You're still thinking about that?"

"Aren't you?" I counter and move position so that I can lean over her a little, then I shift her arm so that I can kiss her tits.

"Mmm, it was obviously a joke, Gabe." But there's something in her tone that makes me wonder if she's trying to convince me or herself.

“What if it wasn’t?” My words come out rougher than I expect and betray my excitement.

*This is insane. This is my wife.*

But as I suck on her hardening nipple, I can’t stop the terrible images flooding my head. Kim pressed against the big older guy, his hands where no other man’s should ever be. “That new blouse makes these look better than ever, too,” I say around her tits.

“Mmm, he wouldn’t try it,” she insists, ignoring my last comment about her tits, but moaning again and arching her back. “He didn’t mean what he said.”

“What would you do if your boss did try, though?” I swap nipples and suck there even harder, “if he tried to kiss you under the mistletoe in some strange house?”

“Uhh, mmm, What could I do?” she says, her voice dropping to a jagged whisper. “He’s the boss, isn’t he? I have to do as he says.”

*Fuck.* The words hit me like a physical force. I struggle to breathe, to think clearly through the fog of crimson desire.

*This is dangerous territory. Surely? Like quicksand. She can’t mean what she said. But what if she does? And if she lets him. If she lets him, and she likes it? If they both like it. If one kiss leads to more?*

But it wouldn’t. Why *should* it?

Either way, I can’t bring myself to back down. I hear myself saying around her saliva-glazed breasts, “You should do it.”

“Do it?” Her hand reaches down for my hard-on.

“Kiss him. Let him kiss you. If there’s mistletoe there.” My mouth is arid, my voice strangled. “He’s the one who brought up the so-called tradition.”

*What am I doing?*

For a split second, fear overtakes arousal, and I want to tell her I'm the one who's joking.

Kim works my cock in her warm fist as she studies my face. There's something calculating in her eyes, though. Something maybe playful but dangerous dancing there. "I might," she pouts, "And then you'd be sorry."

For a moment, the statement hangs between us, heavy with implication.

*Would I regret it if she did?* The possibility of even one 'innocent' but 'willing' kiss stolen from the woman I love sends a chill down my spine even as desire burns through me.

"I wouldn't be sorry," I say and work to keep my voice steady. "It would hardly be an affair, would it? One kiss. But it would be so hot."

*Only a kiss. Just a kiss. Nothing more.*

I kiss now, all over her tits again until she moans.

"Just think about it," I murmur, drawing a dark nipple back between my lips and pulling at it so that she moans more, and then, before pausing to say more, "If you already feel like you've got some power over your boss, imagine what it could be like when he's tasted these lips." I press mine to hers, and she moans again and squeezes my cock, hard and long.

Then her mouth is hungry and insistent on mine.

"Let me go on top," she moans, and I roll swiftly onto my back. Kim clambers onto me, with her beautiful tits swaying and her nipples hard. She straddles me, damp between her thighs, and then lifts her ass up so we can both feed my hardness inside her.

"Uhh," my hands reach up beyond her swinging breasts and tangle in her dark hair. I pull her upper body down to me, and we kiss again. Deep and slow, tongues licking and sucking. I wonder if she's thinking about using her mouth this way with him, about what it might be like to let her boss kiss her.

The thought should repel me. It should make me sick with jealousy. Instead, it only makes me harder as I stab upward and we fuck, as I hold tighter to her, kiss her deeper.

*Only a kiss. That's all it would be.*

## Chapter Nine

### Gabe

The menswear department bustles with shoppers, but I pay no attention as I move mechanically, helping the male store assistant straighten displays of our Amen-D hoodies. My mind is a thousand miles away. Or more accurately, in another town, a small one, where today, my wife is out with her boss, showing a property to potential buyers. And then when she's alone there with the guy she works for...

I check my watch again. *They should be at the house by now.* We've talked about it in bed every night since she told me. Five nights and days that feel like one of the longest periods of my life. She's got that new blouse on. The one that makes her tits look great. Only the pencil skirt without the split, though. *But if he does try to kiss my wife, will it even matter what she's wearing?*

My stomach clenches tight at the thought.

"Shall we get some more of the joggers out, Gabriel?" the assistant asks me with a tablet in one hand.

"Good idea," I nod, jolted back to reality. *How the hell did I miss them?* "Call me 'Gabe' though, please."

"Sure thing," he smiles. "I'll go fetch the stock from the back."

"OK, I need the washroom." And *fast.* The images in my head are becoming too vivid, too persistent: Kim in her tight skirt and that blouse. The older man's eyes following the movement of my wife's legs, he and she alone in an empty house. Before the potential buyers arrive. And maybe afterward too.

Would she *encourage* him to do it? Would she even *need* to?

The men's restroom is mercifully empty. I lock myself in a stall, lean against the door, and close my eyes, fighting for control. *What's wrong with me?* My wife is at work, doing

her job, and all I can think about is another man looking at her body and wanting it. Whether he might try to kiss her.

And worse. Far worse, is how much I *want* him to. *And how much more than 'kiss' I've imagined him doing to her.*

I pull out my cock and jerk in a rush. "Oh, Kim, fucking hell, Kim."

I cum fast, but after, with the realization again of how remote the odds are of anything at all happening between the mother of my kids and some old guy who works for her Dad, I splash cold water on my face. I stare at my reflection in the mirror. My eyes look feverish, the pupils almost as flushed as my cheeks.

*Is this really who I am? A husband who gets off putting his wife into 'risky' situations with another man? A father who, while his children are at school learning and innocently playing, is indulging in these fantasies about their mom?*

I straighten the collar of my shirt and smooth my hair, try to look unruffled. Professional. Like a man in control of his thoughts. I should be focused on doing what I can to end the month strong sales-wise. Not on the far-fetched notion of whether my wife's boss is going to make a fucking move on her.

My phone buzzes in my pocket. A text from one of the chain store buyers asking about a shipment.

*Work. Reality. I need to get a grip.*

I walk back to the sales floor, making a decision. No more obsessing for the rest of the day. Kim is just doing her job. Nothing untoward will happen there today. And even if it did - which it won't - I shouldn't be *hoping* for it.

It's dark outside, and when I open our front door, the house smells of roast chicken. The kids are sprawled on the living room floor with coloring books, but Kim is nowhere in sight. I drop my backpack, feeling that unsettling, intense brew of excited anticipation and dread.

“Daddy!” Harrison squeals and jumps up, launching himself at my legs. I lift him, and inhale the scent of what smells like modeling clay. Presumably something he did at school.

“Hey, buddy. Good day at school?”

He nods enthusiastically and launches into a story about the class pet, a hamster named Mr. Scratchy, who apparently escaped during math time. I listen, grateful for a moment for the distraction from my own morbid thoughts.

Leah looks up from her coloring with a casual “Hi, Dad” that sounds like she’s in one of her ‘grown-up’ moods. I put Harrison back down, then pat the top of Leah’s head on my way to find their Mom.

She’s in the kitchen at the stove. She’s changed out of her work clothes into jeans and a loose red sweater, her dark hair pulled back in a loose ponytail. Her ass looks great, and my heart races with the need to hear all about her day.

“Hey,” I say and move toward her.

She turns, wiping her hands on a tea towel. “Hey yourself,” she smiles, but it seems ‘different’ somehow; ‘secretive?’, ‘knowing?’

*Or am I just projecting?*

“How was your day?” I try to sound casual.

“Fine.” She says before our lips meet and then part, “Dinner’s almost ready. You want to set the table?”

*Has another man pressed his lips to those?*

My balls bristle as I move around her to get the plates. I’m hyperaware of her presence. “The property viewing?” I lower my voice and gaze right at her.

“It was OK,” she says and opens the cutlery drawer.

*Only 'OK'? Obviously, nothing out of the ordinary happened.*

“Was there mistletoe?” I blurt it out.

“Is that all you’re interested in hearing about?” she hands me the cutlery with a frown on her face.

Heat creeps up my neck. “No, of course not,” I say as I lay out the knives on forks on the dining table, “But I’ve been wondering all day, you know, whether..”

“My boss tried to kiss me?” she whispers and glances across to the living room area where the kids have changed the TV channel to some CGI movie. “Gabe, you’re obsessed. I’m trying to make dinner for everyone.”

“I’m not obsessed,” I say, but I’m sure we both know that’s a lie. “I just...”

“Want to know if something happened between us?” she says quietly, “Yes. Kind of.”

“Kind of? I leave the dining table and return to her. I hold her shoulders and look right into her eyes, “What does that mean?” The room spins, and blood rushes in my ears. “What did you do?”

She glances again toward the living room, “I’m not going into details now. Not with the kids here.”

My heart pounds so hard I’m certain she must hear it. I can hardly think straight.

“I’ll tell you later,” she says and returns to the stove as if she hasn’t just detonated a bomb in my chest.

The early evening, with the kids not yet in bed, drags as relentlessly as the whole day has, and as the last few days leading up to today have. I move through every act and conversation like an automaton. My mind reels. I can’t stop gazing at my wife, following her ass about the house, and trying to talk to her. But she won’t go into it yet.

*She did something with her boss. My wife let another man kiss her. The fantasy I’ve teased and tortured myself with for so long actually happened.*

But *'kind of?'*

Throughout dinner, I can barely focus on the kids' incessant stories about school. I smile and nod at appropriate intervals, but my gaze keeps returning to Kim. Her lips. *Have they been pressed against another man's? Did she enjoy it? Did he? How far did either of them want it to go? Why was it only 'kind of' a kiss?*

"Daddy, you're not listening," Leah complains and tugs at my sleeve.

"Sorry, sweetheart. Tell me again about the art project."

Kim and I retire to our bedroom early, a lot earlier than usual. Not long after the kids have been settled in theirs, with books and night lights. All the dishes are done, the kids' packed lunches put up for tomorrow, and there's nothing between Kim and I but the conversation we've circled all evening. I hold her in front of me before she can even begin to undress.

"Tell me," I say with my voice sounding almost alien to me, and I gaze right into her eyes. I hold eye contact, "Tell me exactly what happened."

"Nothing that much," she shrugs, but her cheeks flush.

Heat crawls up my neck. "Come on. I need to know."

"It was hardly a kiss, Gabe. Not that much more than a peck, I guess."

*Oh, fuck, Kim.* She allows me to pull her into my arms, settling against my chest with a sigh. "I practically had to launch myself at him."

"What do you mean, launch yourself at him?" I look into her eyes again, "You instigated it?"

"I could tell he was thinking about it," she shrugs in my arms and breaks eye contact, "When we were alone there, and I was near the mistletoe in the kitchen, and we both looked at it."

“So what did you do?” My heart thumps in my chest. So fast it feels unsafe. *‘Launch’ herself? What does that mean?*

“I just asked him, ‘What about the company tradition?’ ”

“Fucking hell, Kim.”

*She goaded him. My wife goaded another man to kiss her.*

“You’d said you wanted me to,” she says, and her body against mine thickens my cock even as terror seeps through my every pore.

“I did. I mean..”

“It lasted all of two seconds,” she says with a half-laugh.

“And?” The single word lodges in my throat and almost makes me choke.

“He just leaned over me and gave me a quick kiss. That’s it. Pretty anticlimactic, in all honesty.”

I frown, trying to picture it. “That’s all? A quick peck?”

She pulls back to look at my face. “What were you expecting? A full makeout session in someone else’s house?”

“No, of course not,” I say, but the disappointment in my voice probably betrays my feelings.

Kim studies me, her expression softening. “You’re really into this, aren’t you? The idea of me with another man.”

“I always thought it was only a fantasy before,” I say, “but now..”

“It *is* only a fantasy,” she says and kisses me.

“But it actually happened, Kim. You kissed him.”

A small smile plays at the corners of her mouth. "It was barely a kiss."

"Was he... I mean, did you like it?" The question burns in my throat.

Kim purses her lips and tilts her head like she's over-acting at giving it serious thought. "It felt like he was a good kisser, but holding back. And it was hard to tell from such brief contact."

My body reacts instantly to her words, to the casual way she talks about what she's done. "Maybe..." I swallow hard. "Maybe you need to do it again. To find out for sure."

"I think my boss is a big a perv as you," she says, and for a moment, I have no idea what she's talking about.

"What do you mean?" I hold her away from me with my chest pulled tight. I'm desperate to study her expression as I quiz her.

"He made a comment about seeing my butt."

The words hit me like a rail carriage in the torso, and for a second, I can't function. "He *what?*"

"Bea was in late this afternoon after we got back, and she repeated something I'd told her. About you always saying how my butt looks like Kim K's."

*Where the fuck is this conversation going?*

"Malcolm must have heard, because he was laughing and making it obvious he was trying to check it out."

*Holy crap.*

"He said he couldn't be sure about it unless I lifted my dress for him."

I can barely breathe. My imagination floods with images.

“Gabe!” Kim stares at me with her eyebrows raised and her mouth half-open in an astonished smile. “Obviously, I *ignored* him.”

He fucking said *that* to her? *My wife? A married woman with two children! What have I set in motion?*

*Did her suggestion of the kiss embolden that asshole? Is this how he’s planning to talk to my wife at work from now on?*

## Chapter Ten

### Gabe

Thursday evening, I get home from work to the smell of pancakes being cooked in the kitchen. The kids are sprawled in the living room watching cartoons. They're both so engrossed that at first, they barely acknowledge my arrival. Beyond them, Kim moves around the kitchen in faded jeans and a baggy sweatshirt. She hasn't been to work today, so I guess she's had more time to indulge Harrison and Leah with cooked treats. She gives me a big smile, then kisses me before she returns to the stove.

I fix myself a coffee then watch her for a moment from behind my mug, admiring the easy grace of her movements, the sway of her dark hair as she turns from stove to counter.

Last night replays through my mind again. Like it has all day. Not just the explosive sex that followed her revelation about the 'kiss' (such as it was). But also Malcolm's brazen comment about my wife's ass. Joke or otherwise.

I glance again at the outline of Kim's round buttocks in denim. An outline, which, after knowing her boss's attention has been drawn to it, makes it seem even more conspicuous.

My dick shifts in my pants. Like it's been doing all day.

Kim's phone rings, breaking my train of thought.

She wipes her hands on a dish towel and picks her phone up from near to toaster on the worktop, "Hi Mom, yeah, just making pancakes."

I can't hear her Mom Jess's side of the conversation, but I head over to check the kids are still OK in the living room area.

By the time I return to my wife, her eyes are widening, and there's a cautious smile on her face that grows brighter by the second.

“Really? He said that? Oh,” her eyes flick to me. “No, I guess I’m just... well, kind of surprised, that’s all. I mean, I only just started. I haven’t even..” she pauses with her cheeks flushed, and she listens. But then the smile melts away, and she frowns. “Yeah, he might. We’ll see. OK, Mom, will do. Love you.”

“Everything OK?” I ask when she’s put the phone down.

She leans back against the worktop with her arms crossed over her chest and shrugs her shoulders. “Mom said Dad mentioned he spoke to Malcolm and heard I’m doing really well at the branch. That they’re really impressed with me so far.”

I cross the room to her, unable to resist pulling her into my arms. “That’s fantastic, babe.”

“Apparently, Malcolm rarely praises anyone, so I must be doing something right.”

“Apart from being a good kisser,” I say with my dick throbbing again, and I’m only half-joking.

*Her boss seems to have changed his tune, though. From being one miserable asshole with her when she first started.*

Kim’s tense in my arms, though, and looking downward. “Pity my Dad couldn’t be bothered calling me about it.”

“You know what your Dad can be like,” I smile and kiss her, “But he knows now how well his eldest girl is doing.” A familiar heat builds in my chest, though, as I consider Kim’s boss praising her so soon after she and he had their fleeting kiss.

“Maybe Malcolm’s infatuated with this now, too,” I whisper in her ear and pat her butt cheeks, “as well as how good you are on the job.”

Kim rolls her eyes and shakes her head.

“I’m only kidding,” I say, because clearly not in the mood at the moment. She’s probably smarting from what she considers her Dad’s lack of interest. “I always told you

that you were every bit as smart as Rosa and your brother. It's no surprise to me that your coworkers rate you. Even if your boss *is* a dirty old man.”

“He’s only forty-six,” she sighs, but then a little smile returns to her luscious lips, “That’s hardly ancient.”

The mid-morning traffic crawls along the highway, but I don’t pay it much attention. I’m on my way to my first meeting of the day at one of the retailers’ Buying Offices. My mind, though, replays last night’s latest revelation on an endless loop. Malcolm praising my wife to Carl. Kim ‘defending’ Malcolm’s age when I called him an ‘old man’.

And both of those on top of the kiss. As well as him supposedly staring at her ass, and even making that suggestion about her lifting her fucking skirt. I squeeze my erection in my pants.

*She’s at work today. She’ll doubtless see him again. Maybe she’ll tell him about the call from her Dad, thank her boss for praising her.*

When we got to bed last night, I told her she should thank him. Told her how hot it would be if she did lift her skirt and flash the guy.

*What kind of husband suggests such a fucking thing to his wife? What kind of man encourages his wife to show her body to her fucking boss?*

Yet the thought sends heat rushing through me, a bewildering cocktail of arousal and anxiety that almost overwhelms me, and that’s lately become my constant companion.

I pull into the parking lot of our biggest department store client with five minutes to spare before my meeting with their head buyer. I kill the engine. I lean back against the headrest and close my eyes.

It’s a good job Kim knows where to draw the line. That even though she plays along with my fantasies and teases me when she knows I’m turned on by something inappropriate, she’d never act on my wilder suggestions.

*And yet she went ahead with that kiss, didn't she? She's dressing more alluringly for work now, as well.*

Plus, as well as defending his age, I can't forget what she said about him 'looking after his appearance'. Or that she enjoys the 'taboo' of him supposedly being attracted to her. *She even said it's exciting to feel like she has 'some control' over him because of that. And now he's being overtly suggestive to her!*

Something breaks the spell, and I laugh out loud at myself. The sound is harsh in the silence of the car and the parking lot.

No matter how exciting all this 'circumstantial' stuff might seem, and all their office banter, her boss works for my father-in-law. Kim's a married woman and a mother. She just wants to make a good impression in her job. And *he's* a married man too.

I'm back at our offices after my meeting and working on my latest year-end sales forecast when my phone's vibration against the desk makes me jump. Kim's name lights up the screen, and my heart does that stupid little stutter it does now since she started work.

"Hey, everything okay?" I try to sound casual, but there's an edge to my voice I can't control.

"Yeah, everything's fine," she says brightly, "I've been invited for a drink after work. Just wanted to see if you could get away from the office early enough to pick up the kids from school? I already tried Mom, but she's out with her friends, and Dad's not answering his phone, probably on the golf course."

My pulse quickens. "Drinks again?" And on a *Friday*? "Who's...who's going?"

"Bea and me. Maybe Malcolm. It'll only be a quick one at that new place near the office. I can skip it if you prefer."

Malcolm's name resonates through my head like an alarm bell. I grip the phone tighter, but my groin prickles.

*Crap.* “I can’t get away early this afternoon,” I tell her, already hating the disappointment I hear in my own voice. “I’ve got a meeting here at four.”

“No big deal,” Kim says, “I’ll just tell them I can’t make it this time.”

“No, wait,” the words come out too fast. I take a breath, try to slow down. “Let me see if I can get my mom to pick them up.”

“Are you sure? I don’t want to put her out.”

I swallow hard. “It’ll be fine. She loves picking them up.”

“Okay,” Kim says, “But text me and let me know if it’s not convenient for her. I can always just come straight home instead.”

“I’ll call her right now,” I say, aware now more than ever that I actively want Kim to socialize with this older guy. *The guy who kissed my wife and teased her about her ass.*

Even if there is another woman with the pair of them, too.

We hang up, and I immediately scroll to my Mom’s number, but my finger hovers over the call button. Something acidic churns in my stomach.

*What am I doing?* I’m literally arranging childcare so my wife can spend time drinking with a lecherous older man who sounds like he’s been openly flirting with her.

And now I’m involving my parents in my perverse little game.

I shake the thought away, press ‘call’ anyway.

“Hello, dear,” my mother’s cheerful voice answers, and she asks me how we all are.

“Yeah, all good here, Mom, but I need a favour.” Shame burns in my throat, but I swallow it down. “Kim’s got a work thing at late notice this afternoon, and I’m stuck at the office. Could you possibly pick up the kids from school today?”

## Chapter Eleven

### Gabe

The cartoon characters on the TV screen flash and dance, but I'm barely watching. The kids are curled up against me on the couch, still in their school uniforms because I didn't remind them to change after I fetched them back from my Mom's. My phone sits on the armrest, silent.

*Too silent.*

7:32 pm.

*Where is Kim?*

"Daddy, can we have more juice?" Leah asks, tilting her head up at me.

"What? Oh, yeah, sure." I grab their cups and head to the kitchen. No message at all from my wife to say that she's headed home, or indicate what time she'll be back.

*Would I even give that a second thought if she hadn't told me about what her boss has been like the last few days? If I hadn't encouraged her about him?*

Maybe not. *But it's Friday night, for fuck sake.* This should be the start of a family weekend together.

Back on the couch, I check the time again. 7:41 pm.

"When's Mommy coming home?" Harrison asks, his small fingers playing with the remote.

"Soon, buddy," I say, trying to distract myself with the inane TV show. "She's got to spend a little time getting to know the people from her new job."

*'Getting to know them.' By kissing her boss. By getting stared at all day by him, and putting up with inappropriate comments from him.*

My phone vibrates. "On my way," Kim texts a few moments later, and something electric shoots through me.

By the time I hear her key in the lock, it's 8:11 pm. The kids bolt upright and race to the door.

"Mommy!" they shout in unison as she appears. Her cheeks are flushed slightly, and her hair's in a ponytail. Once she gets her coat off, it's her legs that draw my eyes, and the way one of her new shorter pencil skirts hugs her hips and butt.

*Has he been staring at her again today? How could he not? Crap, I wish she'd get around to wearing that slitted skirt on for work sometime, though.*

My dick throbs, even as sickening jealousy clogs my gut.

Kim gives me a few vague comments about her night, and it's clear she's had a glass of wine or two. Then she insists on putting the children to bed, and I await her return as patiently as I can. But my mind races with everything I'm desperate to ask her.

It's twenty minutes before she finally reappears. And by then, she's barefoot and changed into yoga pants and an old jumper. She asks me if I want a drink of tea, but I tell her I don't, and I follow her impatiently into the kitchen area.

"So, how did it go?"

"Good, yeah," she nods, but turns away from me.

I wait for her to say more.

"I really like Bea," she says, filling the kettle.

"What about Malcolm?" I ask, wondering if he showed up after all, and fearing I'm about to be disappointed. "Was he there too?"

"Uh-huh," she says, "His wife apparently suffers from anxiety."

“Right,” I say, but that’s hardly what I want to hear about.

“She barely leaves the house,” Kim says, “It sounds like they pretty much lead separate lives.”

“I’m surprised he discusses stuff like that with his staff,” I say, surprised too by how much the details of their apparent conversation irritate me.

“It wasn’t exactly a discussion,” Kim stands on her tiptoes to extract two mugs from a cupboard.

My eyes descend to her juicy cotton-clad butt and the backs of her long legs.

“What was it then?” I ask, trying to keep the irritation from my voice.

“I think he just appreciated having someone to talk to about it,” she says, and without asking me, drops a chamomile tea bag in each cup.

“What about Bea?” I ask, “Couldn’t he have talked to her?”

*That woman seems to know all the office gossip.*

“She’d gone by then,” Kim shrugs and again doesn’t look at me.

*‘Gone?’ She was alone in a bar with Malcolm?*

“I did something stupid, Gabe,” she shakes her head, but half laughs too as the kettle boils and then it switches itself off. She bites her lip, and her eyes still aren’t meeting mine.

My pulse thunders in my ears. “Stupid? What?”

“I need a drink of water while the tea cools down,” she says and yanks open the fridge door. She pulls out a half-empty bottle of mineral water. “My mouth’s dry after the wine.”

“How were you ‘stupid’?” My voice cracks.

*What's she done? Kissed him again? No way.*

“Malcolm was teasing me again about, you know...”

“Your butt?”

*Is this guy for real?*

“Only because of what you originally said,” now she looks at me.

“*You're* the one who told Bea about the Kardashian comparison,” I say before I can stop myself. I sound a little accusing, but my face is on fire and my heart throbs.

“He kept pretending to look at it, whenever I got up to go to the washroom or whatever.”

“Pretending?”

“You're always going on about him looking too,” she takes a big mouthful of her water.

“Only because of what you've told me about him.”

“You've been daring me since I told you what he said,” now *she* sounds accusing. “And you wanted me to let him kiss..”

“What did you do? You *didn't*...” I can't finish the sentence, and now she's almost hiding behind her drink of water.

Did they kiss *again*?

“Kim...?”

“The bar has those weird washrooms,” she says, “Not exactly unisex, but they've got a shared area with the basins, and then separate doors for men and women, you know?”

I nod but stare at her.

“I can’t believe what I did,” she shakes her head, “I think I was still pissed about Dad not calling me.”

“What? What did you do?” My voice comes out as barely more than a whisper.

*She’s kissed him again, hasn’t she?* I feel like I’m coming down with a fever.

“Flashed him.” She glances at me, biting her bottom lip.

*What the...?*

“Well, I lifted my skirt. Just a little,” she corrects herself, like she caught my look, and she lets out a nervous laugh. Her cheeks burn red. “It was stupid. Bea had gone to the bar, and Malcolm came into the washroom just as I was drying my hands. He made some other another comment about my...” she puts her drink of water down on the worktop.

“So you showed him?” My heart hammers so hard that I’m scared it’ll wake the kids. My head spins. This is uncharted territory, like an alien landscape.

“I only turned around and lifted my skirt a little for like two seconds. Just as a joke. To shut him up.” She groans and covers her face with both hands. “I don’t know what I was thinking. He’s my *boss!*”

I should probably feel fury and pure jealousy. Or at least some form of protectiveness. Instead, I’m engulfed by a tidal wave of arousal.

“What did he do?” I ask, my voice thick.

“He looked about as shocked as you do now. Then I practically ran out to the bar to find Bea. I shouldn’t have done it. I had too much wine, and it seemed funny at the time.”

*My wife showed her ass to another man. Deliberately.*

“Are you mad at me?” she asks quietly. “I know you said something like that could be hot, but I know you didn’t mean for me to actually..”

“No,” I manage, and I hold her shoulders, I look right into her green, almond-shaped eyes, her eyeliner is a little smudged. “I’m not mad.” That’s not strictly true, but these are feelings I can barely put into words. I try to form a coherent thought, to ask one of the thousand questions racing through my mind. “Was he... I mean, did you...”

“He went red, too,” she says, and her cheeks are still flushed, “Same as I did. He mumbled ‘Wow’ or something like that.”

The words hit me like a physical blow. *An older man, her boss, getting ‘flashed’ by my wife. Admiring her body. Stunned by it.*

My heart pounds against my ribs. “What exactly did he see?”

“My pantyhose and some of my butt in my white lace underwear, I guess. But it’s a tight skirt, isn’t it? It’s not easy to lift too far without unzipping. Thankfully.”

“Let me see,” I gesture.

She lowers the front of her yoga pants a couple of inches to expose her panties.

“Are you going to be in trouble with him?” I manage.

“I don’t think so,” she says, “I mean, he was a bit quieter after what I did, but still OK with me.”

*I bet he fucking was.*

“Kim, that’s... that’s so hot.” I say, but ‘hot’ doesn’t come close to describing the swirling emotions in my gut and head.

Her eyes scan mine, and then a smile breaks out on her face, and she hugs me. “I’m so glad you’re not mad. But I honestly don’t know what came over me.”

“I’m mad for *you*,” I grip her fleshy hips and pull her tight against me, needing to feel her body against mine and wanting her to feel my hard on. “I can’t believe you actually did it. I need you in bed, right now.”

I all but drag a giggling Kim to our bedroom.

“We’ll have to be quiet,” she whispers as we paw at each other’s clothes, “Leah could still be awake.”

“I’ll gag you with this,” I hold a palm up to her.

“Caveman,” she says with both her hands and fingernails at the belt of my pants. I don’t know about *me* being turned on since she started work, but Kim seems as horny lately as I can ever remember her.

I can picture it perfectly, though, Malcolm, her thick-necked older boss, reduced to a stammering embarrassed wreck by a glimpse of my wife’s perfect ass in her underwear.

*‘Wow’ he said. And who could blame him?*

“He did well to keep his hands off you,” I say, and the words come out hoarse. I tug her yoga pants down and maul her bare hips and her ass. I kiss a mouth that still tastes of alcohol, then kiss her neck, her throat.

She shakes her head. “Mmm, he was way too shocked to try anything. It was almost sweet, how flustered he was.”

*‘Sweet?’* I yank her panties down and feel between her legs. *Wet.*

“Uhh,” she moans and pulls my cock free of my pants. “Are you really OK with what I did, Gabe? Be honest.”

I try to sort through the tangled, knotted emotions strangling and engulfing me. Heady arousal and excitement, yes, but also pride, and a strange, unexpected ‘tenderness’ toward Kim for doing what she’s done and for sharing this with me. “I’m more than OK,” I groan as I’m masturbated, “God, Kim, you’re so good with your hands. I’m... I can’t even describe what I’m feeling.”

“Mmm, try Gabe,” she moans into my neck as I finger her.

“So turned on,” I gasp, but I need to fuck her so bad. I push her back onto our bed. “Fuck,” I mutter as she lies back with a smile and spreads her thighs. I gaze down at her gleaming pussy and kick my pants right off. “But I feel proud too. Is that weird? Proud that my wife is so hot, that you’ve had such an effect on an older man. And so fast.”

“Uhh, and you’re not jealous?” She pulls me down and into her.

“Ah,” I gasp and push deeper into her.

“Uhh, Not even a little?”

“I am,” I groan, but slap into her and she clings to me, “I’m jealous he got to see you that way. But I wanted him to. I wanted you to show him what’s mine. Wanted him to wish he had it.”

“Uhh, uhh,” she moans.

“Did you have that feeling of control over him again?” I gasp and shove her jumper up, drag her bra up over her tits as we fuck.

“Mmm, yeah, it’s horny.”

“I love that it excites you too, Kim. And the taboo of it.”

“Uhh, yeah,” she grinds her hips and her groin against me, “I could never sleep with another man though, Gabe.”

The statement should surely reassure me, but a pang of disappointment slaps me like a cold, wet blanket that I’m ashamed to acknowledge. “I know, babe. I wouldn’t want you to. Nor have an affair.” I gasp even though it’s not the whole truth. Even in this state, though I recognize that she needs reassurance now, confidence about how far I might try to push her. This fantasy has taken on a life of its own, and the reality has already expanded further than I dared hope. And probably beyond anywhere Kim ever imagined it could lead.

“What do you think you *could* do?” I ask and smack into her, unable to fully disembark from the emotional Bullet train that’s carrying me away.

“Uhh, with Malcolm?”

Or *any* guy.

“Yeah. Ohh, Mmm, yeah, what could you do with him? What could you do with your boss?”

“Uhh,” her legs lock tight around me, “Maybe touch him,” her voice drops to a whisper. “Touch each other.”

“Fucking hell, Kim.” The image forms instantly. An older man’s big hands on my wife’s young body, exploring where only *I’ve* touched for years.

*He and his wife lead separate lives.*

Kim’s perfect fingers caressing another man’s broad chest, kissing deeply, those fingers working her magic on a cock that’s been hard for her since he first saw her.

Her lips part as we fuck, and she’s getting close to orgasm. “When he was looking at me today, uhh, in the office and bar, ... I wondered what he’d feel like.”

*Crap.*

“His cock?”

“Uhhm, yeah.”

“Oh fuck Kim.” *I’m gonna cum any second.*

“Is that too much, Gabe? Uhh, is that too much?”

“No fucking way,” I pull her to me, kissing her hard. “No, way,” I breathe against her lips and thrust into then out of her clenching, drenched pussy. “It’s perfect. You’re perfect.” I gaze at her as our bodies thump together, and she *is* perfect. And no wonder her boss can’t stop looking at her. *And now he’s seen her...* “Where would you do it?” I gasp and try to delay cumming for just a few more seconds, try to stretch out the fantasy.

“Uhh, in one of the properties. When we have a viewing there together.”

*She's imagined it.*

“How would you seduce him? You'd be in control, right?”

“Mmm, oh yeah, use my feminine ways,” her tongue is slippery and urgent in my mouth.

“I bet you would. But I'd have to be there this time, I'd have to watch you with him.”

“Uhh, yeah, hide in the wardrobe while I played with Malcolm's cock.”

Her words are too much for me. She may be close herself, but my control slips away and my whole body spasms, “Kim, oh Kim, oh Kim.”

Her small palm clamps my mouth as I cum inside her.

## Chapter Twelve

### Gabe

The aroma of my Mom's beef stew permeates her dining room as we eat, the smell mingling with the sharp scent of cranberry candles burning on the sideboard. Outside the bay window, darkness has already fallen. Dad holds court at the head of the long, wooden table, regaling the kids with stories of his youth that I've heard many times before.

But I'm not listening anyway. Kim sits across from me, looking every bit like my dad and Mom's perfect daughter-in-law. Almost like butter wouldn't melt. But the heat of her in my thoughts could melt snow. She smiles over at me in between mouthfuls. Somehow, the conservative way she's dressed here at my folks - a loose jumper and skirt - only emphasizes the curves they conceal.

In my *head* at least.

Kim laughs at something Dad says, and her head tilts back slightly, exposing the line of her throat.

*Has Malcolm looked at that same part of her neck and imagined burying his face there and covering her in more kisses? Over this weekend, has he managed to forget what my wife showed him in that bar washroom?*

And what part did his attraction to Kim play in his motivation to tell her old man how well she's doing?

*My wife said she could touch his cock! That she could maybe let him touch her, too!*

I take a sip of table water, trying to cool the heat spreading through me again. All weekend, since she told me, even while we've been here, I've barely stopped imagining it.

*Me hidden and watching him with my wife.*

"Gabriel?" Mom's voice cuts through the chatter and my secret thoughts. "More potatoes?"

I blink, and the bowl is already extended toward me, half-filled with boiled potatoes sprinkled with herbs. Who knows how long the bowl's been held in front of me?

"Oh, no, thanks. I'm good."

"You're a million miles away this evening," she says and sets the bowl down on the tablecloth. "Everything OK at work?"

"Just busy." I force a smile. "End of the year is always crazy, you know."

"Mommy works too now," Harrison pipes up from his seat. "She has to get to know everyone in her new job."

My face heats.

Kim's eyes meet mine across the table.

"I know, sweetheart," my Mom smiles at her grandson, then turns to Kim. "So how are you managing the home life with your new job? Your father must be very pleased to have you on board, too."

Kim dabs her lips with her napkin. The gesture is delicate, feminine, and my mind immediately conjures an image of those same lips pressed against Malcolm's.

"Gabe is helping me a lot at home," Kim smiles over at me.

"What's your boss like?" Dad asks, "You're not working directly for your Dad, are you?"

Kim shakes her head and reddens, and I'm pretty sure I do the latter. "I don't see that much of my boss," she says. "He's out at meetings a lot. But he's nice. He's been with Dad's firm a long time. Honestly, they're all nice at the office."

"That's what you need as a new starter," Dad nods his head knowingly, an experienced head to show you the way.

"He's certainly... experienced," Kim says, and her eyes briefly flick to mine.

The double entendre isn't lost on me and I shift in my chair. *Is that something she likes about the 'taboo' of Malcolm, too? That his age means he'll be experienced?*

The conversation moves on to the kids' school projects, my parents' upcoming anniversary trip, and then inevitably Christmas and the pageant. But I remain hyperaware of Kim across the table, of the flush on her cheeks when Malcolm was mentioned.

*Has she thought much about our late-night conversation? About her admission that she's imagined 'touching' him?*

The domesticity of this scene, family dinner at my parents', the kids chattering about Christmas wishes, my mom's candles flickering on the sideboard, it feels surreal against the backdrop of my wild thoughts. And the backdrop of what Kim did in that bar on Friday, and then what she admitted later in bed, that she *could* do.

*Did she mean what she said about 'touching' though? Or was it fantasy play? And if she's honestly thought about it - feeling Malcolm's fucking cock - then how has it all happened so fast?*

Are these thoughts about other, perhaps 'older' men, something my wife has harbored for a long time? Kept hidden from me? Or has the whole situation developed from her need to 'find herself' again as an 'individual', and not 'just' be a Mom? Or even in some confused way, is she 'entertaining' Malcolm to get back at her Dad, for how she feels Carl treats her? *Didn't she say something about 'still being pissed' about her Dad not calling her about the praise she got? Like that was some sort of justification for lifting her skirt?*

"Gabriel, honey, are you sure you're feeling alright?" Mom's concern pulls me back to reality. "Your face is all flushed."

"I'm fine," I nod and put down my knife and fork. "Just a little warm in here."

"The candles," Dad gestures, "You should know by now that your mother overdoes it every Christmas."

"I do not," she frowns. "They're festive."

Kim catches my eye again, and this time, there's a little concern in her eyes. She can read me better than my Mom. *Does she suspect there's a war raging inside me right now?* A battle between living a conventional marriage and dipping our relationship into the murkiest of desires?

After dinner, while Mom shows the kids her collection of porcelain angels and Dad is in the bathroom, Kim finds me alone in the kitchen, loading the dishwasher.

"Penny for your thoughts," she says softly and hands me another dirty plate. Her fingers brush mine, and in this heightened state, the simple contact sends electricity up my arm.

"I'm sure you can guess," I say and glance toward the doorway, ensuring we're still alone. "You and him next week."

"The itinerary for next week came through on the WhatsApp group," she says, and then looks away from me, "I have to visit a property with him again on Friday."

I nod, not trusting my voice.

On the way home, the car's interior is quiet save for the hum of the heater and the distant whisper of the radio, the latter turned down low so as not to wake the kids. I check the rearview mirror again, and they're slumped against each other like bookends. The roads are nearly empty, dark except for the street and house lamps and an occasional display of ostentatious Christmas lights.

Kim sits beside me, and she's slipped her low heels off. The dashboard lights cast shadows across her face, highlighting just how pretty she is, the curve of her cheekbone, the fullness of her lower lip. No wonder this older man with the crappy home life can't stop staring at her. *He must look forward to getting to work every day she's there.*

I can't stop myself. "So at the property viewing on Friday," I say softly and clear my throat, "Are you going to wear that skirt with the split up the side?"

"I've no idea," Kim laughs quietly, "I haven't even thought about that yet."

“You haven’t thought about being alone with him again?” I check the rearview again. My cock throbs in my pants.

“I haven’t thought about what to wear,” she says.

“You haven’t worn that split skirt yet,” I remind her and reach across for her thighs. They’re warm, firm. *Dancer’s legs*.

“I know,” she says.

“Could be the perfect opportunity,” I squeeze one of her thighs.

“You reckon?” she looks at me with a smile.

“An opportunity to do what you said,” I swallow hard.

Her smile slides away, and she’s silent for a long moment. So long that I wonder if I’ve pushed too far. If I’ve transplanted something that should have remained mere hinted whispers of make-believe in the half-light of our bedroom. If I’ve introduced the topic somewhere it should never be heard.

Kim peers back at the kids, and her voice reduces to a whisper. “And that’s what you want? For me to provoke him?”

“Yeah.” The admission burns in my throat. “I want him to want you. To not be able to stop thinking about you.”

“He probably can’t forget already,” she says under her breath and shudders. “Not after what I did in the washroom.”

The reminder sends yet more heat coursing through me. “Give him even more to obsess over, Kim.”

She shifts in her seat, turning more fully toward me. “What exactly are you hoping will happen next time I’m with him, Gabe?”

It’s the question I’ve avoided asking myself. And certainly one I’ve avoided answering.

What do I *honestly* want? How *far* do I want this to go?

“Just what we talked about,” I whisper and pull up at a red light. I peer around at the kids again. “What you said.” I move my hand higher up her thigh, “Touching.”

“Malcolm’s hardly likely to try and seduce me,” she murmurs, but it sounded like a question in her voice. *And she didn’t balk at the suggestion. She didn’t refuse! She didn’t look horrified! Fuck me, would she actually do something like that?*

But she doesn’t sound or look as confident about it as she did in bed on Friday. I take a deep breath. “You could always seduce *him*. Be in control of it.”

The words hang in the air between us, charged with possibility. In the backseat, one of the kids stirs, murmuring in their sleep before settling again.

“I wouldn’t know how,” she says finally.

“Of course you would.” I glance at her, then back at the road. “You know how to flirt. You’ve always been good at it.”

“I haven’t done it with anyone but you for years,” she says.

“You must be doing something right with him, if he rarely gives praise, but he’s already told your Dad how good you are.”

“Pity my Dad couldn’t care less,” she murmurs.

“Of course he could,” I say as I drive, and I rub her thigh, keen that she doesn’t get sidetracked brooding about her old man. Carl still hasn’t contacted her directly about Malcolm’s praise.

“I’d prefer to wait for him to make any first move,” she says, “Malcolm.”

My dick throbs rock hard at her words. We’ve crossed way over any line we ever drew in our relationship. The implication, that there will be a ‘move,’ that we’re both expecting it, planning for it, perhaps even both hoping for it - sends a crackling jolt of both alarm and terrible excitement through me.

“And if he does?” I ask, my voice strained as I move my hand almost right between her thighs, “Make a move, I mean.”

Kim looks right over at me, “Then I guess I’ll have to decide in the moment how far I want to go.”

*‘How far I want to go.’ Oh, God.* The almost casual way she says it, as if it’s likely to happen, as if she’s discussing how many drinks to have at a party rather than potential petting with another man, makes me dizzy.

“You should encourage him, though,” I hear myself say later on our sofa, when the kids are in bed, and I bring the subject up again. “Make sure he knows you’re... open to the possibility.”

She looks away from the TV for a moment, “I don’t want my boss to think I’m slutty,” she frowns. “Or him reporting him to my Dad for the wrong reason.”

“No, of course not,” I say with my mouth dry and barely able to think. I can still hardly believe what I’m hearing and what we’re plotting.

“Do you think there really *would* be somewhere for me to hide out of sight while you’re in the house with him, Kim?” Even what I’m asking sounds like a script from some wacky Harold Pinter play. Absurd, tense, and scary. *Very* fucking scary.

“You were serious about that,” Kim peers up at me with her cheeks flushed, and her words aren’t a question; they’re like a realization.

I nod because my mouth is so dry. But I know I have to explain myself more. I mute the TV completely and gaze right at her, “Hearing about it after isn’t... it wouldn’t be enough. And I’d want to make sure you were safe there, too.”

She lets out a little laugh. But then she’s quiet for so long, I think she’s going to refuse outright.

“We do keep two or three keys to each property,” she says, biting her bottom lip, “I guess I could slip you one and you could get in there early, ahead of us. I’ve seen pic-

tures of this property's interior. It's staged. Clothes in the closets and everything," she holds my gaze, her cheeks flushed. And then her face grows even more serious. "But Gabe, what if he caught you? What would we even say?"

The fact that she's considering it, that she's already thinking through logistics rather than dismissing the idea, makes me tremble. Even my jaw tremors.

"I'd be careful," I say, desperate to pull this off without having any concrete idea how. "I'd text you to tell you where I was hiding. Which closet or whatever. You'd have to keep everyone else away from it, though. Then bring him there when you're alone with him."

That last sentence sends another thrilling shiver of dread through me.

The image forms in my mind: Kim and Malcolm in a master bedroom, me hidden just feet away, trembling, witnessing her hands on him. *His on her.*

She shakes her head slowly, but there's a flush rising on her neck too now, one that maybe belies reluctance as she looks at me again. "This is insane, Gabe. You know that, right? And anyway, nothing at all might happen between us in there if you were hiding..

"I know that," I reach for her hand again, and find it cold despite the central heating. But as I glance from her pretty face to the outline of her breasts in her top and the length of her legs, I doubt many red-blooded men could resist Kim if she came on to them.

*And that's what she might have to do.* Take the lead. Even if she is worried about that making her look a little slutty.

My dick shifts in my pants.

"If I'm doing something like that, I guess I would prefer you there," she says and shrugs, "In case Malcolm got carried away," she looks down at our joined hands.

*Has she given any serious thought to how this might affect her job? Have I?*

The implication of what she just said, though, that things might escalate beyond her control, beyond what we've discussed, sends a knotted wave of emotions through me. Protectiveness, jealousy, and underneath it all, that ever-present pulsing dark thrill.

*I want sex right now, but we need to arrange this properly.*

"But it doesn't bear thinking about," she grimaces and shakes her head. "You getting discovered there. Maybe we should try and arrange it somewhere else instead?"

"Where, though?" I ask her, scared now that she's backing out after seeming so close. "In your little office? How would I get to see anything then?"

"Can you get away from work early enough on Friday?" she twists to look right at me, "I mean, it might not even be worth it. Nothing might happen."

The fact that we're still discussing the 'how' of this, that we're making concrete plans rather than just indulging in bedroom fantasy, makes everything suddenly, alarmingly real. And much as I've longed for this, my wife's acceptance right now scares the crap out of me.

"I can rearrange a meeting I've got booked," I say, and need a drink to lubricate my mouth. "Look, I know you're worried about looking slutty, so I've got an idea that might encourage him some more."

## Chapter Thirteen

### Gabe

Thursday evening, the day before Kim is due at the 'Lakeside' property with her boss, and she and I are outside it. It's not that grand, a three-bedroom detached on a suburban housing development, but it happens to have a prime spot alongside the small, purpose-built 'water feature'. Twilight filters through bare trees that surround the building and casts dappled shadows across the driveway where we've parked.

It's been another hellishly long week of playing the waiting game. Of me acting like an everyday employee, father, and husband. While all the time feeling like I'm walking on eggshells because I don't want to do or say anything that makes Kim dwell on the potential downsides of what she's agreed to do.

Hell, I barely want to consider them myself.

"You sure we're OK being here?" I ask as she retrieves the key fob from her purse. But *she's* the one who insisted on coming here tonight. I can't help studying her fingers again, though, as she grips the key. A hand that I'm somehow seriously hoping might intimately touch another man tomorrow. In this very house.

*Could that really happen?* It still seems impossible.

If it doesn't happen, it won't be for lack of me trying. Every night since we made the original plan, I've reminded her how good she is with her hands. Told her she's a 'natural' at hand jobs. That's what she said she's imagined doing with him. So I've tried to encourage her and give her confidence.

The very self-destructiveness of that somehow excites me even as my gut clenches.

"Yeah, we're fine being here," she assures me. "If anyone sees us, they'll just think I'm doing a regular viewing. And if it gets back to the office, I'll say I wanted to familiarize myself with the layout before tomorrow. And my husband drove me here."

The fact that she's seemingly thought those details through, too, scares a little. Even as it excites me.

The property isn't directly overlooked from the front. So hopefully that means I can let myself in tomorrow without attracting attention.

I follow Kim up the stone path toward the front door, watching the confident swing of her hips under her long coat. The dark jeans she's got on underneath are a stark contrast to the skirt with the split up one side, which she hasn't said she *won't* wear tomorrow. Hopefully, another factor to draw Malcolm in.

There's a small red swing on the front lawn, and it only makes me think of Leah and Harrison. My folks have been dragged into this again, too, because we've left the kids at theirs for an hour while we came here. The reminder shames me again.

Kim smiles over her shoulder as she unlocks a spotlit green door.

Inside, the foyer echoes with our footsteps on marble-effect tile until we step onto a long, patterned mat. There's what looks like a small faux crystal chandelier overhead, and on our left, a wide mirror on a wall with a bunch of dried flowers on a sideboard right in front of it.

"Nice place," I breathe, and glance at the iron-railed staircase.

"Upstairs?" Kim gestures.

I nod and follow her up, our presence feeling illicit despite her assurances about how we could explain it away.

Each room we pass on the landing looks carefully staged, neutral furniture, tasteful art, vases of dried flowers, almost as if the whole house is holding its breath, waiting.

"This is the master," Kim announces and eases open the last door on the landing. "Deepest closets," she adds without looking at me, which suggests she's given even more logistical thought to tomorrow.

My face flushes, and my heart beats faster as I step inside, knowing that if something does happen between my wife and her boss, this is where it could unfold.

The room is bigger than ours at home. There's a king-sized bed positioned against one wall, and a large window with drapes pulled halfway across - neither fully open nor closed. The carpet is plush underfoot.

"It's got its own bathroom down there," Kim says a little unnecessarily, but I'm already checking the large mirrored closet opposite the foot of the bed. There are a handful of dresses and coats on hangers inside. But as she said, it's deep and dark. If I stayed at the back, behind the clothes, then with the door open a crack... I open the door further and ease inside.

Kim giggles at me from near the bed.

"This could work," I say as I burrow to the back of the dresses and coats, then crouch right down and peer back at the light. The cramped space smells of new timber and of leather, and even if I must sound and look farcical here, the excitement in my gut overwhelms every other sense. "As long as you make sure this door isn't fully closed," I say with my voice dampened by hanging clothes and the wooden, mirrored door, "keep it cracked, then I can see the right-hand corner of the end of the bed from here. You'd have to do it there. Come and stand there, Kim."

Kim appears in the slit of light. I move the clothes a little and peer up at her from her jeans to her face.

She's frowning. "What if I can't keep him in this exact spot?"

"You're bringing that little sprig of mistletoe with you, right?" I remind her of my idea for provoking the whole situation - without her 'appearing slutty'. Using the guy's own 'company tradition' move on him. "And then you'll have to keep a tight hold on him," I say and swallow hard at the mental image. "Stay in control of the situation. You can do it. He'll be like putty in your hands."

Kim rolls her eyes.

“What happens if he *does* find you there, though, Gabe?” she asks as I emerge into the bedroom and straighten up. Her arms cross over her boobs.

“He won’t,” I say, and better be right. “It’ll only be open a crack.” I peer back at the closet, then face her again. “And he’ll be far too preoccupied by you right in front of him. In that skirt that shows one of your thighs.” The clinical way we’re discussing this, the mapping out of positions, me considering and planning angles, it should all feel completely impossible. Yet there’s an undeniable charge to the moment, an electric current pulsing beneath any practical considerations.

“But what if you *were* found, Gabe?”

*Is she trying to back out? Has coming here made it all too real?*

“Then we’d deal with the consequences,” I say and hold her shoulders. I kiss her warm mouth and look right into her eyes.

“How, though?” She persists.

“We’d tell him the truth,” I shrug.

“What, that I gave you a key so you could watch me with him? That we set him up? He’d go crazy. I’d probably lose my job.”

“Of course you wouldn’t,” I sigh, but keep a hold on her shoulders and keep looking right at her, “*He’d* be the one in the wrong, wouldn’t he? An older guy taking advantage of his young employee. His boss’s daughter.”

Kim bites at her bottom lip.

“I could tell him I suspected him of wanting you, and I knew you were both coming here. That I got here early and lay in wait.”

“So how would you have got in?”

“I don’t know,” I groan and look up at the ceiling for inspiration, “Maybe I sneaked the key from your purse and copied it or something.”

“But how would you have..?” Kim starts, but I put a finger to her lips.

“Look, if he thinks he’s been caught in the act by your husband, he’ll have enough to worry about without trying to work out every detail of how I got here. And that’s in the unlikely event of him being able to tear his eyes off my sexy wife for long enough to see me in the back of a dark wardrobe through a tiny crack in the door.” I pull her to me.

The scent of her floods my nostrils, and her heart beats fast against my body. Our lips meet, and familiar though hers and the warmth of her body are, somehow in this strange house where she’ll come tomorrow with another man, she feels unknown to me.

“Is this what you want?” she whispers against my mouth. “For me to kiss him like this?”

The question sends a jolt of fire through me, arousal and jealousy tangled so tight that I can’t separate them. “Yes,” I gasp.

*And more too. So much more.*

I ease a hand down to the belt of my pants and start to undo it. “Show me Kim,” I whisper, “Show me what you imagine doing to him with those magic hands as well.”

“Not here,” she eases my hands away from my pants, “Let’s wait until we get home.”

## Chapter Fourteen

### Gabe

Friday arrives with me having arranged to 'work' from home all day, and with the crystalline clarity of a day that feels like it will forever divide my life into a 'before' and 'after'. Even though I've barely slept. And even after frantic sex in bed, where I encouraged Kim to roleplay a whole scene in that other bedroom with that other man.

But I spent the night alternating between fevered anticipation and cold dread. Kim seemed to take a while to get off to sleep at first, too.

The early morning brings a surreal domesticity. While Kim readies herself for the office, I help out by preparing the kids' lunches. But guiltily. Then drop them at school, and then, for once, take Kim the whole way to her office. I kiss her goodbye, almost as if this were any ordinary day. Only the fever in my heart, my stomach, and groin, only the look that passed between us before she got out of the car, and only the skirt with the split up her leg betrayed the bewildering nature of what could lie ahead.

Later, after an anxious morning at our dining table spent writing and replying to emails, and then mostly futile attempts to work on next year's sales projections, I pull my motor up near a small row of what Kim told me are purpose-built shops around the corner from the Lakeside property. 1.37 p.m.

I kill the engine and take a deep breath. Even the stores are quiet around these parts. A small supermarket, hairdresser, and laundromat. I guess most residents are out at work.

Kim and Malcolm were showing three prospective buyers around the property this morning. Right about now, they're taking the final one - some important regular investor - back to the station to catch his train. Then she and her boss are coming back here for a quick 'tidy up'. I check my phone one last time and re-read the text from Kim with the final arrangements. I need to be in place by 2 pm. My heart thumps.

In any other circumstance, the mere thought of my wife dressed in that split skirt and riding around in some older guy's car with him, of her spending most of the day in his

company, would be enough to fuel my fantasies for weeks. Today, it's hopefully, but frighteningly too, merely the prologue to something way more momentous.

I slip out of the car into the cool air, grateful for the warmth of my fleece-lined jacket and an overcast sky that makes the dark coat and similar jeans hopefully less conspicuous. I walk quickly past other houses with little sign of life in them and soon reach the street where, under the clouds, the steely gray 'lake' glitters dully away to my right.

Barely breathing, I walk down the path with my heart in my mouth and convinced that unseen eyes are surely watching me.

But the front door opens swiftly and easily with Kim's key, and I step inside.

The house's stillness envelopes me immediately. And the same place feels far more intimidating than it ever did last night, with Kim here too.

I can smell a trace of her floral perfume along with lemon polish, and then an excited sense of sadness, of 'loss' even, makes me long for my wife. I wipe my feet though, then double-check I've left no evidence on the doormat. Then I check each sole in turn to make sure they're clean, and I hurry up the stairs. I want to settle into my hiding place, get accustomed to the confinement, well before the pair of them get back here.

Upstairs, the master suite is exactly as we left it last night. Even the gap in one of the mirrored closet doors. Pristine, waiting, 'staged' - for illicitness. I ignore my reflection and ease inside the wide closet with my heartbeat out of control. I crouch to my haunches, push through the hanging clothes, and back right into the corner with a view of a long, narrow vertical strip of the room. The cream-colored carpet, one near corner of the end of the bed. A pale purple furry throw on the bed, a little of the iron headboard, and above that on the wall, part of a portrait of some landscape scene. I adjust my position slightly to see how that affects any view. And to test any noise that moving might make.

*Seems quiet enough.*

I slide my phone from my pocket and check the time again.

*Five to.*

I lower the phone volume to zero and then put it in 'flight mode' too, just in case. Then I slip it back into my pocket and take more deep breaths, to try to calm down.

But I can't control my thoughts, and I'm wondering all over again about how Kim even got to this stage. Doing what we're planning. I mean, she's only been working there a handful of weeks. She barely knows this guy.

*She's spent so many hours alone in his company though, hasn't she?. Whenever it was just the two of them in the office. Or out for drinks like the other night. That previous property viewing. When he kissed her! And he's an older man. He might have experience in seducing younger women like Kim.*

All those moments of him stealing glances at my wife's body, her noticing, pretending not to. The tension between them probably building. The sense of 'power' she talked about enjoying because of that way he looks at her, because he can't keep his eyes off her. An experienced older man paying attention to her after years of her suppressing any sense of being desirable. Any sense of being more than just 'Mom.' And she's admitted she finds the 'taboo' of him exciting - her Dad's long-term colleague.

And the way her eyes lit up when she heard he'd praised her work performance to her folks.

*Who's to say her bosses' connection to Carlo really isn't some confused way of getting back at her Dad because of the way he makes her feel, too?*

*Whatever her motivation for today, she gets off on the whole thought of all this in bed almost as much as I do, doesn't she?*

I shift uncomfortably, my legs already starting to cramp.

*She and he already kissed once! She lifted her skirt for him, for fuck sake. That's a line between two people that can't be uncrossed.*

I lean my head back against the wall, dread and arousal at war inside me. I encouraged this. I practically begged for it. And now, hiding in some stranger's closet, waiting for my wife to arrive with another man, I can't help wondering if we're going too far.

But between my legs, my thickened dick has an opinion of its own.

A while later - and surely longer than ten minutes - I hear it. A car on the driveway. Then doors slamming, voices. A man's and then Kim's.

*They're here.*

I press myself deeper into my hiding place, pulse pounding in my ears so loud that I fear I might not hear anything they say, if and when she brings him in here. The door opens and closes downstairs. Footsteps echo in the foyer, then Kim's voice.

"I'll make a start upstairs, shall I, Malcolm?" and he mumbles something in reply.

Hurried footsteps on the stairs and then the landing, and I shrink back before the bedroom door creaks open and closes again.

"Gabe? Are you there?" she whispers.

I shove the clothes aside and move toward the strip of light. "Yeah. What's happening?"

"You're sure about this?" She's crouched down too, and she peers in at me.

I gaze at all the thigh and pantyhose she has on show and then at her face and the makeup she's freshened and thickened since she left home. She's got her black leather shoulder bag with her.

"Yeah," I whisper back. My heart is in my mouth. "Did he like your new skirt?"

"Well, he's looked at it often enough," she says.

My balls prickle.

“Have you been drinking?” I’m sure there’s alcohol on her breath.

“He took me for a quick bite to eat to celebrate. That last prospect made an offer on the property. Malcolm said the sale was down to me.”

“OK,” I say, and irrationally, given the circumstances, the image of Kim having lunch with him in some swanky bar or restaurant, him plying my wife with wine or whatever, stabs me with regular jealousy.

“Shall I call him up here?” She whispers.

“Yeah,” I say, and I’m trembling.

“I love you, Gabe,” she says.

“Love you too,” I say, and when she stands, I gaze up at her long legs and the skirt and her hips. Then the strip of light narrows ever so slightly as she adjusts the gap, presumably to make doubly sure her boss won’t see me.

*‘Love, though?’* Everything we’re doing feels at odds with the whole conventional notion of the word ‘love’, and yet somehow I’ve never felt more deeply connected to Kim. Or needed to cling tighter to her than I do right now.

I hear the bedroom door open again, and for a second, think it’s him. But then Kim calls out.

“Malcolm? Can you come up here?” Her voice seems to almost float from the room, sweet but with a sing-song undercurrent I’m not sure I’ve ever heard before.

My pulse hammers as I lean through the hanging clothes and closer to the narrow gap between the closet doors.

“Everything OK?” his deep voice carries from somewhere below. *Authoritative*. “Where are you?” He’s got an accent similar to Carl’s.

“Master bedroom,” Kim calls back, and she’s standing at the foot of the bed, exactly where we agreed. The slit down the right side of her skirt shows her supple thigh

as she rummages in her shoulder bag. Her cheeks are flushed, maybe from the wine, maybe in anticipation, or maybe both.

Heavy footsteps on the stairs. Slow, deliberate. The floorboards on the landing creak a little.

“Kim?” My wife’s name from another man’s mouth, and he’s close now, “What are you...?”

He stops mid-sentence, and I can’t see him, but *she* smiles toward the doorway. She’s got one hand raised in the air and the little piece of mistletoe above her head.

*She’s doing it. Fucking hell, Kim.*

“My turn with mistletoe this time,” she says softly.

I see him first in fragments through my limited view. Dark, pressed pants and shiny brogues, tall and in a suit. And then when he’s right in front of her, and I can gaze up at all of him, my stomach drops.

Malcolm John is a big guy. The online photos didn’t do justice to his physical presence. He must be six-four at least, with shoulders that strain against his tailored jacket. His bald head gleams slightly under the bedroom lights, and his thick neck flows into a chest that looks solid as concrete.

*Fuck.*

In front of him, Kim looks so delicate, almost fragile.

She continues to hold the mistletoe and to smile up at her big boss.

Malcolm just stares for a moment, then barks out a surprised laugh. “Are you serious?”

“Does the company tradition still apply?” Kim’s voice has that teasing lilt I know so well. But her face is flushed.

He hesitates, glances back toward the door as if somehow checking no one else is around.

*If only he knew.*

Then his big hands cup her face, and he lowers his head to her. Their lips meet.

*Oh crap, Kim.*

I hold my breath, so it won't be heard.

The kiss is gentle, tentative, even. Just a press of mouths, maybe testing boundaries. My heart thunders. I'm mesmerized, hard as iron, but my heart hurting too, watching what I've imagined for years.

Then Kim makes a small noise in her throat, and the mistletoe slips forgotten from her fingers. Then everything changes.

His arms encircle her waist, pulling her against him.

*Oh, God.* I rub my dick through my jeans.

Their kiss deepens, and my wife moans as her mouth opens under his. Kim's hands move up to grip his broad shoulders.

*This is really happening.*

Their tongues meet, tilted heads, and their mouths find a hungry rhythm.

*Oh, fucking hell.*

I want to jerk off, but I daren't chance making any noise.

His big hands begin to roam; they slide down to Kim's hips, his fingers splay possessively across the curves that I know so intimately. One large palm moves lower, it cups the roundness of her ass through her skirt, and I feel like I could cum in my pants. Kim

presses herself closer to him in response. And then his other hand is at the split in her skirt.

Hot surges of jealousy flood my chest with unexpected intensity, and for a second, I fear drowning. This is my fantasy, my suggestion, but seeing another man's hands on my wife, watching her respond to him with such obvious desire, it cuts way fucking deeper than I anticipated. But I *can't* look away. Can't stop touching myself, can't stop the conflicting waves of consuming arousal and possessiveness crashing through me.

The two of them break for air, and Kim's lips already look swollen, her lipstick smudged. Malcolm's expression is primal, famished almost, as he gazes down at her, both hands below her waist and on her body.

"Christ, I've wanted to do that properly since that first time," he growls.

*He's got a hard-on for her. It's bulging in his suit pants.*

"I guessed," Kim whispers and smiles up at him, and there's a boldness in her voice.

*Has she noticed his erection?*

He bends to kiss her again, more demanding this time, and I watch in stunned silence as my wife melts against him, her body molds to his much larger frame. His hands explore her curves with growing boldness too, and Kim arches into his touch like she's starved for it.

I remain frozen in my hiding place, jaw slack, as the fantasy unfolds before me; beautiful and terrible all at once.

One of Malcolm's hands drifts upward, and the fingers reach the buttons of Kim's blouse. The other stays on the back of her skirt and her ass.

"Wait," Kim breaks the kiss and presses her hands against his broad chest. "I can't let you go too far."

Malcolm's face clouds. "What do you mean?"

I gape through the narrow viewing strip as Kim takes a small step back toward the bed. There's a space again now between their bodies, but her palms are still pressed to his chest. They're both breathing deeply.

"I can't let you touch me... like that," she gazes up at him.

Malcolm's expression shifts from maybe confusion to frustration. "Then what is this? What are we doing here, Kim?"

My heart hammers against my ribs as what sounds like a fucking negotiation is unfolding before me. But it was always a risk that once goaded, he'd try to push further.

Kim gently catches Malcolm's wandering hands as they try to return below her waist. "I'm sorry. I got carried away," she says, "You're a good kisser."

*Was that last statement for my benefit?*

Malcolm exhales heavily and runs a hand over his bald head. The disappointment radiates from him almost in visible waves. "I'm a good kisser? Jesus, Kim. You can't kiss a man like that, not after teasing him the way you did with your skirt the other night, and then just..."

"Especially when he's my boss?" She peers up at him with a dirty smile. "I didn't say we have to stop completely," her voice takes on a bolder quality, still seductive, but more in control.

"What exactly are you saying?"

Kim takes one of his large hands in both of hers. Her eyes never leaving his face, "I could touch *you*... if you wanted me to."

The air in the closet feels too thick to breathe. I'm lightheaded, watching my wife offer this compromise to another man while I'm hidden just feet away from them.

Malcolm's sharp intake of breath is audible even from here. "You mean that?"

"Uh-huh," Kim nods slowly. "Only if you want me to."

For a moment, it's almost like he's weighing up her proposition. I don't get why he doesn't jump at it. His chest rises and falls rapidly. And then his hands - both of them - lower to his belt and his bulging pants, and he's pulling them open and his zipper down.

*Oh, fucking hell.*

Kim moves closer to him, and her hands take over from his.

I clench both my fists. Try not to cry out.

"Mmm," she purrs as she reaches into his pants.

He groans, and his head rolls back, even as his hands return to Kim's hips. "Do it to me on the bed," he gasps and peers over his shoulder.

"No," she says, and she's touching the flesh between his legs. "I want to see it in the mirror here too."

*Fuck.*

"Uhh," he groans.

"Ooh, my boss *has* got a very big willy," she says with a little laugh, but wide eyes and a flushed throat that seems to snag the sentence. She grips a thick shaft that's a whole lot larger than mine. And I don't know why, but there's something doubly erotic about being down here in this crouch while her hand and that 'thing' are almost in my face. Her delicate and slender hand, feminine fingers with painted nails, a hand so small it can barely encircle the whole of his brutally fat manhood.

*And it's long cock too. Uncircumcised.*

My face burns.

Kim somehow maneuvers him around by his cock to face this way and the mirror.

*She's doing this for me. Giving me the best seat in the house.*

And yet I can't believe what I'm watching.

She stands more to his side now, leaning into her boss's barrel chest as she masturbates him with her right arm and hand. He paws at her ass with one of his hands, then he lifts her chin with his other and lowers his shoulders to taste again from my wife's mouth.

"Christ, that's good," he groans around her lips.

"Mmm, this *is* a big one," she purrs, and as her gripping hand speeds up, I can't help wondering if her words are her playing to the gallery.

"Uhh, bigger than...uhh, than what you're used to?"

"Mmmm, yeah," she says and then smiles at the gap in the door. Under her silky blouse, her boobs shudder in time with her arm as she pleasures the groaning older man.

I hold my breath and try not to cum in my pants.

My wife strokes Malcolm's thick erection, and he kisses her neck. He drags fingers through her dark hair and mumbles in her ear.

*Crap, I wish I could hear what he's saying to her.*

"Mmm, it's not just this big dick that's all stiff, is it?" Kim purrs with his cock slicking in her hand, "Your whole body feels tense, Malcolm. Just relax."

"I'm trying," he groans into her neck.

The intimacy of their shared words somehow shocks me even more.

Kim's throat and cheeks are flushed as, in between his waves of kisses, her glances switch from her hand to its reflection, and she concentrates on her task. Her tongue becomes visible and stiff at one corner of her mouth, and her lush painted lips as her small clenched fist clearly struggles to hold his erection tight.

Then she twists her whole body more directly to him, obscuring my view more, but clearly she's massaging his balls for him too.

*With the hand and the finger that wears her wedding and engagement bands.*

*How can the fact that he's getting his pleasure from my wife, while I'm getting nothing here, excite me so much?*

"I've got a tissue," he gasps, "Got one in my pocket," his hand stops massaging Kim's buttocks, and it delves frantically into his pocket, but then he groans. "Uhhh," his cock bloats in her hand and then spurts at me.

I duck to one side of the gap.

*I don't think any got in here.*

Outside the closet, he's gasping, and when I straighten up and peer out again, his shoulders are slumped as he tries to stem the flow with both hands.

Kim giggles and, for a moment, looks like she's trying to help keep him upright, but then she stands back and lets him clutch the fast-soaking tissues to his seeping cock. His legs are shaking.

For a moment, I'm somehow consoled by how fast he came.

"There's so *much* of it!" Kim squeals as she gazes wide-eyed at what she's done and sounds almost thrilled.

"Shit, did some go on the carpet?" he gasps, shoulders still hunched, head down as both fists clasp the ball of sodden tissues to this oozing dick.

"Only down the mirror," she shakes her head and glances in my direction. "I've got wipes in my bag. You go get cleaned up. I'll do the mirror."

Malcolm hobbles away in the direction of the bathroom with Kim giggling as he does. Then she finds her bag again and pulls out her wet wipes. She crouches down close to me, and I'm shaking like he was. I'm in disbelief about what I've just seen.

“It’s dribbling all down here,” she mutters under her breath as she wipes. “Was that OK?” she whispers and then glances in the direction Malcolm went.

“Yeah,” I whisper back, but as I look at her again, I start to wonder how well I’ve ever really known her.

She uses up several wipes, and while she’s cleaning up another man’s mess, I expect her to pull some sort of disgusted face, but that doesn’t happen. I’m pretty sure I do so, though, because I can smell the nutty, ammonia-like aroma of his discharge from here.

And then, while I’m still crouched and shaking, he’s back.

He helps my wife to her feet, curls an arm around her waist, and kisses her again. “That, Mrs Porter, was something special.”

My wife and her boss straighten their clothes, their movements carrying an unhurried intimacy, almost like familiar lovers.

The leave after plumping up pillows they never used and laughing together when they spray the room with air freshener. She doesn’t even look back in my direction.

But I guess she couldn’t. It would probably have been too risky. He might have followed her gaze.

## Chapter Fifteen

### Gabe

The elementary school auditorium pulses with Christmas cheer. Paper snowflakes dangle from the ceiling, tinsel is wrapped around every available surface, the scent of cinnamon and cookies hangs in the air. Parents crowd the rows of uncomfortable metal chairs, smartphones at the ready.

And she's right beside me. My loving wife. My Kim, looking adoringly at her youngest up on stage. My Kim, the woman who last Friday stroked another man to completion while I watched from a closet.

She's wearing a pretty modest green angora wool sweater that matches her eyes; her dark hair is pulled back away from her face in a way that highlights both her overall beauty and in particular, her cheekbones. Those same cheekbones that flushed pink for most of that whole act with her boss.

"He's so good," she murmurs and shakes her head as she watches Harrison's antics with his shepherd's crook. Then one of her guilty hands squeezes mine.

I squeeze her hand back, trying to anchor myself in this moment. *Loving*. We're a normal, loving couple and happy family. Together at a school Christmas pageant.

Last Friday, after his car pulled away from that house with my wife as his passenger again, I hurried to the bathroom and beat off. My head filled with vivid images, from almost on my knees of gazing up at her hand, and at his terrible yet thrilling thick hardness. I barely touched myself before I came in buckets.

But afterwards, the 'downer' was crushing.

I called Kim on my way to pick the kids up from school, but I got her voicemail. I left an anxious message asking her to ring me. She did so a while later, but I was with the kids by then, so I couldn't really talk. It wasn't until she got back from work that we were able to have a proper conversation about what had happened.

Onstage, all the children sing 'Silent Night,' their small voices imperfect but pure. I glance at Kim, and her eyes glisten with tears. She leans against my shoulder, and I breathe in her familiar scent. The same perfume that probably lingered on Malcolm's clothes as he drove her back to their office on Friday.

I asked her what he said afterward. And she said he was asking her if she felt guilty. She told me that was a tough one to reply to without him learning the truth about me and her. She told him she 'wasn't sure'. He said he felt the same. He wasn't in the office the rest of the day, he had a meeting late afternoon. And he wasn't in at all today either.

As the performance ends, we join the surge of parents moving toward the stage. Kim reaches our children first, dropping to her knees to envelope both Harrison and Leah (whose class performed earlier) in a big hug. "You were amazing!" she tells them, and I raise my gaze away from behind that another man groped through her slitted skirt right in front of me a handful of days back.

Then she kisses the foreheads of both kids. Those same lips that Malcolm devoured and that opened beneath his with a hunger I'm not sure I've seen in years.

Still low to the ground as she was when she cleaned up another man's mess, she ruffles Harrison's hair, her slender fingers threading through his dark curls. And I can barely think of what those same fingers did with such gentle precision on Friday. Or of her passion for it. What that hand of hers coaxed out of an older, more experienced man than me.

"Daddy, did you see me too?" Leah breaks free of her Mom and tugs at my hand, her face earnest beneath her crooked halo.

"Of course I did, sweetie," I smile and lift her up. "Best angel in the whole show."

Over Leah's shoulder, I catch Kim's eye. She smiles back at me. That intimate smile meant just for me. But something twists painfully in my chest. *How can she be both women at once?* The devoted mother and wife, and the woman who did what she did for another man?

Then, as the four of us walk to my car, the kids chattering excitedly between us, my mind races ahead to the rest of this week and over Christmas.

*What will change when she sees him again in the office? What might he expect now? More than what happened yesterday? A regular sexual arrangement with my wife?*

And then there are the questions that terrify me most of all. *What do I want to happen? What would Kim want?*

There's an awful truth that burns inside me. That image of Kim's face as she masturbated Malcolm - a look of what? Liberation? Control? Unrestrained desire? Whatever it was, it haunts me. Even as it electrifies me.

*What if she wants to go further with him? What if she wants to cross that final line we once considered uncrossable?*

Would I let her?

"Gabe," Kim nudges me as we reach the car. "Got the keys?"

I gaze at her, I mean really look at her. She's surrounded by the colored lights on the parking lot, our children's small hands in hers, her breath making clouds in the late November air.

"Just thinking about how much I love you," I say softly, and it's no lie. It might be the only truth I'm certain of in the whirlwind of confusion inside me.

She smiles, and leans over and onto her tiptoes to kiss me. I taste cherry lip balm. "Let's go home," she says softly.

And then, as I start the car, I wonder exactly what that is now. The 'home' we've built. How it might already be changed forever, mutated because of my desires, altered into something I've always both feared, and yet desperately wanted.

## A Final Thank You

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