

TBD chapter 21

At 5:30 PM, Tom Marshall loosened his tie as he climbed the stairs, a bouquet of long-stemmed white roses in hand. Jess's Tesla in the driveway had told him she was already home. The sound of the shower running in the master bathroom confirmed it.

He crossed to the kitchen, finding a crystal vase in the cabinet beside the sink. As he arranged the flowers, he tried to focus on the evening ahead. They had a 7 PM reservation at Xenia. The Uber would arrive in exactly one hour. He had chosen the roses carefully, wanting something elegant but not trite. White roses had significance to them. He'd given her white roses on their first anniversary.

The flowers arranged, he opened the refrigerator and pulled out a beer. He twisted the cap off and took a long pull, then made his way to the living room and settled onto the couch.

His mind wasn't on the restaurant. It hadn't been fully on anything work related since yesterday evening when Jess had described, in exquisite detail, her latest encounter with Bob. The images she'd painted had replayed in his thoughts throughout the day, distracting him during conference calls and strategy sessions.

Tom took another swig of beer, his free hand unconsciously adjusting himself through his pants as the memories returned. Jess in red lingerie, selected to entice their tenant. The multiple orgasms Bob had given her with just his fingers. The way she'd taken him in her mouth afterward, swallowing his cum.

It wasn't the first time Jess had mentioned multiple orgasms with Bob. That detail gnawed at Tom in odd moments, creating a strange mixture of arousal and competitive drive. How had Bob figured out her body so quickly? What techniques was he using that could bring Jess to climax repeatedly in a single session? Even Tom himself, after years together, couldn't claim the same consistency. Most of their intimate encounters ended with Jess having one orgasm, if that.

Did Bob possess some instinct for female pleasure that Tom lacked? The thought was uncomfortable yet undeniably arousing. Tom made a mental note to focus more on Jess's responses next time they were together. He wouldn't be outdone by a 55-year-old man, not when it came to pleasuring his own wife.

But what kept circling back, what continued to both haunt and arouse him, were the specific things she'd said during their coupling Thursday night.

"Bob suggested something I'd never even heard of before," she'd whispered. "Using my pussy on him without letting him inside."

He'd been confused at first.

“He called it a ‘pussyjob’,” she’d explained. “Like a handjob but with my pussy lips sliding up and down his shaft.”

Tom had felt her shiver against him.

“God, Tom, it feels so fucking dirty just saying that word.”

The term had been new to him too, though the concept made immediate, visceral sense. The mental image had formed instantly, Jess straddling Bob, her pussy gliding along his substantial cock.

“I straddled him and just slid my bare pussy up and down his bare cock,” she’d continued, her voice dropping to that register that told him she was reliving it as she spoke.

“You should have seen how wet I was, Tom. It felt so fucking good, the pressure on my clit... I was almost shaking.”

Tom had listened, enraptured, as Jess described how she’d ground herself against Bob’s cock.

“There was a moment where I was right over the tip of his cock,” she’d admitted. “All I would have needed to do was push down, and he would have been inside me.”

That revelation had sent a white-hot surge through Tom’s system. The line she’d drawn, no penetration, had almost dissolved in the heat of the moment. She’d hovered there, tempted, her body craving the fullness that Bob’s impressive size promised. Yet she’d chosen to maintain her boundary, to honor the limit she’d set for herself despite the overwhelming physical desire.

“I came so hard riding his cock like that,” Jess had gasped as Tom thrust into her. “I came on his cock, Tom.”

The phrasing had been deliberate, he knew. Not technically incorrect, she had orgasmed while grinding against Bob’s cock, but worded to maximize the impact, to blur the distinction between what had actually happened and what could have happened.

“Afterward, I went down on him,” she’d added, “and could taste myself on his cock.”

Jess had suddenly changed her position, planting her hands on his chest. She’d begun bouncing on his cock with an intensity they rarely reached, her movements urgent and almost desperate. Her eyes had closed, her breasts rising and falling with each forceful movement.

Tom had watched her face, the concentration evident in her furrowed brow, and found himself wondering if she was imagining Bob beneath her, his massive cock stretching her instead of his. Was she mentally replacing him in that moment? The possibility had felt like both betrayal and gift.

That final detail had pushed Tom over the edge. The image of Jess tasting herself on Bob's cock, the layers of intimacy involved in that act, the possibility that she was imagining Bob beneath her, had proven too much for him to withstand.

The shower shut off, pulling Tom back to the present moment. He realized he'd been lost in the recollection, his beer now empty. He set the bottle on the coffee table and stood, straightening his clothes before making his way to the bedroom.

He knocked once on the bathroom door before opening it. Jess stood in front of the mirror, towel wrapped around her torso, another smaller one around her wet hair. She looked startled for a moment before her expression shifted to amusement.

"I'm joining you," Tom announced, his hands already moving to his shirt buttons.

Jess laughed, a sound that still affected him even after years together. "There's no time," she protested. "We've got less than an hour before the Uber arrives."

"I'll be quick," Tom promised, stepping into the bathroom and closing the door.

"You're impossible," Jess said, but she was smiling as she brushed past him to exit.

Under the spray, he contemplated what their arrangement with Bob had become, how rapidly boundaries had shifted. What had begun as voyeuristic thrill had progressed to direct physical contact, oral sex, and now this latest innovation, the "pussyjob."

Tom shut off the water and toweled himself dry, then wrapped the towel around his waist and made his way into the bedroom. He noticed that Jess had laid out his navy suit on the bed, complete with a white shirt and his favorite blue grenadine silk tie. The gesture touched him. She'd done it without being asked.

He dressed quickly, listening to Jess move around in the walk-in closet. Through the partially open door, he caught glimpses of her in her underwear.

"How was your day?" Jess called from the closet.

"Productive," Tom replied, buttoning his shirt. "Wrapped up the last Meridian documentation. Had lunch with Davis and the executive team."

"Did they toast your promotion again?" Jess asked, amusement in her voice.

"Miles insisted," Tom replied. "You'd think I'd been named CEO instead of just Senior Consultant."

"You earned it," Jess said. "They're right to celebrate you."

Tom slipped into the suit jacket, adjusting it across his shoulders. "What about you? Houston materials come together?"

“Finally got approval on the lighting package for the residential floors,” Jess replied. “And Chen’s team confirmed the schedule for the site visit.”

Tom approached the closet doorway. “Will you be traveling to Houston?”

“Full week on-site for the first visit,” Jess confirmed. “The next week after I return from Savannah.”

“More travel than usual,” Tom observed.

“Says the man about to start flying to Colorado or California,” Jess countered without turning.

“Fair point,” Tom conceded.

He watched as she dabbed perfume at her wrists and neck. Even this ordinary moment felt significant somehow, a glimpse of Jess in her private ritual of preparation. He’d witnessed this countless times over their years together, yet tonight it struck him differently, as if he were seeing her with new awareness.

“I’ll wait in the living room,” he said, stepping away before she could catch him staring. “Uber should be here in about fifteen minutes.”

Tom returned to the living room, settling back on the couch. He reached for the remote and switched on the TV, finding a baseball game in progress. The players moved across the screen, a blur of motion and color that failed to capture his attention.

His mind drifted inevitably back to last night. After Jess had described the “pussyjob” in detail, after they had finished and lay in bed, Tom had asked the question that had been burning inside him since she first mentioned straddling Bob’s cock.

“Were you serious about fucking him?” he’d asked, his voice quiet over the pounding of his heart. “When you were hovering there over the tip of his cock... did you actually want to?”

Jess had gone quiet, her eyes finding his in the dim bedroom light. Then she’d nodded, the simple gesture more devastating than any verbal response.

“In that moment,” she’d admitted, “I really wanted to.”

Tom felt like he’d been hit by a train. He’d known it was the truth even before she spoke it. Jess couldn’t lie convincingly to save her life, but hearing it confirmed had unleashed something primal within him, a cocktail of anxiety and arousal so potent he’d barely slept afterward.

He both loved it and hated it. The thought of Jess wanting another man’s cock inside her, specifically wanting Bob’s massive cock stretching her open, created a confusing mixture of jealousy and unprecedented excitement. He’d never experienced anything so contradictory, so capable of making him feel threatened and aroused.

He'd been awake long after Jess had fallen asleep beside him, staring at the ceiling, replaying her confession. "I really wanted to." Four words that suggested a fundamental shift in their arrangement.

His phone buzzed with a notification, pulling him from his thoughts. The Uber was two minutes away.

"Jess?" he called. "Uber's almost here."

"Coming!" she replied.

He heard the bedroom door open and turned.

The sight of Jess rendered him momentarily speechless. She wore a black dress that transformed her from successful interior designer to femme fatale. It fell asymmetrically across one shoulder, leaving the other bare, the fabric following her silhouette before ending mid-thigh. A subtle slit allowed glimpses of her leg when she moved.

"What do you think?" she asked, executing a small twirl.

"You're stunning," Tom said.

Jess approached, reaching up to straighten his tie though it didn't need adjusting. "Not bad yourself," she said. "I see my selection worked out well."

"Your selection was perfect," Tom acknowledged.

He pulled her close, one hand at the small of her back, and kissed her. He meant it to be brief, but as her lips parted beneath his, he deepened the kiss instinctively.

"Careful," Jess murmured against his mouth. "You'll ruin my lipstick."

"Worth it," Tom replied, though he released her.

His phone buzzed again. "Uber's here," he said, offering his arm.

Jess took it, and they made their way down the stairs and outside to where the Uber waited at the curb. Tom opened the door for her, watching as she slid gracefully into the backseat.

Inside the car, they sat close. Jess's hand found his knee almost immediately. The city moved past the windows, Austin in the early evening, warm and golden as sunset approached.

Tom placed his hand over hers, their fingers intertwining naturally.

"Did Miles say anything else about the promotion?" Jess asked.

"He's already planning how to leverage my 'executive access' for his own projects," Tom replied. "I told him to focus on his deliverables first."

Jess laughed. "Classic Miles."

"What about you?" Tom asked. "Any word from the Savannah contractors about those staircase materials?"

"They located an original supplier," Jess said. "Same family business that provided the originals in 1897. They still have the molds."

"That's incredible," Tom replied.

"It means we can maintain the exact original profile," Jess continued. "Webb's thrilled. It's a major win for the project's authenticity."

Tom noted how her eyes lit up when discussing her work, the passion that made her such an exceptional designer. That passion extended to other aspects of her life as well, he reflected, including their recent explorations.

"I can't believe how far we've come," he said.

Jess gave him a look. "In our careers, you mean?"

"Among other things," Tom replied with a slight smile.

Jess squeezed his hand. "It's been quite a journey."

They had indeed come far, professionally, financially, sexually. Tom reflected on how their relationship had evolved in ways neither could have anticipated months ago. Yet somehow, despite or perhaps because of these evolutions, they felt more connected than ever.

The Uber slowed to a stop in front of Xenia.

"We're here," the driver announced.

Tom thanked him and exited first, offering his hand to help Jess from the car.

"Ready?" Jess asked.

"More than ready," he replied.

As they approached the entrance, the doorman nodded respectfully. "Good evening. Welcome to Xenia."

Tom's hand found its place at the small of Jess's back. They stepped into the restaurant, ready to celebrate both his professional achievement and their evolving relationship.

Tom approached the host stand, Jess's hand resting in the crook of his arm.

"Good evening," Tom said. "Reservation for two under Tom Marshall."

The maître d' looked up, his fingers scrolling through the evening's bookings. "Ah, yes, Mr. Marshall. Right on time." He glanced between Tom and Jess with a professional smile. "Please follow me."

He guided them through the restaurant, weaving between tables. Their table awaited in a secluded corner, a curved booth.

"Here we are," the maître d' said, gesturing. "Your server will be with you momentarily."

Tom slid into the booth after Jess. The restaurant pulsed with Friday night energy, glasses clinking in toasts, the low murmur of conversations, and the subtle notes of a jazz piano floating above it all. The décor married minimalism with warmth, rich wooden tables, brass fixtures, dim lighting, and abstract art in muted tones adorning the walls.

A young man approached their table. "Good evening, I'm Julian, your server tonight." He handed them each a menu bound in soft leather. "May I start you with still or sparkling water?"

"Still, please," Tom replied.

"Excellent. Today's specials include a pan-seared Hokkaido scallop with black truffle risotto and a Wagyu ribeye cap with bone marrow butter and roasted heirloom carrots," Julian recited. "Our sommelier recommends the 2016 Ornellaia with the ribeye. It's an exceptional pairing."

"That sounds perfect," Tom said. "We'll take a bottle of the Ornellaia."

"Wonderful choice, sir. I'll be back with your water and wine shortly."

As Julian departed, Tom settled more comfortably against the plush upholstery.

"This place is gorgeous," Jess observed, her eyes taking in the restaurant's ambiance. "No wonder it took weeks to get a reservation."

"Worth the wait, I think," Tom replied. He watched as she examined the menu, her lower lip caught between her teeth in that familiar expression of concentration.

Julian returned with their water, followed moments later by the wine presentation. The ritual of uncorking, pouring, and awaiting approval proceeded smoothly. When both their glasses had been filled, Julian withdrew, promising to return for their dinner order.

Jess lifted her glass. "To Senior Consultant Tom Marshall," she said. "To your hard work, your dedication, and this well-deserved recognition of your talent. I'm so proud of you, baby."

The sincerity in her voice touched something deep within Tom. Despite their recent boundary pushing explorations, moments like this reminded him of the foundation beneath it all, love and mutual respect.

“And to you,” Tom countered, raising his own glass. “To the woman who makes everything possible. Skyline finishing with rave reviews, Savannah restoration on track, and Houston about to transform under your vision. You’re the real star.”

Jess smiled as they clinked glasses. The wine was exceptional, rich, complex, with subtle undercurrents that revealed themselves gradually. Much like his wife, Tom thought.

“So,” Tom said, setting his glass down. “What are you thinking of ordering?”

They discussed options, comparing notes on the menu descriptions. When Julian returned, they were ready.

“I’ll start with the scallop special,” Jess decided. “And then the filet mignon, medium rare.”

“Excellent choice,” Julian nodded. “And for you, sir?”

“The lobster bisque to start, followed by the ribeye, also medium rare.”

Julian collected their menus. “I’ll put these orders in right away.”

Once alone again, their conversation drifted naturally to work matters.

Jess detailed the latest developments with the Skyline completion party scheduled for month’s end.

The conversation shifted to her Savannah trip next week.

Tom listened, fascinated by her enthusiasm. This was the woman he’d fallen in love with, brilliant, passionate about her craft, her eyes lighting up when discussing the architectural details most people would never notice.

Their appetizers arrived, creating a natural pause in the conversation.

As Julian departed, Tom decided to shift the topic. “Will you be seeing Bob on Tuesday before your flight?”

Jess glanced up from her scallop, her fork pausing midway to her mouth. “I’m not sure yet. Depends how busy I am with preparations.”

“But you’re considering it?”

“Maybe.” She took the bite, closing her eyes momentarily as she savored the flavor. “God, this is amazing.”

Tom watched her face as she experienced the dish, the way her features softened with pleasure, eyes shut, lips parting slightly. The expression was disarmingly similar to one he’d witnessed countless times during their intimate moments, and now, he knew, one that Bob had witnessed as well.

He wondered if she'd looked like that yesterday, grinding herself against Bob's cock until she came.

"I haven't been able to stop thinking about what you told me," Tom admitted after a moment. "About the 'pussyjob.'"

Jess's cheeks colored slightly, her gaze dropping to her plate. "Tom, we're in public."

"No one can hear us," he pointed out. "Besides, what's wrong with a husband discussing intimate matters with his wife over dinner?"

She took another bite. "Nothing, I suppose."

"How did it feel?" Tom pressed. "You said it felt good, but... compared to what?"

Jess took a sip of wine, considering. "It was... different. The friction against my clit was so intense, especially after the orgasms I'd already had. And feeling the size of him against me without him being inside... it created this tension..."

"And you wanted him inside you," Tom stated, his voice dropping lower.

Jess met his eyes directly. "In that moment, I did."

Her honesty still struck him, even after she'd admitted it the night before. The confirmation that his wife had genuinely desired another man's cock inside her created a strange response in his body, one he couldn't fully articulate even to himself.

"That's so fucking hot," Tom said, emphasizing only the arousal aspect of his reaction, omitting the anxiety that had kept him awake afterward. "The honesty of it, the raw desire."

"I didn't act on it," Jess pointed out.

"I know. But hearing that you wanted to... that's almost better than if you actually had."

Jess tilted her head, studying him. "Why's that?"

"Honestly, I don't know myself," Tom replied. "It's this perfect tension, this moment of possibility and... restraint."

"Hmm," Jess murmured, seemingly unconvinced by his explanation.

"Are you going to do it again?" Tom asked. "The pussyjob, I mean."

"I don't know," Jess replied. "Maybe."

"You should," Tom encouraged. "But maybe this time, tease him more. Get him right to the edge but don't let him finish. Make him wait."

Jess raised an eyebrow. "That sounds like you've been thinking about this a lot."

"I have," Tom admitted. "It's been on my mind all day."

They finished their appetizers, the conversation drifting briefly to other topics. When Julian cleared their plates, promising their main courses would arrive shortly, Jess leaned in closer.

“I think we should take advantage of this dinner to revisit our rules,” she suggested. “It’s been a while, and things have... evolved.”

“That’s probably a good idea,” Tom agreed. “Where should we start?”

“Communication,” Jess said immediately. “That was our first rule. Complete honesty, telling each other everything.” She twirled the stem of her wine glass between her fingers. “Do you feel like we’re doing that? Being fully honest with each other?”

The question created immediate discomfort for Tom, who had maintained significant omissions from the beginning. He hadn’t told Jess about seeing Bob masturbating to her photos that first night, about his conversations with Bob regarding how to push past her boundaries.

The deception had become foundational to their arrangement. How could he possibly confess now, months into their arrangement? The revelation would undermine everything they’d built, would cast every “choice” Jess had made in a different light. She would question whether her decisions had truly been her own or merely the result of careful manipulation by both men.

“I think our communication has never been better, especially sexually,” Tom replied, finding refuge in a true statement that avoided the question’s heart. “We’re talking about desires, fantasies, experiences more openly than we ever have.”

As he spoke, Tom recognized the hypocrisy in his response. Here they were, discussing honesty while he continued to hide fundamental truths about their arrangement.

“True,” Jess acknowledged. “I’ve shared things with you I never thought I could say out loud.”

Her eyes dropped momentarily to the tablecloth.

“Exactly. We’ve created this space where nothing is off limits,” he said.

Jess nodded.

“What about our second rule?” Tom asked. “Veto power. Either of us can stop anything immediately, no questions asked.”

“That one seems to be working well,” Jess said. “You’ve been incredibly respectful of my boundaries.”

“And you’ve been brave in exploring them,” Tom replied.

Jess nodded. “But sometimes I wonder if your enthusiasm for each new step makes it harder for me to use that veto power.”

Tom's brow furrowed. "What do you mean?"

"Just that..." Jess paused, seeming to search for the right words. "When I tell you about something new with Bob, and I see how excited it makes you, it creates this... incentive for me to keep pushing further."

"Do you feel pressured?" Tom asked.

"Not pressured exactly," Jess clarified. "More like... I enjoy making you happy, seeing that excitement in your eyes. So there's this natural momentum toward more."

Tom reached across the table to take her hand. "If something doesn't feel right for you, I want you to use that veto, regardless of how it might affect me."

"I know that logically," she said. "But emotions aren't always logical."

"True," Tom acknowledged. "What about our third rule? Privacy. Keeping this between us."

"That's been challenging," Jess admitted. "Especially with Madi."

"You've wanted to tell her?"

"She's my best friend, Tom. We share everything. We've always shared everything." Jess sipped her wine. "I really wanted to tell her."

"I think keeping this private is still important," Tom said. "Not because it's wrong, but because other people wouldn't understand."

Jess nodded. "I know."

"And what about the fourth rule?" Tom asked. "Emotional boundaries. No dating, no separate emotional relationships, no romantic connections."

Jess looked thoughtful. "That's the trickiest one to define, isn't it? Where does physical exploration end and emotional connection begin?"

"Do you think there are emotional boundaries being crossed with Bob?" Tom asked.

"Not romantic ones," Jess replied quickly. "I'm not falling in love with him or anything like that."

The immediate denial reassured Tom somewhat, though the qualification "romantic ones" suggested other emotional territories might be in play.

"But?" Tom prompted, sensing there was more she wanted to say.

"But I think any ongoing physical relationship inevitably creates some kind of connection," Jess said. "We're not robots. Separating sex from emotion isn't always clear cut."

"What kind of connection are we talking about?" Tom asked, needing specifics.

Jess took a moment before responding. "I care about his wellbeing. I enjoy our conversations. I feel comfortable with him in ways I didn't expect." She looked directly at Tom. "It's definitely not love or romance, but it's not nothing either."

Tom nodded slowly, absorbing this. "That makes sense. Though it wasn't what I anticipated when we started."

"And what about kissing?" Jess asked suddenly. "That was your boundary. You said it felt too intimate, too emotional."

Tom shifted in his seat, recalling that stipulation. "Has he tried to kiss you?"

"No," Jess said. "He's respected that boundary completely, all boundaries actually. I just wonder about the logic of it sometimes."

"What do you mean?"

"Just that..." she gestured vaguely, "I can have his cock in my mouth but not his tongue? The distinction seems kind of arbitrary from a certain perspective."

Tom considered this. "It's not about what's more intimate, I guess. Kissing just feels... different. More personal somehow."

"I understand," Jess said. "And I've respected that boundary. I'm just curious about how you see it."

"It's hard to explain," Tom admitted. "But when I think about you kissing him, it feels different. Maybe because kissing is something we do casually, as part of our everyday connection. It's not just sexual."

"Compartmentalization," Jess observed. "We've gotten good at that, haven't we? Different versions of ourselves for different contexts."

"Is that bad?"

"Not necessarily. But it can be exhausting. Sometimes I wonder who the real me is, the designer, the wife, or the woman who goes downstairs to Bob's apartment in lingerie."

"Maybe you're all of them," Tom suggested. "People are complex. We contain multitudes, right?"

"Quoting Whitman at dinner? Senior Consultant Marshall is feeling intellectual tonight," Jess teased.

Their main courses arrived, Julian presenting each dish with a flourish that bordered on theatrical. Tom's ribeye glistened under the restaurant lighting, accompanied by roasted potatoes and asparagus spears. Jess's filet sat atop a pool of red wine reduction, a stack of truffle-infused potatoes alongside.

"This looks incredible," Jess remarked once Julian had departed.

They each savored the first bites, the exceptional quality of the meat meriting a moment of silent appreciation.

"Perfect medium rare," Tom commented. "Worth every penny of this ridiculously expensive meal."

"Absolutely," Jess agreed, cutting another piece of her filet.

After they'd eaten for a few minutes, Tom returned to their previous topic. "Can I ask you something?"

"Of course."

"About your 'no sex' boundary," Tom began, choosing his words carefully. "Is there something specifically meaningful about penetration for you? I mean, given everything else you've done with Bob, does that still hold special significance?"

Jess set down her fork, her expression growing more serious. "Yes, it does. For me, at least."

"Why? I'm genuinely curious. Is it emotional? Physical? Symbolic?"

"All of those, I suppose," Jess replied. "Penetrative sex feels like a line that, once crossed, can't be uncrossed. Everything else maintains a certain... plausible deniability in my mind."

"Plausible deniability?" Tom repeated, not quite understanding.

"It's like..." Jess paused, gathering her thoughts. "With touching or oral, I can still tell myself I haven't fully given myself to him. There's still this final boundary that keeps what we're doing in the category of 'exploration' rather than actual... infidelity."

"But it's not infidelity if I know and approve," Tom pointed out.

"Logically, I know that," Jess acknowledged. "But emotionally, there's something different about actual sex."

Julian appeared at their table, his timing unfortunately perfect. "How are you enjoying your meals?"

"Everything is excellent," Tom replied. "The ribeye is perfectly cooked."

"Wonderful to hear, sir. And your filet, madam?"

"Delicious," Jess confirmed with a polite smile.

"Perfect. Please enjoy, and I'll check back with you shortly." Julian withdrew, seemingly unaware of the tension he'd interrupted.

They ate in silence for several moments, the conversation requiring a reset after the interruption. Tom watched Jess, noting the slight furrow in her brow that suggested continued contemplation of their topic.

“I’m not pushing you to cross that boundary,” Tom finally said. “I’m just saying the door’s open if you want to cross it. I hope you know that.”

“I do,” Jess replied. “But I also know how excited you get when I tell you about getting closer to that line. The way you responded when I told you I’d thought about letting him inside me...”

“Fantasy and reality aren’t the same,” Tom said, though he wasn’t entirely sure that was true.

“Aren’t they beginning to blur, though?” Jess asked. “What started as your fantasy has become very real.”

Tom couldn’t argue with her assessment. The boundary between fantasy and reality had indeed grown increasingly permeable. “You’re right. But that doesn’t mean every fantasy needs to become reality.”

“Have you thought about whether our arrangement has an endpoint?” Jess asked, changing direction. “I mean, did you imagine this as something temporary, an exploration, or as a permanent change?”

Tom hadn’t considered this question. The arrangement had evolved so naturally, each step following logically from the one before, that he’d never projected its ultimate trajectory.

“I haven’t really thought about it in those terms,” he admitted. “I never mapped out a specific timeline or endpoint.”

“Do you think that’s something we should discuss? Whether this is temporary or... something else?”

“Maybe,” Tom acknowledged. “But I’m not sure we need to decide right now. We could just continue following where it leads naturally.”

“That’s exactly what concerns me,” Jess said. “The natural progression’s moved very quickly. A couple of months ago, I was nervous about wearing a revealing bikini around Bob. Now I’m going to his apartment in lingerie and grinding on his bare cock.”

Tom couldn’t deny the rapid pace of their exploration. “Does that bother you? The speed of it?”

“Sometimes,” Jess admitted. “It feels like each step makes the next one easier, more inevitable. The boundaries keep shifting without clear discussions about them.”

“We’re having that discussion now,” Tom pointed out.

“True. But it’s usually after the boundaries have already moved.” She took another sip of wine. “I’m not saying I regret anything. Just that it might be worth being more intentional about where we’re going.”

Tom nodded, acknowledging the wisdom in her perspective. “You’re right. Though part of me has enjoyed letting things unfold organically.”

“I’ve enjoyed it too,” Jess conceded. “The spontaneity, the discovery.”

They continued eating, the conversation shifting to their upcoming travel schedules.

“We’re going to be ships passing in the night for a while,” Tom observed.

“At least with Bob there, the house is never empty,” Jess replied.

“That’s true,” Tom agreed. “Though I doubt home security was what convinced us to keep this arrangement going.”

Jess laughed. “Definitely not the primary benefit anymore.”

“When you’re in Savannah,” Tom said, his tone growing playful, “you’re welcome to flirt with others, you know. See if any of those Southern gentlemen catch your eye.”

“Tom!” Jess exclaimed, her eyes widening slightly.

“What? I’m just saying, you could have boyfriends in different cities. One in Savannah, one in Houston, one in Austin...”

“That’s ridiculous,” Jess said, though her lips quirked upward. “I barely have time to maintain one extramarital arrangement, let alone establish a national network.”

“Just putting it out there,” Tom said. “The option exists.”

“I’ll keep that in mind,” Jess replied. “Though I think I’d need an assistant just to manage my schedule if I took that approach.”

The joking eased the tension that had been building throughout their boundary discussion. Tom found himself grateful for Jess’s ability to find humor in situations that might otherwise become too weighted with significance.

“But,” Tom began, returning to a more serious tone, “when I start traveling, you’ll be home with Bob. Alone.”

“I suppose I will,” Jess acknowledged.

“Does that... interest you?” Tom asked, careful with his phrasing. “The idea of having more freedom, more privacy for your encounters?”

Jess studied him for a moment. “Are you asking if I plan to take advantage of your absence to cross more boundaries with Bob?”

"I'm just curious about your thoughts," Tom said, though in truth, the image of Jess and Bob together in his absence created the usual response, arousal tangled with anxiety.

"I haven't thought about it," Jess replied, her tone suggesting this wasn't entirely true. "But I imagine our Tuesday and Thursday routine will continue."

Tom pictured Jess and Bob alone in the house for days at a time. Would they maintain the structure of their scheduled encounters, or would the artificial constraints dissolve? Would Bob sleep in their bed, in Tom's spot beside Jess? The thought sent blood rushing to Tom's cock even as it twisted something painful in his chest.

"Would you be upset if we didn't stay strictly confined to Tuesdays and Thursdays?" Jess asked, watching his face closely. "If I saw him on a Saturday, for instance?"

"I... no, I wouldn't be upset. As long as you told me about it afterward."

"Really?" Jess pressed. "You wouldn't mind if I spent a Saturday afternoon in Bob's bed while you were away?"

Tom's arousal intensified at the mental image. "I would want to hear everything," he said. "Every detail."

Jess nodded slowly, her eyes never leaving his face. "I'll remember that."

A silence fell between them, heavy with unspoken possibilities. Tom wondered if she was testing him, probing for his true feelings about her potential independence during his absence, or if she was genuinely contemplating expanding her encounters with Bob beyond their established schedule.

"Speaking of Bob," Jess said, breaking the silence, "do we still need him financially? With your promotion and my projects, we're in a much better position than when we first rented to him."

Tom hadn't considered terminating Bob's tenancy since their arrangement had evolved. "I guess that's true. Though the extra income still helps with rebuilding our savings."

"Of course," Jess agreed quickly. "I wasn't suggesting we ask him to move out. Just noting that the original reason for having him there has become less... pressing."

"It's taken on additional value," Tom observed.

"It has," Jess confirmed.

Julian approached their table. "Have you saved room for dessert? Our dark chocolate soufflé is particularly exceptional this evening."

Tom glanced at Jess, who nodded. "We'll share the soufflé," he told Julian.

"Excellent choice. Would you like coffee while you wait?"

"I'm fine," Jess replied.

"None for me either," Tom added.

When Julian departed, Jess leaned forward slightly. "Have you spoken directly with Bob? About our arrangement, I mean."

Tom felt a flicker of panic at the question. His conversations with Bob had been strategic and essentially manipulative, focused on pushing Jess toward greater intimacy while maintaining the impression that these were her autonomous choices.

"Not recently," he replied. "Why do you ask?"

"I'm just curious about what he wants from all this," Jess said. "Where he sees it going."

"What do you think he wants?" Tom asked, deflecting the question back to her.

"I don't know," Jess replied. "He's been respectful of my limits, hasn't pushed beyond what I've invited. But I wonder what he's hoping for."

Tom let out a short laugh. "Come on, Jess. He's a 55-year-old twice divorced tradesman who suddenly gets to fool around with a gorgeous 27-year-old. He's basically won the lottery."

"That makes it sound so transactional," Jess frowned.

"I don't mean it that way," Tom said. "But from his perspective, this has to be the fantasy scenario of a lifetime. Of course he wants to have sex with you. What man wouldn't?"

"I wonder whether he sees it as just physical fun," Jess continued.

"Have you asked him?" Tom inquired, curious about Bob's presentation of his intentions.

"Not directly. But I get the sense that he values our connection beyond just the physical aspects." She looked up, meeting Tom's eyes. "He listens when I talk about work. Offers advice about handling Webb and the other developers."

Tom felt a flicker of something uncomfortable. The idea of Bob positioning himself as Jess's advisor, confidant, creating connections beyond the purely physical arrangement they'd established, represented a potential complication he hadn't fully considered.

"That's... interesting," Tom managed.

He wasn't concerned about Jess developing romantic feelings for Bob. A 55-year-old tenant living in their downstairs unit hardly seemed like genuine competition, but the emergence of a friendship complicated the clean boundaries he'd imagined for their arrangement. Physical exploration was one thing, a controlled experiment with clear parameters. Emotional connection was messier, less predictable.

What troubled him most wasn't Bob specifically, but the precedent it established. If Jess formed connections with men in Savannah or Houston, professional peers closer to her age,

with shared interests and ambitions, the dynamics would be entirely different. Those men wouldn't be temporary accessories to their marital explorations. They would be independent entities in her life, potential threats in ways Bob simply wasn't.

"Is that a problem?" Jess asked, clearly picking up on his hesitation.

"No, not at all," Tom assured her quickly. "It's just not something I'd thought about."

Julian returned with their soufflé, rescuing Tom from further exploration of this uncomfortable territory.

"Enjoy," he said, placing two spoons beside the soufflé before departing.

The conversation naturally paused as they sampled the dessert. The exterior gave way to a warm, molten center that was indeed exceptional, as Julian had promised.

"Remember that bar game I mentioned?" Tom asked after several bites, returning to a topic he'd introduced during their night out with Madi and Brandon.

"Where couples pretend not to know each other, and one of them flirts with strangers?" Jess recalled. "Yes, I remember."

"I was thinking we could try that sometime." Tom watched her reaction. "Maybe tonight, even. We could go for a drink after dinner."

Jess set her spoon down, studying him. "I'm still not comfortable with the idea of involving unsuspecting third parties in our... explorations. Remember what happened at Domino?"

"They're not really involved," Tom argued. "It's just flirtation, a little harmless attention."

"But they don't know it's an act," Jess pointed out. "They think they might have a chance with me. It feels manipulative."

"I guess," Tom conceded, then leaned forward. "But isn't that part of what makes it exciting? The unknown element?"

"For you, maybe," Jess replied.

"Look, we'll just get one drink at The Fleming," Tom said, mentioning the hotel bar within walking distance. "If nothing happens, we leave. No pressure."

Jess raised an eyebrow. "The Fleming? You've clearly thought this through. I'm starting to suspect this whole dinner was leading to this suggestion."

Tom grinned, not denying it. "It's a beautiful hotel bar. Sophisticated clientele. Nothing like Domino."

"And what exactly would this involve?" Jess asked.

"You'd go in alone," Tom explained. "Find a spot at the bar. I'd come in separately, sit across the room. If someone approaches you, which they will, you flirt a little, see if you can get him to buy you a drink."

"And you'll just be watching this whole time?" Jess asked.

"From a distance," Tom confirmed. "We can text if needed."

Jess twirled her wedding ring thoughtfully. "I assume I'd need to take this off?"

"That would help," Tom agreed, reaching across to touch her hand. "Just for an hour or so."

Jess looked down at her outfit. "If I walk into a bar looking like this, alone, someone's definitely going to approach me."

"That's the idea," Tom said with a smile. "The question is whether you're willing to play along when they do."

"What if someone gets handsy?" Jess asked.

"You know how to let men down gently," Tom replied. "And I'll be right there if things get uncomfortable. But..." he paused, "if you like the attention, you can go with it. Within reason, of course."

Jess's eyes widened slightly. "Within reason? That's pretty vague, Tom."

"That's intentional," he admitted. "I don't want to script this. The spontaneity is what makes it interesting. Just go along with what feels right in the moment. Don't overthink it."

"So I'm supposed to walk into a bar, pretend to be single, flirt with strange men, and just... see what happens?" Jess summarized, though Tom noticed her tone contained more intrigue than outright rejection.

"Uh... yeah. No expectations. Just an experiment." Tom took her hand. "And afterward, we go home together, and you tell me every detail."

Jess was quiet for a moment, considering. "What if no one approaches me?"

Tom laughed. "In that dress? Impossible."

She bit her lower lip, the gesture he recognized as her working through a decision. "One drink," she finally said. "And I reserve the right to abort mission at any point if I feel uncomfortable."

"Absolutely," Tom agreed immediately. "You're in complete control."

"And you'll be watching the whole time?"

"Every second," Tom promised.

A small smile played at the corners of Jess's mouth. "You've really been thinking about this."

"A little," Tom admitted. "I think you might enjoy it too, once you're in the moment."

"You know I'm terrible at acting," Jess pointed out.

"You don't need to act," Tom assured her. "Just be yourself, minus the wedding ring and the husband. The rest will happen naturally."

They finished the soufflé in a comfortable but charged silence, the possibility of their after-dinner activity creating a new energy between them.

Tom reached for the bottle of Ornellaia, tipping it to pour the last of the wine into their glasses. The realization that they'd finished the entire bottle between them registered dimly.

"We've made quite a dent in this," Tom observed, setting the empty bottle at the edge of the table.

Jess nodded, lifting her glass. "It's been that kind of evening."

Tom wondered briefly if the alcohol was influencing their decisions, particularly this bar game he'd suggested. The idea had seemed so compelling at home, a natural extension of their boundary exploration, but would they be considering it so seriously if completely sober?

"Wait, are we too tipsy for this bar experiment?" he asked, offering Jess a chance to reconsider.

"Maybe just tipsy enough," she replied with a small smile that carried both nervousness and anticipation. "Liquid courage, right?"

Tom nodded, acknowledging the truth in her assessment.

When Julian brought the check, Tom reached for it immediately despite Jess's attempt to intercept.

"This was supposed to be my treat," she protested. "We're celebrating your promotion."

"And I'm celebrating you," Tom countered. "Your Skyline success, your leadership on Savannah and Houston."

"That's not how celebrations work," Jess argued, though her expression had softened.

"It is for me," Tom insisted, slipping his credit card into the leather folder. "Let me do this."

Jess relented with a small nod. While they waited for Julian to return with the receipt, Tom noticed her fingers tracing the outline of her wedding ring, as if already preparing for its temporary removal.

Julian returned with the receipt, which Tom signed with a generous tip. As they prepared to leave, Jess leaned close.

“If we’re really doing this, I need to visit the ladies’ room first,” she said.

“Take your time,” Tom replied, understanding she might need a moment to prepare mentally.

When Jess returned, her wedding ring was already absent from her finger. The sight of her bare ring finger created an unexpected pang in Tom’s chest, a visceral reaction to this small but significant alteration.

They slid out of the booth, Tom offering his hand to help Jess up. As they made their way through the restaurant, Tom noted several men tracking Jess, a preview of what awaited them at The Fleming.

The maître d’ bid them goodbye at the door, thanking them for dining at Xenia. Outside, the night air carried just enough coolness to be refreshing after the restaurant’s warmth.

“So how do we do this?” Jess asked as they stood on the sidewalk. “Do we walk to The Fleming together or separately?”

“Together,” Tom decided. “We’ll separate just before going in. You’ll enter first, I’ll wait a few minutes, then follow.”

As they walked toward the hotel, Tom’s arm found its place around Jess’s waist, drawing her against his side. “Having second thoughts?” he asked, noticing her unusual quiet.

“Not exactly,” Jess replied. “More like... first time nervousness.”

“That’s what makes it exciting.”

“What exactly am I supposed to say when someone approaches me?” Jess asked. “Do I make up a whole backstory?”

“Keep it simple,” Tom advised. “You’re in town for business. You don’t need elaborate lies, just omit certain truths.”

“Like the fact that my husband is watching from across the room?” Jess said with a nervous laugh.

“Exactly,” Tom agreed. “Just be yourself. That’s more than enough to hold anyone’s interest.”

As they walked The Fleming came into view.

“One drink,” Tom promised, his hands finding her shoulders. “If nothing happens or you feel uncomfortable, just text me and we’ll leave.”

Jess took a deep breath, then nodded. “Okay. I’m ready.”

“You look incredible,” Tom told her. “Every man in that bar is going to envy whoever gets your attention.”

Jess smiled. She reached up, kissing him briefly. "See you inside, stranger," she said with a playful smile.

She disappeared inside, leaving Tom on the sidewalk.

Tom checked his watch, determined to give Jess at least five minutes alone in the bar before following. Five minutes seemed sufficient time for her to settle in, for the initial awkwardness to dissipate. Five minutes for men to notice her, for someone to perhaps approach. Five minutes for Tom to prepare himself mentally for what might follow.

He decided to circle the block, both to kill time and to calm his racing thoughts. The evening air had cooled further, carrying hints of approaching autumn despite Austin's lingering summer temperatures. He loosened his tie slightly, feeling constricted suddenly by the formality of his attire.

As his shoes tapped against the sidewalk, Tom replayed their dinner conversation in his mind. Jess's questions about the boundaries of their arrangement, about the progression that had unfolded with Bob, about potential endpoints or trajectories. Her observations were astute, as always. They had indeed been following where things led "naturally," without explicit discussions about where it all might be heading.

But wasn't that part of the appeal? The discovery, the sense of venture into unknown territory, each new experience building on the last? There was something thrilling about not mapping everything in advance, about allowing desire to guide them rather than rigid planning.

The experiment tonight represented yet another evolution. Unlike their arrangement with Bob, which had developed in stages through their shared space, this bar scenario introduced actual unpredictability. Random men, strangers with unknown intentions, interacting with Jess while Tom observed from a distance.

He was ceding control to chance, to Jess's choices in the moment, to strangers' initiatives. The thought created a peculiar mixture of anxiety and excitement.

What if no one approached her? That seemed unlikely given her beauty and the dress she wore, but still possible. Would they consider the experiment a failure? Would Jess feel rejected?

Or worse, what if someone did approach her and she found herself genuinely attracted? Not playing a role for Tom's benefit, but experiencing actual interest in a stranger?

Four minutes had passed. Tom decided to head toward The Fleming's entrance. The hotel itself was elegant, a blend of modern architecture with subtle nods to Austin's historical aesthetic. The lobby would undoubtedly be just as tasteful, populated by business travelers and tourists rather than the raucous club-goers they'd encountered at Domino.

Tom entered through the revolving door, the air conditioning creating an immediate contrast to the night air. The lobby was all polished marble and tasteful lighting, a pianist playing something subdued in the corner. To his right, a sign indicated the direction of The Fleming.

He followed it, heart rate accelerating with each step. Through the bar's entrance, Tom could see a sophisticated space filled with leather chairs, dark wood tables, and amber lighting that cast everyone in a flattering glow. The bar itself dominated one wall.

Tom stepped inside, his eyes immediately searching for Jess among the patrons. For a terrible moment, he couldn't locate her. Had she changed her mind? Left without telling him? The thought triggered a wave of irrational panic. Then his gaze landed on her at last, seated at the bar, a man in business casual attire already positioned on the stool beside her.

Relief collided with an unexpected flare of possessiveness. Someone had approached her already, had claimed the space beside her, had potentially already ordered the cocktail she now held in her hand. The man looked to be in his early thirties, his suit jacket removed, tie loosened, sleeves rolled up. Not particularly handsome, but not unattractive either. Just... average. Ordinary in a way that somehow magnified Tom's discomfort.

Tom moved to the opposite end of the bar, positioning himself where he could observe without being obvious. "Whiskey, neat," he told the bartender.

She quickly poured his drink.

Payment made and drink in hand, Tom took a seat at one of the small tables positioned to afford a view of the bar where Jess sat.

Jess appeared engaged in conversation, her body angled slightly toward the man, maintaining polite interest without excessive enthusiasm. Even from across the room, Tom could read her like a book. The slight stiffness in her shoulders betrayed her nervousness despite her outward composure.

The man seemed to be doing most of the talking, gesturing occasionally with one hand while Jess nodded. Nothing about him seemed particularly compelling, at least not from Tom's perspective. An ordinary business traveler, probably in town for a conference, hoping to alleviate the loneliness of a hotel room by chatting up a beautiful woman at the bar.

Tom sipped his whiskey. As he watched, he noticed other men in the bar glancing at Jess. A pair in suits at a nearby table kept looking in her direction, one nudging the other and nodding. Another man, silver-haired and distinguished, cast repeated glances over his martini.

That's my wife, he thought. All these men watching her, desiring her, unaware that she belongs to me. The thought carried both satisfaction and a strange vulnerability. She was his, yes, but she was also her own person, making choices independently from him, capable of attracting other men's attention without his involvement.

Tom was distracted from these thoughts when the man beside Jess checked his phone. The man's expression changed, and he appeared to apologize to Jess before signaling the bartender for his bill. Whatever the message contained, it seemed sufficiently urgent to cut their interaction short.

After the man departed, Tom observed Jess's momentary solitude with fascination. She straightened her posture, smoothed her dress, and took a sip of her cocktail. The self-awareness in these small gestures revealed volumes about her mental state. She was conscious of being observed, of occupying a role unfamiliar to her usual identity. Yet even in her discomfort, she was magnificent.

The vacancy beside her didn't last long. Almost immediately, a second man approached. This one was altogether different from the first, tall, around forty, in a tailored suit. His dark hair was styled. Everything about him exuded confidence, from his straight shoulders to his smile.

This was no ordinary business traveler. This man belonged in spaces like The Fleming.

Tom fidgeted with his whiskey glass. This scenario suddenly felt vastly different from what he had imagined. The theoretical "strangers flirting with my wife" fantasy had manifested in the form of this handsome, obviously wealthy man who now occupied the stool beside Jess.

The man said something that made Jess laugh, her head tilting back in a gesture of unguarded amusement that Tom recognized from their private moments. The sound didn't carry across the bar's ambient noise, but Tom could visualize it perfectly, that rich, genuine laugh that transformed her features, that made her eyes crinkle at the corners, that invited others to share in her delight.

Jealousy cut through Tom's arousal. That laugh belonged to him, to moments between them, not to this stranger in his expensive suit with his charm. Yet even as this possessiveness flared, Tom's cock responded to the scene unfolding in front of him, his arousal intensifying alongside his anxiety.

Jess touched the man's arm briefly as she spoke, a gesture she employed naturally in conversation. Tom had seen her do it countless times, with friends, with colleagues, with clients. It meant nothing beyond her engaging personality, her instinct for connection. Yet in this context, observed by a stranger who might interpret it as flirtation, the touch carried different implications.

The man leaned closer to Jess, presumably to be heard over the bar's noise. The motion brought their faces nearer, created an intimacy in their positioning that excluded others. Tom's emotional response fluctuated wildly, arousal at witnessing his fantasy unfold in real time, anxiety about potentially losing control of the situation he had initiated.

A server momentarily blocked Tom's view of the bar, triggering a spike of irrational panic. What if Jess and the man had somehow disappeared in those few seconds? What if they'd moved elsewhere, beyond his sight, beyond his knowledge? The thought was absurd, Jess

would never leave without telling him, yet the alcohol combined with the heightened emotions of the scenario amplified his anxiety.

When his sightline cleared, they were still there, just as he'd known they would be. Yet his heart continued racing, his palms clammy around the whiskey glass.

Tom struggled to interpret their interaction from across the room. Their body language suggested mutual interest, but what were they discussing? What version of herself was Jess presenting to this stranger? Was she fabricating a persona, creating an alternate identity for this experiment? Or was she essentially herself, merely omitting her marital status?

As Tom watched, Jess checked her watch, then said something to the man before standing. The man remained seated, watching as she walked toward the hallway marked with restroom signs.

Tom immediately pulled out his phone, typing a message.

Tom: Everything ok?

Instead of a text response, his phone rang. Tom answered.

"Hey," he said, keeping his voice low.

"Oh my god, I can't believe we're doing this," Jess's voice came through, breathless and slightly giddy. The wine from dinner combined with the adrenaline of the scenario had clearly lowered her usual inhibitions. "This is insane, Tom. Absolutely insane."

"You seem to be enjoying yourself," Tom observed, trying to keep any hint of jealousy from his tone.

"It's... weird. But kind of exciting too," Jess admitted. "That first guy was boring, some marketing executive in town for a conference. But this second one is something else."

"I noticed," Tom said. "Who is he?"

"Frank Ellison," Jess replied. "He's from Dallas, here for an energy conference. He's staying in the penthouse suite."

"The penthouse?" Tom repeated.

"Yes, which he's already invited me to see," Jess said, her voice carrying a note of disbelief. "Can you believe that? We've been talking for like fifteen minutes, and he's already suggesting we go upstairs."

"Are you considering it?" he asked.

"What? No!" Jess exclaimed. "Why, are you asking me to?" Her tone suggested genuine shock at the implication.

"No," Tom said quickly. "Definitely not. I mean, the idea turns me on but also terrifies me."

"I was just surprised by how direct he was," Jess explained. "I assumed men would flirt a little, maybe try for a phone number. I didn't expect an immediate invitation upstairs."

"Are you ready to leave?" Tom asked. "We can call it a successful experiment and head home."

"Yes," Jess confirmed. "I've had enough excitement for one night. I told him I needed to use the restroom, but I'm not sure how to extract myself without being rude."

"I can play my role and come pick you up at the bar," Tom suggested.

"Perfect," Jess agreed. "Give me two minutes to get back out there."

"Will do," Tom replied.

The call ended, and Tom remained seated, waiting. He watched as Jess returned to the bar minutes later, resuming her conversation with Frank. Instead of immediately playing his role, however, Tom found himself hesitating. There was something compelling about the scene, something that kept him rooted to his spot despite their agreement.

He pulled out his phone again, this time to order an Uber. As he completed the request, Tom continued observing Jess and Frank. Their conversation appeared to have shifted subtly. Frank leaned closer, speaking directly into Jess's ear. Her expression cycled through surprise, amusement, and something else Tom couldn't quite identify from this distance.

Frank reached into his jacket, extracting what appeared to be a business card. He wrote something on it, his phone number perhaps, before offering it to Jess. She accepted it with a smile, tucking it into her small clutch.

Tom was about to finally approach when, to his shock, Frank stood and offered his arm to Jess. She accepted it, and they began walking toward the bar's exit together.

Panic surged through Tom. Had they misunderstood each other somehow? Had she changed her mind about leaving with Frank? He stood, quickly pushing through the Friday evening crowd, heart hammering as he tried to catch sight of them again.

By the time Tom emerged into the hotel lobby, he was genuinely alarmed. His eyes darted frantically across the elegant space, scanning the concierge desk, the seating areas, the elevators. No sign of them. Had their game become something real?

Just as he pulled out his phone to call her, he spotted her, standing alone near the entrance. Relief flooded his system, followed immediately by confusion.

He moved toward her.

"That's for taking so long," Jess said with a mischievous smile.

"What just happened?" Tom demanded. "I thought you wanted me to approach you at the bar."

"I did," Jess confirmed. "But you were taking forever, so Frank suggested we 'give your husband a scare.'"

Tom froze. "Your husband?" he repeated. "You told him you were married?"

"You're not going to believe this," Jess said. "He knew what we were doing. The whole time."

"What do you mean he knew?" Tom asked.

"He said a man matching your description kept watching me with 'anxious interest,' as he put it," Jess explained. "He immediately guessed I was married and that you were my husband."

"Are you serious?" Tom shook his head in disbelief.

"Completely serious. We ended up having this bizarre conversation about hotwifing."

"Hotwifing?" Tom repeated.

"Apparently, it means wife sharing," Jess confirmed. "He said has some experience with it."

Tom struggled to process this information. "So he knew the entire time that we were... experimenting?"

"Yep," Jess said. "He told me it was 'refreshing' to meet a couple willing to explore their boundaries."

"And he still propositioned you for sex? Even knowing I was right there?"

"The man was shameless, Tom," Jess shook her head in wonderment. "He told me he was discreet, successful, and experienced. Said he'd been with several married women whose husbands knew about it."

Tom ran a hand through his hair, still processing the unexpected turn of events. "Did you give him your number?"

"No, I gave him my name but a fake number," Jess replied, opening her clutch to extract the business card. "Look what he wrote on the back, though."

Tom took the card, turning it over to find a room number scribbled in blue pen. "2801," he read aloud. "The penthouse suite?"

"That's what he said," Jess said. "He said the invitation was open if I changed my mind. Or if we changed our minds, I should say. He made it clear you'd be welcome too."

"What did he mean by me being welcome too?" Tom asked, furrowing his brow. "Was he suggesting... what, a threesome?"

Jess looked at him with a mixture of amusement and disbelief. "Actually, I asked him the same thing. His answer was... interesting."

“How so?”

“He said you could watch him, and I quote, ‘blow my mind.’ According to Frank, there’s nothing more erotic than watching your wife get satisfied by another man.”

“Jesus,” Tom muttered. “Pretty presumptuous of him.”

“It gets better,” Jess continued. “When I told him we weren’t looking for anything like that, he just smiled and said, ‘Tonight, maybe not. But the invitation stands.’” She shook her head. “Unbelievable.”

“It’s also a hell of a coincidence,” Tom remarked. “Of all the hotels in Austin, we happen to choose one where a guy experienced in ‘the lifestyle’ is staying. And of all the women in the bar, he approaches you.”

“I was thinking the same thing,” Jess agreed. “Though to be fair, I was the only woman sitting alone at the bar.”

“Still,” Tom insisted. “What are the odds that the first person to really engage with you would be someone who recognized what we were doing?”

Jess tucked the card into her clutch. “Maybe it’s not as rare as we think? Or maybe people like Frank have a radar for these situations.”

“A radar for experimenting couples?” Tom asked skeptically.

“Maybe we were more obvious than we realized. You weren’t exactly subtle with your staring.”

“I wasn’t staring,” Tom protested automatically.

Jess raised an eyebrow. “Tom, you practically burned holes through Frank’s back with your eyes.”

“Was it really that obvious?”

“To someone looking for it? Apparently so.” Jess placed her hand on his arm. “Don’t worry, I doubt anyone else noticed.”

Tom nodded, wondering how many other supposed coincidences in their lives might actually be patterns they simply hadn’t recognized.

“Is our Uber here yet?” she asked.

Tom checked his phone. “Two minutes away.”

They moved outside to await their ride.

“Are you upset?” she asked, looking up at Tom, studying his face. “About what happened with Frank?”

“Of course not,” Tom replied. “Just... processing, I guess.”

Jess laughed softly. “When I agreed to this little game, I didn’t imagine ending the night with a business card from a penthouse dwelling energy executive who offered to sleep with me in front of my husband.”

“Life’s full of surprises,” Tom said.

“The whole thing was surreal,” Jess continued. “Like we stepped into some parallel universe where these conversations happen casually at hotel bars.”

“Do you regret it?” Tom asked.

“No,” Jess replied. “It was educational, if nothing else.”

The Uber arrived, a silver Honda. They climbed into the backseat, Jess nestling against Tom’s side.

As they pulled away from the hotel, Tom glanced up at the building’s upper floors, wondering which windows belonged to penthouse suite 2801, where Frank Ellison was presumably returning now.

Lips entangled, bodies pressed together, Tom and Jess lay naked in their bed.

The ride home had passed in charged silence, punctuated by playful touches. They’d undressed, brushed their teeth side by side while exchanging mischievous looks in the bathroom mirror, then tumbled into bed.

Tom ran his hand along Jess’s side, tracing her waist, the flare of her hip. Her skin felt electric beneath his fingertips, responsive to even the lightest touch. She deepened their kiss, her tongue exploring his mouth.

Earlier that evening, before they’d left for Xenia, he’d made a mental note to focus on Jess’s pleasure.

Breaking the kiss, Tom began a slow journey downward, his lips trailing across Jess’s jawline, down her throat.

When he got to her breasts he took each nipple between his lips in turn, using his tongue and the edge of teeth until she squirmed beneath him. Her responsiveness tonight seemed heightened, perhaps from the night’s unusual events or the wine they’d shared at dinner.

“God, that feels amazing,” Jess whispered, her back arching off the mattress.

Tom continued his downward path, kissing across her stomach, dipping his tongue into her navel, his hands gently pressing her thighs apart as he settled between them. He glanced up, finding her eyes watching him.

Jess bit her lip, nodding, her eyes never leaving his.

Tom lowered his head, delivering a soft kiss to her inner thigh first, then the other, delaying contact. He could smell her, could see the glistening evidence of her arousal.

When he finally made contact with her pussy, Jess let out a soft gasp, her hands immediately finding his hair. Tom licked along her folds, tasting her, savoring the flavor. He took his time, wanting to make this about her pleasure.

“Right there,” Jess murmured as his tongue found her clit.

Tom obeyed. He sucked her clit gently between his lips. The sounds she made, soft moans, quiet gasps, fueled his determination.

Without breaking the contact between his mouth and her pussy, Tom brought his hand up. He slid two fingers inside her, feeling her immediate contraction around them. He began a steady rhythm, thrusting in and out while continuing to work her clit with his tongue.

“Oh fuck,” Jess gasped, her hips rising off the bed.

Tom increased the pace slightly, his fingers moving more quickly as his tongue pressed against her clit.

Somewhere in the back of his mind, a question arose. What exactly did Bob do differently? What techniques elicited those multiple orgasms Jess had mentioned? But Tom pushed the thought aside, focusing instead on the woman beneath him, on her responses, on what he knew she enjoyed.

It didn't take long for Jess's thighs to begin trembling, a tell that she was approaching climax. Tom intensified his efforts, fingers continuing their rhythmic thrusts as his tongue moved faster.

“Tom, I'm gonna...” Jess didn't finish the sentence, her words dissolving into a cry as her body tensed.

Tom felt her pussy clench around his fingers. He maintained the pressure and rhythm, extending her pleasure as she came, her hips bucking against his face.

As her movements slowed and the tension began leaving her body, Tom eased back, placing soft kisses against her inner thighs while she caught her breath. He looked up at her flushed face, her closed eyes, satisfaction swelling within him at the sight of her pleasure.

“Come here,” Jess said after a moment.

Tom moved up her body, kissing her stomach, her breasts, her neck before reaching her mouth. She kissed him deeply, tasting herself on his lips.

He positioned himself between her legs, the head of his cock resting against her entrance. He paused, looking into her eyes.

Jess nodded, her hands sliding down to grasp his ass, pulling him toward her. “Fuck me,” she whispered.

Tom pushed forward, entering her warm and wet pussy. He quickly established a rhythm, not too fast, not too slow, watching her face.

Jess wrapped her legs around his waist, changing the angle, allowing him deeper access. “God, that’s good,” she sighed, her hands moving to his shoulders.

Tom leaned down to kiss her, maintaining the rhythm of his hips. There was comfort in this position, in its familiarity, yet tonight it felt charged with added significance after the evening’s events.

“Did you wonder what I might have done if I’d gone to his room?” Jess asked suddenly.

The question caught Tom off guard. “What?”

“Frank,” Jess clarified, her eyes locked on his. “Did you wonder what might have happened if I’d taken him up on his offer?”

“Yes,” he admitted.

“Tell me,” she urged. “Tell me what you imagined.”

Tom slowed his thrusts. “I imagined you going up in the elevator,” he began. “Wondering if you were really going to go through with it.”

“Mmm,” Jess encouraged.

“He’d open the door,” Tom continued, the fantasy building as he spoke. “The penthouse would be massive.”

“And then what?” Jess pressed, her fingers digging into his shoulders.

“He’d offer you a drink,” Tom said. “You’d accept.”

Jess’s breathing quickened as the fantasy unfolded between them.

“He wouldn’t waste time,” Tom went on. “He’d make it clear what he wanted. He’d take the glass from your hand, set it aside.”

“Would he kiss me?” Jess asked.

The question struck Tom. “No kissing” had been his rule, the emotional firewall he’d insisted on maintaining. Yet here was Jess, in the middle of their fantasy, pushing that boundary.

Tom felt that familiar twist of jealousy and arousal. Something about the fantasy, the heat of the moment, perhaps the wine still lingering in his system, made him want to cross even his own lines.

“Yes,” he said. “He’d kiss you, and you’d let him.”

Jess’s eyes widened slightly. “Even though that’s your rule?” she asked.

“Yes, baby,” Tom replied. When had their roles reversed like this? When had Jess become the one testing limits while he became the one yielding? “In this fantasy... yes.”

Jess moaned. “And then?”

“He’d undress you,” Tom said, the words coming faster now. “Revealing your body bit by bit. He’d touch you everywhere.”

“Where?” Jess demanded, her hands moving to Tom’s ass, pulling him deeper.

“Your tits first,” Tom replied. “He’d cup them, squeeze them, maybe suck your nipples until you moaned.”

“God, yes,” Jess gasped.

“Then he’d move lower,” Tom continued. “Your pussy would already be wet.”

“For him?” Jess asked, a glint in her eyes.

Yes,” Tom replied.

“What would he do next?” she asked.

“He’d want to taste you,” Tom said. “He’d go down on you, right there.”

Jess’s breathing grew more ragged. “Would I let him?”

“Yes,” Tom said. “You’d let him taste you, and you’d come.”

Jess moaned, the fantasy clearly affecting her as much as it was affecting Tom. Her pussy felt impossibly hot and tight around him.

“And then?” Jess prompted.

“Then he’d fuck you,” Tom said, his voice strained with the effort of maintaining control while discussing such provocative scenarios. “He’d push you onto the bed and drive his cock into you.”

“Would I like it?” Jess asked, her voice taking on a challenging edge.

“You’d love it,” Tom replied, matching her tone. “You’d wrap your legs around him like you do with me, urging him deeper, harder.”

The image burned in Tom’s mind as he spoke, the fantasy both torturous and intoxicating. The fictional Frank fucking his wife in a penthouse suite, Jess responding with the same enthusiasm she showed him.

“Enough,” Jess said suddenly, placing her hands on his chest. “Stop moving.”

Tom stilled, confused by the abrupt command.

“Get on your back,” Jess instructed.

Tom complied, withdrawing from her and rolling onto his back. His cock stood straight up, wet with her juices, almost painfully hard from their dirty talk.

Jess straddled him, but instead of sinking down onto his cock as he expected, she positioned herself so that her pussy rested against his shaft, not taking him inside.

“This is what I did with Bob,” she explained. “The pussyjob.”

She began moving, sliding her pussy along the length of his cock.

The physical sensation was incredible, but what truly drove Tom wild was the connection to what she'd done with Bob. This wasn't abstract dirty talk about a hypothetical encounter, this was Jess showing him exactly what had transpired.

“Fuck,” Tom groaned, watching the point of contact where her pussy lips surrounded his shaft, her clit grinding against the underside of his cock.

“See how good it feels?” Jess asked, her pace increasing.

“Show me how you moved with him,” he urged.

Jess obliged, adjusting her position slightly to better stimulate her clit against his shaft. Her movements grew more urgent, more focused on her own pleasure. Tom watched, fascinated by her expression, by the way she took what she needed.

“I almost let him inside me,” Jess reminded him, her eyes locked on his. “I was right there, his cock head just barely touching my hole.”

“Jesus, Jess,” Tom groaned, his hands finding her hips.

“It would have been so easy,” she continued. “Just a tiny shift and he would have filled me.”

“Fuck, Jess, that's so hot,” Tom muttered.

“I want you inside me,” she said, lifting her hips and reaching between them to guide his cock to her entrance.

She sank down, taking him fully. Tom groaned.

Jess began bouncing on him, not the teasing friction of before but full, deep strokes that took her to the base each time. Her hands braced on his chest, she worked herself on his cock.

“I love your cock inside me,” Jess said. “I love how perfectly we fit together.”

Tom's hands found her breasts, squeezing them gently as she moved. "You feel fucking amazing," he told her.

Jess increased her pace, bouncing on his cock with abandon, her breasts jiggling with each movement. The rhythm she established spoke of urgency, of need that transcended consideration for technique. Each downward motion drove Tom deeper inside her, his cock disappearing completely before she rose again, only to impale herself once more.

"God, you feel so good," she murmured, her voice fractured by the impact.

Tom watched, transfixed by the sight of his wife above him.

"Right there," she whispered, more to herself than to him. "Right fucking there."

"You're a goddess," he told her. "Look at you."

Jess met his gaze with an intensity that spoke of both their physical connection and something deeper. For a moment, the frenzy of their coupling paused as they watched one another, husband and wife engaged in this most intimate act.

Tom felt himself approaching the edge. The visual feast of her body in motion, the tight wetness of her pussy gripping him, combined into something he couldn't resist much longer.

"Jess," he warned. "I'm close."

Without hesitation, Jess lifted off him completely. Before Tom could protest, she had moved down his body, taking his cock into her mouth.

"Fuck, I'm coming," he gasped.

Jess maintained eye contact as she swallowed his cum, never breaking the seal of her lips around him, taking everything he offered. When the final spasms subsided, she released him.

"God damn," Tom breathed, feeling boneless against the mattress.

Jess moved up to lie beside him, her head finding its place on his shoulder, her hand resting on his chest.

As they settled into the quiet that followed lovemaking, Tom's mind refused to still. His heartbeat gradually slowed while Jess's breathing softened against his shoulder.

His thoughts rearranged themselves around a realization that had been forming throughout the evening.

He'd initiated this exploration with Bob, had confessed his voyeuristic fantasies, had encouraged each step. Yet tonight, Jess had taken control of their fantasy.

Her question about going to Frank's penthouse had emerged from her imagination, not his prompting. The fantasy she'd constructed wasn't meant just for his arousal but reflected her

own curiosity, her own desires.

When she'd asked about Frank kissing her, the boundary he'd insisted on maintaining, he'd felt himself yield. In that moment, the rule had seemed arbitrary, a distinction without meaning in the context of their shared imagination.

As sleep came, Tom wondered what other surprises awaited them. What other aspects of Jess's desires remained undiscovered? What boundaries might dissolve next, not through his encouragement but through her initiative?

Bob Caldwell sat at his kitchen table, carefully wrapping a package in rich blue paper. His fingers moved, folding corners, smoothing edges, applying tape. The gift itself, immaculately packed, represented over a week of painstaking work and several hundred dollars in materials.

Three failed attempts had preceded this final, perfect version. The first kit had yielded a product with air bubbles marring the surface. The second attempt captured his size but lacked the detailed veining he wanted preserved. The third nearly succeeded, but the base wasn't stable enough. This fourth attempt achieved perfection, an exact replica of his cock, from the prominent head to the thick shaft to the heavy balls.

"Perfect," Bob muttered, securing the final fold with tape.

He added a simple white ribbon, tied in a simple bow. Nothing garish or juvenile, nothing that suggested Valentine's sentimentality or birthday festivity. This was something else, a bridge between where they'd been and where they were headed.

Bob checked his watch. 2:37 PM. Jess's flight to Savannah departed at 6 PM. She'd likely be leaving for the airport at 4:30. The timing needed to be precise, late enough that she couldn't come downstairs to discuss the gift, early enough that she'd have time to inspect it properly before leaving.

He still remembered her text from earlier that morning.

Jess: Swamped with Savannah prep today. Won't make it downstairs. See you when I'm back!

He'd replied with casual understanding, giving no hint of disappointment. Better to seem unfazed.

Bob moved to his laptop, opening the folder of surveillance recordings from the past week. Tom and Jess's bedroom activities had intensified remarkably since Thursday's pussyjob encounter. Every night they'd come together, as if their exploration with him had awakened something dormant in their relationship.

Friday night's recording showed them returning from dinner, Tom in his suit, Jess in that stunning black dress. Their conversation had revealed an unexpected adventure. They'd encountered a man named Frank who had invited Jess to his hotel room.

The footage from Saturday night had been equally captivating, slower lovemaking punctuated by dirty talk referencing their experiences. Sunday night they'd fucked twice, once before dinner and once after.

Last night, Monday, they'd been at it again, with Tom bending Jess over the edge of the bed. Her face was not visible from the camera angle, but her moans had come through the audio feed. Later, lying in bed, they'd discussed her upcoming trip, with Tom suggesting she could "have fun" in Savannah if she wanted.

The suggestion had intrigued Bob. Was Tom actually encouraging Jess to explore with other men beyond their arrangement? Or was he simply feeding his own fantasy, knowing she wouldn't actually pursue anything?

Either way, the recordings provided invaluable intelligence. Each night revealed more about their dynamic, their triggers, their boundaries. Most importantly, they showed Bob exactly what worked for Jess, what made her gasp, what made her moan, what made her come.

And notably, what Tom couldn't do that Bob could.

The squirting remained a secret. Jess had experienced it multiple times with Bob, yet never once mentioned it to Tom. Bob had watched carefully for any hint that she might have revealed it, but it remained conspicuously absent from their bedroom conversations.

Bob found this omission particularly telling. In a relationship supposedly built on complete honesty about their sexual exploration, why hide this? The answer seemed obvious to Bob. She feared hurting Tom's ego. She didn't want her husband knowing another man could trigger responses he couldn't.

It created leverage, certainly. He could reveal this information to Tom at some critical juncture, potentially creating division between them. But was such manipulation even necessary anymore? Everything seemed to be progressing perfectly without additional interference.

The pussyjob had been a masterstroke. Bob had worried it might push boundaries too far, too fast. Instead, Jess had embraced it completely. He'd felt her wetness sliding along his shaft, had watched her face as pleasure overtook her, had noted how she'd hovered above his cock head, contemplating actual penetration.

Later that night, she'd confirmed it to Tom. "I really wanted to."

Their timeline had accelerated substantially. The final boundary, penetration, now seemed inevitable rather than aspirational.

Reviewing the footage had required discipline. Bob had not masturbated at all despite the temptation of the nightly recordings. He needed to maintain his reserves, to ensure his next encounter with Jess would be memorable, overwhelming.

The evidence of his self-control was apparent in his balls, heavier and fuller than usual. When Jess returned from Savannah, he'd have over a week's worth saved up for her.

Bob closed the laptop, turning his attention back to the wrapped package. The dildo would serve multiple purposes. On the most basic level, it would give Jess a way to experience his size during her trip, to familiarize herself with his dimensions without the pressure of actual intercourse. This familiarity would make the eventual penetration less intimidating.

More importantly, it established an escalation path. The dildo wasn't just a toy. It was a promise, a preview, an inevitability. By accepting it, Jess would implicitly acknowledge where they were headed.

Tom's reaction would be equally telling. Would he encourage Jess to use it? Would he want to watch? Would he incorporate it into their lovemaking? Each possibility revealed something about the dynamics at play.

Bob leaned back in his chair, running a hand over his bald head. These young couples, they thought themselves so progressive, so enlightened. They didn't realize they were merely acting out patterns as old as humanity itself.

Women were fundamentally designed to seek the strongest provider, the most capable protector for their offspring. Modern society had clouded this basic biological reality with notions of romance and partnership, but the underlying imperative remained unchanged.

Jessica Marshall was no different. She'd married young, choosing Tom with his college education and professional promise. A safe choice, a stable choice. But deep down, her body responded to more primal cues. Physical size, dominance, raw masculinity.

Bob had these in abundance. Where Tom was lean and boyish, Bob was broad and powerful. Where Tom hesitated, Bob commanded. Where Tom's performance lasted minutes, Bob could go for hours.

Jess's body recognized these differences even if her conscious mind hadn't yet caught up. Her responses, the squirting orgasms, the flushed skin, the trembling thighs, told the true story. Her body knew what her brain wasn't ready to admit.

The question was how to leverage this advantage, how to make the eventual transition seem like her idea rather than his manipulation. Getting her pregnant would be the ultimate victory, but that required careful groundwork.

He needed to position himself as the superior provider, the more capable protector. He needed to create contrast between himself and Tom, to highlight Tom's weaknesses while showcasing his own strengths.

Bob glanced at his watch again. 3:12 PM. Time was moving faster than he'd realized. He picked up the wrapped package, inspecting his handiwork one final time. The blue paper was smooth and unwrinkled, the white ribbon precisely tied. Nothing about the exterior hinted at the contents within.

He set the package down, mentally rehearsing what he would say when he delivered it. Too eager and he'd seem desperate. Too casual and the significance might be lost. The tone needed to be just right, thoughtful but not overly sentimental, suggestive without being crass.

Bob moved to his bedroom where he changed into a fresh button-down shirt, light blue, crisp, recently ironed. No unnecessary fanciness, but presentable.

He checked his reflection in the bathroom mirror, ensuring nothing in his appearance would detract from the moment. Presentation mattered, particularly when delivering something as significant as this gift.

Bob returned to the kitchen, where the package waited on the table. He picked it up, weighing it in his hands. Not heavy, but substantial enough to feel significant. Not so large as to be unwieldy, but big enough to command attention.

The minutes ticked by with excruciating slowness as Bob waited for the appropriate time to make his move.

At 3:58 PM, Bob decided the moment had arrived. He picked up the package and made his way through his apartment, out and around to the front entrance of the house.

Standing in front of the Marshall's door, Bob took a deep breath and pressed the doorbell. The chime echoed inside, followed by the sound of footsteps approaching.

When Jess opened the door, she looked surprised to see him. She was fully dressed in travel clothes, dark jeans, a comfortable looking blouse, and a light cardigan draped over her arm. Her hair was pulled back in a ponytail, her makeup minimal but flattering.

"Bob," she said. "I wasn't expecting you."

"I know you're busy getting ready for your trip," he replied with an apologetic smile. "But I wanted to drop this off before you left."

He extended the package toward her. Jess hesitated momentarily before accepting it, curiosity evident in her expression.

"What is it?" she asked, turning the package in her hands.

"Just a little something for your trip," Bob replied. "I thought you might enjoy it while you're away."

Jess's eyebrows rose slightly. "Should I open it now?"

"If you'd like," Bob nodded. "It's entirely up to you."

“Okay,” she said, carefully untying the ribbon.

Bob watched as her fingers worked at the tape, unwrapping the blue paper to reveal the plain white box beneath. She lifted the lid, pushed aside the tissue paper, and froze.

The color drained from her face, then rushed back as a deep blush. Her lips parted in shock as she stared at the contents.

There it was, an exact silicon replica of Bob’s cock, balls and all. The detail was impeccable, every vein and ridge captured perfectly. The size alone was unmistakable.

“Oh my god,” Jess whispered, looking up at him with wide eyes.

“Something to remember me by while you’re gone,” Bob said simply. “I figured if you couldn’t come downstairs today, I’d send a piece of me with you to Savannah.”

Jess seemed at a loss for words, her gaze dropping back to the dildo then rising to meet his again.

“I... I don’t know what to say,” she managed.

“You don’t have to say anything,” Bob assured her. “Just something to consider while you’re away. For you to use however you see fit.”

The implication was unspoken but unmistakable. Bob watched as Jess processed the gift, the flush in her cheeks deepening.

“I should let you finish packing,” he said, stepping back. “Have a safe trip, princess.”

He turned and walked away, resisting the urge to look back. He didn’t need to see her face to know the impact he’d made. The dildo would occupy her thoughts throughout her trip, would create a physical connection despite the distance, would prepare her body for what was to come.

Bob smiled to himself as he entered his apartment. The foundations were being laid. Jess might be going to Savannah, but a part of him, the most important part, would be going with her.

When she returned, he was confident they’d cross the final threshold. Not because he would push or pressure, but because Jess would come to the conclusion herself. The dildo was just one more step in that inevitable progression.

Taking a seat on the couch, Bob indulged in a moment of genuine optimism. Getting Jessica Marshall pregnant no longer seemed like a distant fantasy. It was becoming an achievable goal. Every encounter, every boundary crossed, every secret shared brought him one step closer to his ultimate objective.

By the time Jess returned from Savannah, she’d have spent four nights with his replica for company. Four nights imagining what the real thing might feel like inside her. Four nights

considering the possibilities.

The waiting game continued, but now the odds had shifted dramatically in his favor. The image of Jess's face when she'd opened the package, shock, embarrassment, and unmistakable curiosity, told him everything he needed to know.

The next move would be hers, but Bob had stacked the deck. The question wasn't if she'd take that final step, but when.

Bob moved to his window, watching as Tom's Lexus pulled into the driveway at 4:17 PM. The pretty boy consultant was home earlier than usual, likely adjusting his schedule to drive Jess to the airport. Bob observed Tom jogging towards the house.

What Bob wouldn't give to see Jess's face as she explained the gift, or perhaps she'd hidden it, tucked it away in her luggage where Tom wouldn't find it. That possibility sent a fresh wave of satisfaction through him. A secret between them, something she'd conceal from her husband.

Eleven minutes later, the front door opened again. Tom emerged carrying Jess's suitcase while she followed with her carry-on and purse.

Tom loaded the suitcase into the Lexus's trunk while Jess slid into the passenger seat. Their body language revealed nothing unusual, no tension, no awkwardness that might suggest a confrontation about the gift.

As Tom backed the car out of the driveway, Bob caught a glimpse of Jess's profile through the passenger window. Her expression was unreadable from this distance. Thinking about the gift, perhaps?

Bob stepped away from the window. Four days without Jess would be frustrating, but the anticipation would make her return all the sweeter. In the meantime, he had surveillance footage to review, plans to refine, and self-control to maintain.

When Jess returned from Savannah, he would be ready. His balls would be full, his patience perfected, his strategy honed. And if everything went according to plan, Jessica Marshall would soon be carrying his child, whether she realized it yet or not.

The image of her pregnant with his baby while naive Tom celebrated "his" impending fatherhood was almost too delicious to contemplate. The ultimate victory, the perfect revenge against all the young professional types who thought themselves superior simply because they had degrees hanging on their walls.

Biology didn't care about degrees. Biology responded to strength, to dominance, to virility. Jessica's body would recognize its ideal match, regardless of what her wedding ring symbolized.

Bob turned away from the window, humming tunelessly as he headed to the kitchen. He'd prepare something special for dinner tonight. After all, he had much to celebrate. The pieces

were falling into place, the chessboard arranged as he desired.

Tom Marshall may have won the first round, securing Jessica as his wife. But Bob Caldwell intended to win the game, to claim her body, to plant his seed, to assert the natural order that society pretended to have outgrown.

And Jessica? She was already halfway there, her resistance weakening with each encounter. The dildo would finish what their previous sessions had started. By the time she returned from Savannah, the last barrier would be psychological, not physical.

Bob smiled to himself. Jessica Marshall was about to discover exactly what she'd been missing all these years. And when she did, there would be no turning back.