



THREE TIMES A LADY

A 2 Book Hotwife Series

PETER G JOHNSON

Three Times a Lady: Book 1

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TITLE:

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Author's Note

In my previous story I asked for readers who'd be interested in helping me edit and reduce the number of typos in my stories. Two new friends stepped forward to join CBears, all three of whom have contributed many hours to improve the story and reduce errors.

CBears, RJ, DukeMet – thanks guys. Your help had been invaluable.

Synopsis

'Three Times a Lady'

One of the greatest love songs ever written.

Strangely enough, it's a song from the year my wonderful wife, Lizzy, was born.

Lizzy and Jim – that's us. We were a happy, settled couple in our forties.

We'd had a turbulent 2020. One of our best friends had just lost his wife. On the flip side, even though we were only in our forties, we'd just welcomed a newborn grandchild. The circle of life had given us tears – tears of grief and tears of joy.

Whenever I used to listen to *'Three Times a Lady'*, I thought of Lizzy – thought of her as my lady three times over. My lady as lover, as best friend and as the mother of our wonderful daughter.

But now, two-and-a-half years later, when I listen to that same melody and lyrics, my thoughts are very different.

My thoughts and memories offer a mix of dark introspection and exciting memories as I recall how three very different Sir Galahad's pursued her when my job kept us apart.

Each of these men's very different pursuits and desires taught Lizzy and me new things about each other and tested the fabric of our love and marriage to its very limits.

Chapter 1

Friday 1st January 2021

“Here’s to new life ... to family ... to happiness ... and to loved ones ... here’s to 2021!”

The clock had just struck midnight – 2020 had morphed into 2021. The four of us sat simmering in the hot tub’s bubbling, steamy waters - as happy as life allowed. The only downside for me was the ratio of men to women – three guys to one woman. This downside was offset by the fact that the single woman was my lovely, wonderful wife Lizzy. After all these years, Lizzy still filled out a bikini with the best of them. Her understated, modest prettiness somehow made her curves and sensuality more appealing.

Though another woman would have evened up the numbers. The admiring and none too subtle glances from our two male friends left me feeling more excited than jealous. Ted, a recently widowed ex-Marine and one of our oldest friends, was more subtle about his admiration. His brother-in-law Simon, a washed-up music star from the New Romantic wave in the eighties and like me a Brit, was borderline crude. Although Simon’s salivating glances at Lizzy’s boobs, legs and ass seemed obvious, she pretended not to notice. She may have cut him some slack given his recent loss of his sister, or maybe – like us all – really not noticing his glances due to the effects of the New Year’s Eve booze.

‘No harm, no foul,’ I thought to myself. If Lizzy could cut him some slack, surely I could do the same? After all, he wouldn’t be the first man to lust after the full boobs and shapely ass of my beautiful five-five brunette wife.

Didn’t that wise man Nelson DeMille say, ‘Plagiarism is the sincerest form of flattery.’ So in the world of sex and relationships, isn’t another man lusting after your wife a similar compliment, I asked myself. And anyway, we might not like the egotistical ex-music star, but Lizzy and I weren’t exactly strangers to a few bedroom fantasies about others!

“Cheers! 2021!” We all clinked our glasses. Well, all except one – five out of six wasn’t bad. Our daughter Caitlin clinking along with the four of us in the tub - as she said a brief hello and goodbye, back from her own festive

gathering.

Caitlin gave her ‘Uncle’ Ted a big New Year’s hug –and got her top wet in the process. She, Ted and Rachel, his late wife, had been close. Caitlin was like the daughter they’d never been able to have. Their bond had only grown closer when our daughter had fallen pregnant and Ted and Rachel had, like me and Lizzy, supported Caitlin in her decision to keep the baby.

“Screw them! Screw the whole damned world! You do what you want ... what you know is right, right for you!” Ted had told her more than once during some of the inevitable dark moments Caitlin had been through.

“Fuck the lot of them!” had been Ted’s attitude when discussing all the gossips and backstabbers. This was just the attitude and fighting spirit you’d have expected from a man who’d enlisted at seventeen and worked his way to the top of the US Marine Corps’ cadre of senior NCOs. He succeeded in the Corps through spirit, stubbornness and intelligence. In the Corps, unlike in many walks of life, the color of Ted’s skin presented no barrier to his ascent.

Looking across at him, I smiled because he reminded me so much of the truculent, no-nonsense characters often portrayed by the actor Wendell Pierce. His resemblance was both physical and one of attitude.

Of late, I also often wanted to cry for him. After forty-four years of service, Ted had looked forward to enjoying his loving marriage to Rachel. Though it had been stressed and tested by the demands of separation and new postings, their marriage had been strong. Unfortunately, after forty-four years of sacrifice, the big C ripped his beloved Rachel away just five months after he’d retired from the Corps. During Rachel’s fight with the big C, Master Gunnery Sargeant Edward Washington tearfully nursed her as the cancer slowly ate away at her body. Though her spirit was as strong as her husband’s – it was a battle they couldn’t win and just ten months ago we’d all bawled like babies as we said goodbye to Rachel. All of us howling to the moon at the lack of justice - a good woman taken, no golden years for Ted and Rachel while far less deserving men and women still walked on God’s green earth!

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“Happy New Year, Uncle Simon!” Caitlin clinked. It was rare our daughter

used use such an endearing term of address for Simon. Like the rest of us, she didn't hate him - but she only put up with his self-centered, boorish behavior out of her love for Simon's late sister Rachel. Caitlin's normal quiet animosity hardly likely to be reduced by the way she'd just spotted him drooling and perving over her mom.

"Let's hope those back catalogue royalties keep rolling in!" she smiled and clinked. The drink and festive goodwill overcoming her deeper thoughts, as she kissed him on the cheek before turning to someone she really loved.

"Happy New Year, Uncle Ted!" Caitlin toasted again, this time just the two of them. Sharing a special look, Lizzy squeezed my hand – not as drunk as I thought. She smiled at me softly, our hearts warming to witness two of the people we loved most finding strength and joy in their friendship after such a difficult year. Caitlin accepted the quasi-paternal kiss to her forehead after Ted's oak beam shoulders had shaken with laughter at how wet the hug had made her. Ted then lovingly squeezed our granddaughter's chubby cheek before kissing her the same way.

Caitlin and Ted's wife, Rachel, had been especially close during Caitlin's pregnancy. A closeness that had only gotten stronger when Rachel had discovered her terminal illness. All of us knowing it was her rock-solid determination to support Caitlin and see the baby that had kept Rachel going, pushing well beyond all of the doctors' predictions. A fact proven by the fact that Rachel finally gave up her medical battle one week after Caitlin gave birth.

Seeing Rachel and Ted holding Caitlin's newborn daughter, the grandchild they'd never been able to have – was one of the most emotional moments I've ever known. Only equaled when Caitlin quietly whispered – in a moment just for the three of them – the name of her daughter to Rachel and Ted. Her expression telling two stubborn people she'd brook no argument. They were holding Rachel Jr.

Rachel Jr gurgled and smiled. Even at just less than one year, aside from her mom, Ted seemed to be her favorite person in the whole world. As if somehow she intuitively knew the story and love behind her own name.

Ted laughed and moved the rim of his glass close to the lips of Rachel Jr.

“Uncle Ted ... you’re incorrigible ... she’s a baby, not one of your brawling, bar-hopping marines!” our daughter playfully scolded him.

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Like I said, *‘five out of six clinking in the New Year wasn’t a bad score,’* I thought to myself as Caitlin gave her mom and me each a New Year’s hug. Then headed off to put Rachel Jr to bed in the small home we’d built for them at the back of the one-acre plot that surrounded our modest South Carolina home.

All the time her receding figure was tracked by the lascivious gaze of Ted’s brother-in-law, Simon. Should I have been glad he was no longer ogling my wife?

Hell no! Right now, I wanted to pound him into the ground. Ogling my wife, I could get past – but my daughter! My daughter with her young child – double no, double out-of-bounds and worthy of violence! And – brother-in-law or not – I’m sure Ted would have leant me a fist or two!

Simon wasn’t a terrible man. A little pompous and full of himself – a product of his fifteen-minutes of fame back in the eighties, or maybe the Anglo heritage he, Rachel and I shared!

Whatever the reason, aside from these traits, he could sometimes be good company. And I hated to admit it, but when he cracked open his battered old guitar case and started crooning, he could turn an ordinary evening into a night you’d never forget.

With that kind of power, handsome looks and a masculine six-foot-two frame, it’s no wonder his sixth marriage had just ended. It’s never cool to gloat over other’s misfortune – but even his own late sister Rachel had been most un-English in how she’d described him. Ted and I chuckled on numerous occasions when she called him a ‘man slut’ to his face!

Not that her attempts to shame him seemed to make the slightest difference. Blessed by the gods with the ability to charm and serenade any woman out of her panties, he seemed destined to roam the English-speaking world breaking hearts as he tried to recapture lost adulation and fame.

“Ahem,” I coughed, Simon’s blushed apology a first in all the years we’d

interacted with him on his intermittent visits to his sister. Visits which normally only came after the breakdown of his latest marriage. Although, to his credit, he'd been ever present and a devoted brother ever since the day Ted and Rachel had told him he was going to lose his only living relative.

"Sorry, old fellow, no insult intended ... beer goggles I'm afraid ... forgiven?" he asked, momentarily more naughty six-year-old than lecherous sixty-one-year-old.

"Forgiven," Lizzy replied, recognizing the truth in Simon's explanation. And, objectively speaking, Caitlin shared the same feminine figure and good looks as her mother. And unlike Ted, Simon had not been around to see Caitlin grow from young girl into a young woman. To Ted, Caitlin would always be more like a daughter. Simon, especially a Simon with beer goggles, primarily saw an attractive young woman.

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Though the conversation moved back to safer, more friendly topics, Simon did not stay apologetic and well-behaved for very long. His eyeballs soon resumed looking at Lizzy's bikini-clad cleavage, pretty face and swaying butt whenever she made a trip to the bathroom.

Due in part to the booze, and in part to the emotions of our and Ted's first New Year without Rachel - Lizzy seemed a million miles away. Lost in her thoughts as she snuggled up close to me. Surreptitiously stroking the front of my shorts under the bubbling waters – a most unLizzy thing to do.

In the privacy of our bedroom – Lizzy could be as raunchy and randy as any man. A welcome vestigial effect from her years of nurse training, before she switched careers to spend more time with the young Caitlin.

That training had removed any hint of embarrassment about any part of the human body, and I had been lucky because of it! But in public, her conservative upbringing trumped her four years of nursing school, and she normally adhered to the modest behaviors her parents had modelled. That is, unless booze and the appreciative attention of three horny men acted as a temporary counterweight. Just as they were doing tonight!

"Why do you have to go away so soon," she whined, her hand still stroking me to make clear what she'd miss the most. The tone of her whine similarly

childlike and petulant as Simon's had been when he'd been caught with his hand in the cookie jar, ogling Lizzy's curves.

"Why can't you stay a few extra days ... so you're here for my birthday," she whined again. The way she squeezed my cock and the way she pouted made it clear that I would have received a special reward if I'd been here for her upcoming forty-third celebration. Lizzy had always been an enthusiastic lover, and our tipsy, post birthday love making sessions were amongst some of our most memorable.

But now – unfortunately - my boss had stolen that experience from us. I was realistic enough to know the trip I was being sent on was make-or-break for our company. Malfunctioning equipment in our customer's new fifteen-billion-dollar semiconductor plant in Thailand needed sorting, or the lawsuits would kill us.

My boss had been smart enough to concede my request to delay three days so I'd be there for our granddaughter's first birthday – he knew me well enough to know a refusal would have won first prize in the resignation letter lottery draw. But having agreed to that, he'd stood his ground when I requested another three days so Lizzy and I could celebrate her birthday.

"Not gonna happen, Jim ... I gave you Rachel Jr's party ... I really need you on the ground, seeing what's going wrong ... moding the code, testing it ... undoing all the shit the local guys have screwed up."

I knew he was right ... the local cretins out of our Asia-Pacific office had screwed the implementation up bigtime, and fixing the implementation was going to be a long and complicated process.

"But tell you what, Jimbo ... here's what I'll do for you, I'll upgrade your monthly return flights from Bangkok to Charleston from Business Class to First Class ... and I'll see if I can get the CEO to sign-off on a bigger bonus for you..."

He'd come through on the bonus – and even before the incremental increase, it had been substantial. It was one of the main reasons I was signing up for something that was going to keep me away from Lizzy and my family for a substantial amount of time. That and the fact I did love my job and had been raised to be loyal to my team.

Without being immodest, I knew I was the best person to parachute in to identify and oversee the needed changes. Without the patches and changes, the three-hundred-million dollars' worth of automated manufacturing equipment that we'd installed was just useless junk. So much useless junk that it would earn those courtroom bottom-feeders a fortune in fees as they litigated our company to death if the issues weren't resolved. Not something I was about to let happen on my watch – whatever the attractions of another sexy night with Lizzy to mark the passing of another year. Especially not now that we had to think of the needs of our unwed daughter and our first grandchild.

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“Sorry, honey,” I smiled apologetically, “but maybe we could bring your birthday forward ... you know, make good use of the time before I have to fly...”

Lizzy's pout softened a little. The smallest of mischievous twinkles appeared in her eye. She liked the idea – her playful little smile suggesting she might give me a downpayment as soon as our New Year's guests were gone.

“Hey, don't worry, Lizzy ... me and Zimmer Frame Rambo here will show you a good time on your birthday!” Simon toasted, empty glass held high!

The dirty look ex-Master Gunnery Sargeant Edward Washington and I gave the aging rock star shrank him down to size.

With an old-school traditionalist like Ted, it wasn't the age crack that generated the killing look – even though Simon was only eleven months his junior. No, it was the sharpest of warning signs not to treat Lizzy like that.

“Hey guys, I didn't mean it like that!”

He meant it exactly 'like that'.

Over the months since he'd moved in with Ted to look after his now deceased sister, the four of us had shared many a boozy evening letting off steam and dealing with life's sadnesses and pressures. And there'd been many a bawdy comment during those evenings. But coming so soon after he'd been caught openly ogling Lizzy, and against the backdrop of her own sadness at my absence, his comments were well out of line. Even for Simon.

“Sorry guys,” he whined. His apologies were becoming a bit of a habit.

“Forgiven!” Lizzy smiled. She’d always had a heart of gold. She was always quick to see the best in people, and was never one to hold a grudge. These were qualities that had made me fall in love with her so deeply all those years ago.

“Simon, even with your randy Romeo reputation ... I know you have your moments, have your better side,” she chuckled. “I’m sure you and Ted will do a fine job as my stand-in Sir Galahads ... to replace my missing Knight Errant ... who seems to prefer the fleshpots of Bangkok to being home with his lovely wife.”

“Unfair ... so unfair,” I spluttered. Lizzy’s sense of humor just another reason why I’d fallen for her. The ring of Ted’s mobile rescuing me from any further unfounded accusations as we all piped down so Ted could take his call.

He listened ... laughed ... listened again and then his rumbling laugh and words answered whoever it was on the other end of the phone. Ted’s rich, deep bass leaving his interlocutor in no doubts that his mind was made up.

“Look, Irons ... I don’t care how far we do go back ... how many bar room brawls you claim to have rescued me from ... the answer’s still ‘No’ ... I don’t mind the odd ride with you guys ... but I don’t want anything more involved...”

He listened again, took a deep breath and declared his closing verdict. “I’m sorry, Irons ... I know exactly what kinds of things go on in that Black Knights MC club of yours ... and that’s your prerogative ... you’re all consenting adults ... but it’s not for me ... that’s not the life Rachel and I lived ... so, with respect, the odd ride ... but that’s all!”

Ending the call, he grinned and waved the phone at us as if he needed to explain.

“That guy, Nine-iron ... he was the same back in the Corps ... I love the guy, but I wouldn’t trust him as far as I could throw him ... He’s another guy who’s more ‘*Sir Sicko*’ or ‘*Sir Man-Slut*’ than Sir Galahad!” he chortled. Looking directly at Simon to make clear what he thought about the honor levels of his brother-in-law – another man slut to be bracketed with Nine-

Iron. Whoever Nine-iron was.

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“Anyway, time for bed, I think,” Lizzy beamed, picking up on her earlier forgiveness of Simon’s inappropriate comment - her gentle look to Ted then Simon making clear there were no hard feelings.

A quick dry-off and we walked with Ted and Simon to the gate that separated our two plots. We’d really lucked out when we’d moved here and landed Ted and Rachel as our neighbors.

Simon made some comment about the New Year back home in England and we laughed about how much better the weather and life was on this side of the pond. Ted and Lizzy walking just ahead – his thick arm protectively around her shoulder as they spoke just loud enough for me to hear over Simon’s noisy and opinionated tone.

“Sorry Jim will be away for your birthday ... but, regardless of what my oaf of a brother-in-law may have said ... we will make sure you have a proper evening ... and, I just want you to know, that while Jim’s away ... I’m here for you...”

That earned Ted a smile and a tender, affectionate kiss on the cheek from Lizzy. She really was dreading my impending absence, because my work trip would certainly be the longest we’d been apart since we’d married. Having Ted here while I was abroad made me and Lizzy both feel better.

# Chapter 2

*Friday 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021*

Damn. I loved making love to Lizzy ...

Laying between the soft, welcoming skin of Lizzy's thighs ... feeling the smooth, velvety touch of her arms wrapped around my neck and shoulders as she pulled me in for another passionate, tongue-fighting kiss...

I was in heaven. The Physical pleasure combined with our emotional connection made me think that life couldn't get any better than this.

Her eyes were deep, deep wells of love and emotion that melted my heart. They reminded me of what I'd soon be missing when work took me to the other side of the world.

*'Fuck,' I asked myself. Why? Why did work have to call me away now?'*

These thoughts reverberated around my skull inflicting pain and damage. They were only pushed away when I felt Lizzy's ankles tighten around the small of my back, felt her pussy muscles squeeze me, and witnessed the love in her eyes slowly transform into a teasing twinkle.

*'Come on, big boy ... fuck me ... fuck me hard ... do your worst,'* they seemed to be saying.

I didn't need a second invitation. I pulled her arms from around my neck, pinned them high above her head next to the headboard, and began slamming my hips in and out of her as fast and hard as I could. As I did, I twisted my hips and pushed my cock in as deep as I could. I loved how my actions changed her face. No longer able to maintain her teasing, playful mask, her eyelids began fluttering from the pure pleasure she was experiencing. I watched as she slowly started building towards an orgasm. Both of us knew she wasn't far from release, so I went harder and deeper. I felt her nails dig into my back and draw blood, but it was blood worth giving as I smothered her mouth with my lips.

"Come on, baby ... come on ... cum for me ... scream for me ... take it, take it all," I shouted at her. My words were silly in the cold light of day, but

these words and the passions we both shared connected Lizzy and me as lovers and best friends. They celebrated our passion, which hadn't dimmed, and which had only strengthened after all these years. United in body and spirit we celebrated our connection in the last few days before work parted us for our first month long separation.

"Hhh-hhh-hhh," she panted with her nails digging deeper and the skin around her eye sockets tightening. In response, I smiled down lovingly.

"Come on, sweetie ... give it me ... show me you love my cock ... how much you need it," I teased. As I did so, I pistoned my hips into Lizzy even harder and faster and felt the tip of my cock heat up.

"Argggh .... Argggh," we shrieked and sobbed as our bodies sizzled with electricity and emotion. Together, our brain cells fused in the most wonderful of ways as if Old Sparky himself was frying our sex parts and our dopamine glands. Together, we tightened our grips dug our nails deeper, and savagely gulped for air. Neither of us thought about the future. Instead, we reveled in the moment. Each of us loved that we still take such pleasure this way after all our years together.

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"Happy birthday to you, happy birthday to you, happy birthday dear Rachel, happy birthday to you."

Was it really only one year since this little bundle of joy had burst into our lives?

So much had happened in the last year, and in the year before.

Our tearful daughter looking like her world had ended, sat us down and revealed that she was pregnant. As tears streamed down her face, she told us she did not intend to marry the man who'd got her pregnant, but she was determined to keep the baby.

After that conversation, our daughter slowly began rebuilding her life and confidence. This process was greatly helped by Ted and Rachel. They repeatedly reached out to her to provide infusions of love, support and fighting spirit.

While Rachel's pregnancy progressed, everyone had to deal with the sad

reality of Rachel's aggressive pancreas cancer. We had to watch as Rachel, in spite of medicine's best efforts, wasted away. The sadness of this was almost matched by observing Ted's heart break. When he thought no-one was looking, Ted's face would reveal the depths of his anguish at seeing the woman he loved in extreme pain and knowing that he'd soon lose her.

Caitlin's pregnancy was the only thing that made Rachel's tragedy remotely bearable. The excitement from witnessing Caitlin's pregnancy provided a counterbalance to the pain and desolation caused by Rachel's cancer.

"Pop ... pop," Rachel Jr happy gurgled. As she did, her tiny fist gripped Ted's stubby brown finger with surprising determination. He may have been a big, soft, Teddy Bear under his gruff Marine Corps exterior, but Ted had been adamant that he was too young to be addressed with any title that began with the letter 'G'. Consequently, almost from the first hour she'd emerged from her mother's womb, Ted had coached and manipulated Rachel Jr to call him something other than 'grandpa.' Then, a month ago little Rachel Jr's first words had been 'Pop ... pop.' None of us remotely minded that our granddaughter had honored Ted by calling him by name before her mom or us.

"Hey there, dinkums," Ted gurgled back. Since his beloved Rachel had passed, he never appeared happier than when he had Rachel Jr nestled in his arms. Caring and devoted – Ted was totally smitten by Rachel Jr. I imagined that the way Ted relaxed and played with her was very different than how he conducted himself during his many years commanding and training young soldiers. The men who'd been lucky enough to come under the ever-watchful gaze of Gunnery Sargeant Edward Washington considered themselves fortunate, but their 'Gunny' was never tender or soft. We'd never seen Ted in action; but over the years of our friendship, we'd heard enough to recognize that there was a big difference between 'Gunny' and the man now wrapped around the finger of our daughter's little one-year-old.

Lizzy and I had first met and become friends with Rachel and Ted nearly fifteen years ago. We met when Caitlin was a precocious five-year-old. She and her mom had been out shopping at the local grocery store. As they shopped, she'd eavesdropped on another couple as they discussed which cuts of meat to buy.

Standing next to them while waiting for their turn with the butcher, Caitlin had such an acute ear for sound that she accosted the lady in the couple. She boldly stated, *'You talk just like my daddy...'*

After that introduction, the rest was history. The very next day we were invited to Ted and Rachel's home. At their house, we bonded over twenty-one-day aged steaks and beers. We also discovered that Rachel and I, before we'd married our respective American spouses, had grown up within twenty miles of each other in the area just north of London.

Ted and Rachel had no children of their own ('a medical problem', we didn't pry). With Ted's frequent absences for deployment, Rachel soon became a close and much valued friend.

Lizzy's mom lived in the rural expanses of Wyoming more than two thousand miles away from our home in Charleston, South Carolina. It was these rural expanses which many years ago drove Lizzy to relocate to live with an aunt in Charleston. It was in Charleston where she built her life and studied for her nursing degree). With Lizzy's mom absent, Rachel soon became a surrogate aunt to our daughter.

This closeness bloomed even more when, to her surprise and delight, Caitlin found no hint of criticism or judgment from 'Auntie' Rachel when she broke the news of her unplanned pregnancy.

In fact, quite the opposite was true. When the initial shock had worn off, Rachel became a human version of a protective Mama Grizzly Bear.

Anyone who was unlucky or stupid enough to say anything remotely negative about Caitlin, about the baby, or about the fact she wasn't married was promptly savaged to within an inch of their lives. Rachel became our daughter's mother confessor, shoulder to cry on, and avenging angel all rolled into one.

This is just what you'd expect from the wife of Gunnery Sargeant Edward Washington! Rachel may have been raised by well-to-do, genteel English parents; but Lizzy and I both agreed that, if it ever came to it, we'd rather take our chances with Ted than with Rachel.

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“You wanna hand her back?” Caitlin had asked Ted out of kindness, to give him a break. But the look on his face was as if she’d accused him of being a serial killer and unfit parent all rolled into one. A look that made Lizzy and me look at each other. Lizzy didn’t speak, because she didn’t have to. I knew she was getting all nostalgic and dewy-eyed about when we’d been like Ted. After Caitlin had been born, we’d been unable to get enough emotional and physical closeness to our then new-born.

Lizzy had given birth to Caitlin only three-and-a-half-years after we met. At that time, we stood in the same place that Caitlin was now. After spending my early years in England trying to escape the shadow of an absent but ridiculously talented father, I somehow found my way to the United States to study programming and teach English. From there, transitioning into a job in software and IT support had been a short step. My job eventually took me to the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) teaching hospital. It was at MUSC where I met and fell in love with a quiet, beautiful brunette nurse named Elizabeth Cowley.

She may have been superficially quiet due to her rural, conservative upbringing in Wyoming. But as I got to know her better, I soon discovered that a fun, vivacious and wickedly humorous lady hid under her conservative exterior. A lady who I was lucky enough to soon call my girlfriend, then my fiancé, and finally my wife.

The day Lizzy and I tied the knot was the happiest day of my life. I was so pleased that I’d made the almost random decision to explore life in the States. My happiness and our happiness somehow increased even more the day my sparkly-eyed wife grinned at me and held up a pregnancy stick before my nose. Even at a time like this, she couldn’t resist the chance to tease me. As she flaunted the stick in front of me, she made sure to hold her hand in front of the business part of the stick. Leaving my guts twisting like a pair of mating eels, my Adams apple bobbed up and down as I waited for her to make the big reveal. When she ultimately did, I wrapped her in a tight hug and, used my full five-ten frame to lift her sexy five-five body off the ground and swing her around the room in joy.

We were both so happy that day. Since then, with a few small exceptions; we’ve been happy ever since. One slight sadness was that, due to my own ‘shortcomings’, we were never able to give Caitlin a brother or sister.

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“Do I wanna hand her back?” Ted parroted back to Caitlin.

“Men have died for less,” he teased.

“It’s a good thing that I don’t fight women and that you’re the mother of the most precious lady in my life!” he added. As he did, his face slowly changed from a mock angry scowl to a full-on smile.

“*The most precious little lady in your life,*” Caitlin mimicked. “I remember when I was the little lady that held that title!”

Ted laughed a real, deep, belly laugh. It was the first laugh that I could recall since Rachel’s passing.

“Get over it, Caitlin,” Ted said with a smile. “You’re still the number two lady in my life, but Rachel Jr’s is cuter and more petite,” he chuckled.

“Besides which, if I don’t treat her right, she’ll poop all over me. So she has to be number one!”

“To precious little ladies!” came a voice from the side of the room. This toast made us all turn and look. The toast came from Simon, who’d been strangely quiet during the birthday party.

“To precious little ladies!” Simon toasted again. Only this time his gaze had switched from Rachel Jr to Lizzy. His toast was serious and sincere when his gaze was focused on Rachel Jr. The toast was still sincere when Simon transferred his gaze, but the toast somehow assumed a sexual undercurrent when he looked at Lizzy. Unfortunately, the change scrambled the mood. It wasn’t so inappropriate that it caused a fight. But his look possessed enough heat that it pushed the bounds of acceptability, and everyone understood there was a sub-text being communicated. It was clear that the second toast was not about the little one-year-old but was instead about her grandmother. The look that accompanied Simon’s toast reminded me of how Simon had looked at Lizzy in the hot tub just two days ago.

By his late sister’s own admission, Simon was a man-slut. The way he was looking at Lizzy when I’d be leaving in just four days-time sent shivers through me.

Like all long and happily married couples, Lizzy and I had talked and played

about opening our marriage in our shared sexual fantasies. But that was all our fantasies had ever been – talk and play. We'd never thought of pursuing anything more serious or real.

But the way Simon was looking at Lizzy – a man-slut who'd already worked through six of his own marriages – stopped me stone cold in my tracks. He was looking at her as though she was a prize that he desired to acquire.

Chapter 3

Thursday 7th January 2021

“I don’t want you to go,” Lizzy grumbled. As she did, she threw her arm over my chest as a physical back-up to what she was saying.

“I don’t want to go, either,” I replied. I was sad and frustrated by my pending departure. As we spoke, we cuddled closer. My cock was still sticky and happy from performing its husbandly duty. We’d made the most of our last night and morning together for a month—. We’d made love three times connecting physically and emotionally. These three loving, tender events were spaced out with cuddles, long reminiscent talks, and little sleep. Sleep could wait for the plane. I’d much rather spend my remaining time looking into Lizzy’s eyes, kissing her lips, and stroking her hair. If I was going to be denied these pleasures for more than a month, then I wanted to enjoy them as deeply as I could.

“But we did talk about all of this honey...” I said reminding Lizzy of the purpose for my travel.

“I know, I know. You want the money, especially the bonus, so we can use it for Caitlin and Rachel Jr. You’ve also told me that you need to satisfy your ‘*oh-so-worthy*’ commitment to your team and company.”

Lizzy said this last bit with a bit of sarcasm, but I knew my loyalty and values were things Lizzy loved about me and had loved from the early days of our courtship.

“But that means I’m going to miss this,” she said, playfully squeezing my limp cock. “You’d better make sure he doesn’t get up to no good. He needs to remember who he belongs to. I’ve heard all about those bars and dives in Bangkok. I don’t want to find things out that will make me chop him off when you come back,” she said with a semi-serious frown.

I laughed out loud at the picture she painted. Why would any sane man trade in this beautiful, loving woman for a fifteen-minute romp with some charge by the hour bar girl? Correction – why would any sober man do that? As these thoughts flitted through my mind, it made me wonder how many

travelling businessmen might have sacrificed their marriages due to booze and bar girls. I further wondered whether such businessmen might have been enabled and encouraged by their hosts – hosts with different gender roles, hosts who might be lurking, taking photos for later use. These thoughts that made me shiver with a bit of foreboding. As they did, I told myself, ‘*Not for you, Jim, old boy ... not for you.*’

“Not a chance, darling ... you won’t get rid of me that easily,” I chuckled. I then kissed my way up Lizzy’s neck until I was looking into her teasing, twinkling hazel eyes. “Besides which, knowing what a passionate, sexy, sex-loving lady you are ... I’m not sure I’m the one we should be worrying about!”

She didn’t say anything in response to my comment, but the smile she returned and the mischievous sparkle in her eyes spoke volumes.

Over the years we’d shared many games and bedroom fantasies. More than once, we’d enjoyed a romp while I whispered in her ear about me handing her to some handsome stranger who’d ravish her within an inch of her life. The situations, our motives, and the type of man might have varied. But these bedroom whispers never failed to bring both of us to a screaming orgasm.

Though the look in her eyes told me she knew exactly what I was thinking, I was having fun so I decided to spell my response out and be even more direct.

“Don’t talk to me about me and bargirls. I saw how Simon was ogling you at New Year’s and how he was making goo-goo eyes at you at Rachel Jr’s birthday party. Moreover, what was all that ‘*to precious little ladies*’ nonsense while he made bedroom eyes at you. You’re a married woman. You’re my married woman!” I exclaimed with a smile.

Craning up to kiss me softly and smooth away a stray hair on my forehead, Lizzy’s eyes were now fully blazing. Game on. My words helped Lizzy forget the sadness of our parting.

“‘My married woman’,” she teased back, “What am I? Some kind of chattel? Some kind of possession, to be kept in shackles until my lord and master sees fit to find a use for me?” The smile in Lizzy’s eyes told me

exactly what kind of use she had in mind. She was thinking of the kind of use that both of us found super pleasurable. This was the kind of use that had blessed us with Caitlin just under twenty years ago.

I was just about to serve my volley back, but she wasn't done yet.

“And another thing, if you think things like ‘*to precious little ladies*’ are ‘*nonsense*’, it shows you, my dear husband, don't have an ounce of romance in your heart. Simon is different. It's no wonder musical Romeos like him are loved and appreciated by armies of their female fans. His fans are probably all like me. They're also married to uncaring, unromantic, chattel-minded husbands who don't appreciate a good thing when they have it.”

“Uncaring, unromantic, chattel-minded am I!” I laughed, as I pushed her onto her back, snapped her hands above her head, and nudged her legs open. “I'll show you who you belong to. I'm going to fuck all those thoughts of Romeo Simon out of your head and your pussy.”

“Promises, promises!” she shrieked. As she did, she play bit my shoulder and wrinkled her nose at me. These were signs that she was bubbling with excitement at having tempted an extra round out of my flagging cock and body. She proceeded to pull me down into a smoldering, smoky kiss that made my heart sing. I was consumed with happiness at her demonstration of how much she loved and would miss me. Once again, I was left mourning how much I would miss this during my upcoming travels.

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“We really do need to get up now!”

I loved our home in Charleston, but it was a hellish location for the type of long-distance flight I was about to start. My flight required an early evening flight from Charleston to JFK, an overnight flight from New York to Doha, and a final connection from Doha to Bangkok. Door-to-door, my flight would require a forty-hour journey. Even though I was flying first-class, the flight would give me jet lag that would scramble the strongest of constitutions.

Lizzy rolled her weight onto me making a final playful effort to anchor me at home. Then she kissed me and started a beautifully overacted routine of slipping back into her lingerie and clothes. Each of her body movements was

exaggerated and designed to give my mind and eyeballs a last, final memory of what I'd be giving up for the next month.

Even with her back to me as she pulled up her stockings, she sensed my eyes caressing her body. She knew how to send her man off to work-war with a smile and a stiffy.

“No bar girls ... remember!” she teased me. Her teasing tone presented a double bluff. She made me remember what she'd said she'd do to my cock if I strayed.

“And no ageing crooners!” I retaliated as she turned to smile at me.

“Oh, so ageing Marines are okay then?” she joked. The look she gave me as she offered this statement reminded me that Ted had made more than one guest appearance in our bedroom fantasies. We'd never have done anything about it, because we loved Rachel and him way too much to test our friendship like that. But Lizzy's challenge was a reminder that Simon wasn't the only temptation that Lizzy might face during my absence.

I shook my head. “I know what you're up to. You baited me into fucking you once already. Now we really do need to go or I'll miss my flight.”

“You can't blame a girl for trying!” she smiled. After that, she gave me a final, love-filled kiss with her eyes inches from mine.

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The trouble with long-haul flights, especially those with multiple layovers, is that they present way too much opportunity for booze and thinking. Each is bad enough by itself, but taken together, booze and thinking present a very dangerous combination.

We were only an hour out of JFK when my mind first wandered to all the jokes between Lizzy and I about bar girls, and my retaliation about her own needs and temptations. As the pretty, multinational stewardesses pampered us with pre-sleep blankets and a nightcap, my thoughts began to race.

Lizzy and I had only ever shared play talk about her sleeping with another man. Both of us were too scared and protective of the love we shared to seriously contemplate complicating our idyllic relationship by introducing another man.

But, as the second gin and tonic seeped into my brain; I found myself dwelling on the question of how Lizzy would cope without me there to meet her physical needs.

Lizzy didn't use sex toys very often. With me present, she'd never had a need for such toys. Even so, I knew she owned a vibrator and a small dildo that were hidden in the bottom drawer of our bedroom dresser. They were items we'd only used occasionally to add a little variety, or to provide relief to Lizzy when I was away for a few days.

But as Lizzy had told me many times over the years, a vibrator or heavily ribbed piece of plastic was not a substitute for a flesh and blood penis nor for the man on the end of it. The man could kiss, stroke and transform something basic and physical into something extraordinary.

If I was only going to be gone for a few days, then those two stashed pieces of plastic might have served as a temporary and third-rate substitute until I returned.

But this time I'd be gone for a whole month. And while I wasn't sure how many months the job would take, I believed that I'd need to make at least three month-long trips to sort out the mess the local team had created. I was also concerned that my estimate of three trips might prove to be too optimistic.

As the lights dimmed so others could sleep, these thoughts left me troubled and sleepless. I worried about how Lizzy would cope with our separation for the next month and with the subsequent month-long absences which were likely to follow.

Lizzy loved sex, the closeness, the intimacy too much for it to be easy for her to give it up for a whole month. Asking her to repeat this sacrifice on at least two subsequent occasions seemed like it would be extremely difficult.

As a couple, we were lucky. We'd never had to make this kind of sacrifice before. Thus, I had no previous experience to guide me. But everything I knew about Lizzy suggested that she'd find giving up sex for a month to be incredibly difficult. With only her deep love for me and our family, and her busyness with Rachel Jr acting as a brake on what otherwise might be intractable urges.

The need to travel to Bangkok had arisen really quickly. Only ten days had passed from the date my company received the first angry client calls until the date I boarded the plane. During that time, Lizzy and I had not had time to talk about anything beyond my company's need for me to travel, the holidays, and Rachel Jr's birthday. Discussions about the physical privations Lizzy would have to endure had been limited to the teasing and joking we'd enjoyed during our last few nights together. Now I was frustrated that we'd been too busy, and that we'd missed the opportunity to have a discussion on this topic.

I thought a third gin and tonic might dampen my fears and help me sleep, but it did the opposite. The additional alcohol pulled at two opposing chords in my racing brain. The extra alcohol made me fret more about the impact on Lizzy of a lack of sex. But it also loosened my conventional thinking. It gave my brain freedom to think of the exciting bedtime fantasies that I'd whispered to Lizzy about her having sex with another man.

Damn. Ruminating on this topic wasn't really how I wanted to spend the rest of my flight. I didn't relish spending the next day plus, flying at thirty-five thousand feet, and torturing myself with a conflicted and insoluble problem. I didn't take pleasure in half tearing myself apart with fear and worry and half heating up my cock and chest with unhelpful and unhealthy thoughts about Lizzy being bedded by another man.

When I wasn't sweating and fretting about how Lizzy would cope with her enforced lack of sex, intimacy, and male company, I was conjuring mental pictures of faceless, nameless guys accosting her at the store or at the school where she worked. Starting with a friendly smile, before progressing to flirting, and maybe a dinner invite; before finally making their move. The pictures in my mind always showed the same image. Lizzy resisted and tried her best to withstand temptation. But ultimately, she gave in. At that point, she enjoyed the intensity of the rendezvous. The wicked naughtiness of the tryst made it even more exciting for her. Each reel that played in my head ended in the same way. It ended with her clinging tightly to a mystery man. Then, the image transitioned into her offering a tearful apology to me.

I somehow managed to get some sleep just before the flight landed in Doha. Then, I kept myself busy and distracted during the three-hour layover. But by the time we'd climbed out of Doha and returned to cruising altitude for the

last leg of the flight, my mind had resumed tearing itself apart with these two conflicting sets of thoughts.

It was worse during this leg however, because the faceless men had acquired faces. And not just any faces, the faces haunting my sleepless dreams were none other than the faces of Ted and Simon.

Over the years, Ted had sometimes made an impromptu appearance or two in our bedroom fantasies.

But his appearances had only ever been a bit of harmless fun. His love for Rachel, and our love and friendship with both of them would never have allowed the fantasies to become anything more than harmless daydreaming.

But my current unsettled dreams felt very different. Their prospects seemed more dangerous. Ted's loss of Rachel changed my thoughts about the possibility of Ted pursuing Lizzy into something far nastier, and far more real.

And my thoughts about the prospect of Simon pursuing Lizzy were even worse. Simon had never previously even been given a bit part in Lizzy and my bedroom games. At best we'd been ambivalent to him. In the years before Rachel's illness, meetings with Simon left both Lizzy and I thinking that he was pompous, arrogant, and totally in love with himself. We repeatedly wondered how he'd bedded such a long line of beautiful women, and how he'd actually persuaded six of them into relationships and marriage.

But, for the sake of Rachel, Lizzy and I had mostly kept our thoughts about Simon to ourselves. We'd been even more cautious about sharing our thoughts after she'd fallen ill, and Simon had become a constant, heart-broken presence in Ted and Rachel's home. His sadness, grief and love for his sister changed him beyond our prior recognition. These changes made him a much easier person to like and love.

Zippering along at six-hundred-miles-per-hour I tried to force images of Simon and Lizzy out of my head.

The images I tried to make myself forget included how Simon had laughed like a wolf when he'd learned that I'd be absent for Lizzy's birthday. And how he'd promised that he and Ted 'would show her a good time'. I unsuccessfully tried to force myself to forget how Simon had ogled Lizzy at

New Years and then had flirted openly with her at Rachel Jr's first birthday celebration. In both cases, my mind reminded me that Lizzy seemed to have enjoyed his attention.

Shit! The more I tried to force these images and thoughts from my head, the more my disobedient brain amped them up. The more forbidden they were, the more exciting and tempting my brain painted them.

By the time my flight approached Bangkok, these fears and thoughts had confused, aroused, and frazzled me. In my sleep deprived state, I found my thoughts about Simon so troubling and all consuming that I developed a preference for the safety of the more traditional fantasy of Lizzy sleeping with Ted.

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At least my first-class ticket guaranteed me a speedy disembarkation and baggage retrieval. This was pretty much the only thing that kept me going as I came to the end of my grueling journey.

Using my last reserves of energy, I heaved my overweight bag off the carousel and pulled it behind me as I dreamed about the hot, soothing shower I'd take at the hotel that was just a short distance from the airport. Following this shower, I also anticipated stretching out, closing my eyes, and finally getting some sleep on the clean, pristine white linen of my hotel room bed.

I'd left home in the middle of the afternoon on Thursday and had arrived on Saturday morning local time. I'd spent most of my flight time fretting about the situation I'd left at home. To say I was exhausted and in need of rest would be a tremendous understatement.

The office had promised to send someone with a name card to meet me and take me to the hotel. This was just as well, because I'd never been to Bangkok before. I was so tired, that I think I would have needed help to cross the road, never mind to locate the Four Seasons Hotel in downtown Bangkok.

Based on my previous trips, I'd expected to be met by a middle-aged, overweight company driver in a way-too-tight blazer and tie, with a shirt stretched tight over his driver's belly.

But, blessing of blessings, I wasn't greeted by some greasy-haired, disinterested, Pro Plus popping driver.

# Chapter 4

*Saturday 9th January 2021*

No. Instead the person that met me possessed a much more agreeable appearance. The woman who met me was a smiling, enthusiastic vision of Thai loveliness who held up the card. ‘*J. Sharp.*’

“Mr. James?” she asked, somehow managing to smile even wider. “I’m Anong. I’m here from the office, to take you to the hotel. I’ll be your assistant while you’re here in Bangkok. I’m here to assist you in any way I can.” Anong even gave me a little ‘hands-together’, prayerful nod of her head when she took my suitcase handle and gestured towards the exit.

We shook hands and started walking and talking. It was just a short walk to the car, but still long enough for me to hear a buzz.

Before I could react, feel the sting of some little insect taking a bite out of yours truly. We were hardly going ‘up country’, but that aspect of traveling to Asia was something I’d never get used to - the constant threat of something wanting to sting you or bite you.

A sharp slap, a quick inspection of the little black smudge on my palm – his days of nipping were well and truly over – and I allowed the cool texture of the BMW’s luxurious leather to soothe me as we sped into town.

As we road to the Four Seasons, we talked through the normal social niceties ... “how was the journey, how far is the hotel, what’s the schedule” ... But as we conversed, I’m ashamed to admit that my sleep-deprived brain wasn’t thinking about work or even about my hotel’s comforts.

No, upon meeting Anong, my brain had gone straight into ‘caveman mode.’ This is the mode that all guys recognize when we meet a beautiful woman for the first time. This is the mode where our energy levels perk up – even after a day and a half of travelling – and we devote our energy and attention into impressing the newly encountered female. We attempt to absorb every little detail about how she looks, sounds, smells, and - most importantly - reacts to what we say and do. Our evolutionary, Darwinian senses ramp up from zero to a hundred in a matter of nanoseconds.

The ride to the hotel was long and the Bangkok traffic on Sukhumvit Road was as bad as I'd been warned. On the bright side, the delays gave me a chance to learn more about my new assistant and to enjoy the view.

As we rode across town, regardless of the topic, whether work or social or just small talk, Anong seemed to have a permanent smile on her face. Her smile sat easily amongst the beautiful and well-balanced features of her light brown face.

The make-up and 'face' she wore was immaculate. Even half hidden behind the outsized frames of the 'sexy librarian' glasses she wore, she still looked like she'd just come from a fashion photo shoot. She possessed red-pink lipstick that was vivacious and inviting without being too garish. Her eyebrows were plucked and shaved to a perfect width and shaped into a pleasing arch; and she used dark eye liner on her eye lashes which maintained a carefully judged length.

The effect of her face was complimented by chest length long 'black' hair. Half of which cascaded down her back, and half of which naturally lay forward, forming curtains on either side of her chest. No man with functioning eyeballs could ignore her chest which was generously proportioned and sat high on her small, slender frame.

Anong's final attention-drawing feature was her attire. Although the rest of her outfit was weekend corporate casual (fashionably ripped black jeans and a matching black jacket), her Armani T-shirt was hyper-tight and showed the unmistakable truth that she'd chosen to go braless. This presented an unfair temptation to the eyeballs of a man at the limits of his endurance.

As we talked, I tried to judge her age. This is something I've often struggled to do with non-Caucasian women. My best guess was that she was similar in age to Lizzy. But this was just a guess, because I've met many Asian women over the years who are a decade or more older than they look.

Anong was definitely shorter than Lizzy. But the heels she wore added four or five inches to her five-foot height.

Over the years, I'd travelled enough so I was not surprised by the exaggerated politeness that Anong showed as we left the airport and started talking.

Asian culture, Asian ways of handling hierarchy, and Asia's normally unbalanced relationships between men and women came together to mean it was nigh on impossible for Anong to be anything but super polite and deferential to me.

It was written all over the questions she asked me and how she gave me the impression that any request I might make, regardless of how silly or small, would be fulfilled as if I was an inhabitant of Mount Olympus.

But beneath her deferential, super-polite exterior, I sensed a keen intelligence and a personality that combined a steely determination with a sharp sense of humor. I drew these inferences as we talked and as - having asked me about my family - she answered my questions about her family.

Apparently, she was a single, divorced mom of a seventeen-year-old daughter named Malee. Anong didn't exhibit any embarrassment when she told me how she'd become a mother. She told me how, as a young woman, she'd married Francois, a French man who was thirty years her senior. She then told me how soon after Malee was born, Francois had grown tired of Anong and parenthood. He'd grown so tired that he'd started conducting affairs with younger women, staying out all hours, and frittering away the family's money.

"The pig did all of this even while I was still recovering from having these for him," she gestured, pushing her arms tight against her sides and thrusting her boobs out to make crystal clear what 'these' were.

She'd known me less than thirty minutes. The clashing mismatch between her normal deference and super politeness, and her opening up to share so freely about such a personal surgery was stunning! It was only later, when I understood more about Thai culture, that I realized such a lack of embarrassment about all things sexual was very common amongst Thai women. In this way Anong was similar to my medically trained wife.

As Anong told me the story about her pig of a husband and her boobs, she tried to keep the polite, hierarchical veneer in place. But she couldn't help her smile when she told me, in a very matter-of-fact way, how she eventually kicked him out but still kept most of his money. This smile told me how proud she was of what she'd done.

A little smile and a story told in remarkably good English that told me that, however polite her exterior, any man would have to be either very brave or very stupid to mess with Anong.

The way she'd joked and opened up, I felt honor bound to reciprocate, smiling as she finished her story and joking around.

“Well, I have the opposite problem! My wife Lizzy has certain preconceptions about Thailand,” I grinned, gesturing to the boobs she'd just been thrusting towards me. “She's warned me in no uncertain terms which parts of me she'll cut off if she ever finds any reasons for suspicion ... so maybe you'd better hide those away, maybe wear a habit or a head-to-toe burqa or something!”

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Just as the first rays of morning started coloring the city, we finally drew up at the hotel.

After a series of sounds that included a melee of ‘*Sawadees*’, ‘*Khap khun kas*’ and other sounds I didn't register, I was finally checked in and made my way to the thirty-fourth floor.

‘*Bed!*’ I thought. ‘*Shower and bed!*’ Heavenly ...

‘Damn! I need to ring home!’ This thought made me feel guilty. In all of Lizzy and my years together, I'd never been so tired that I didn't look forward to calling home and speaking with her.

Sighing deeply, I placed my laptop on the large desk at the end of the bed and fired up WhatsApp. It was my go-to way to keep in touch with home when I was travelling.

The instant the dial tone sounded, and I thought about Lizzy and our home, I felt the familiar warm sensation of happiness spread through my chest.

“Hey, honey. I finally got here.” I grinned into our WhatsApp call. As I spoke, I tried to hide my tiredness, because I wanted my face to show how delighted I was to talk to Lizzy.

“Baby, you look so tired! I thought you were going First-Class. Didn't you manage to get any sleep?”

“Not really,” I exhaled. I had some pressing thoughts on my mind.” As I said this, something felt wrong. Though Lizzy and I were always totally open about everything, something about the thoughts I’d had on the plane felt dangerous.

“Work thoughts? Family thoughts – Caitlin, Rachel Jr? Or me thoughts?” It was so like Lizzy for her to jump straight to the point. It was also so like her for her to jump straight to thinking about how she could help me. Finally, the way she emphasized her last words, showed that she was as perceptive as usual in reading me and guessing the source of my worries.

“Well, we never really talked about, you know ... ‘things’ ... before I left ... it all happened so fast ... we were so busy with Christmas, New Year, and Rachel Jr’s birthday,” I grimaced. The tone of my voice hinted at the fears and thoughts which had stopped me from sleeping for the last day and a half.

The tone of my voice only hinted at the fears and thoughts which had stopped me sleeping through the last day and a half. I didn’t have the energy to talk Lizzy through my dreams about the various men I’d pictured sleeping with her while I was away. That was something that I’d either hide and try and forget or deal with another day when I was strong enough. When I’d slept!

“We’ll be fine, honey,” she smiled, warming my heart all over again. “In these last couple of years, we’ve dealt with Caitlin’s pregnancy, the ups and downs of Rachel’s illness, and then Rachel Jr’s birth. If we can survive these changes, then our love is strong enough to survive your temporary absence. Living apart for a month and going without sex for a month will be a breeze. You’ll see, honey. This separation will be finished before...”

And then her voice trailed off. She suddenly looked distracted; her eyes were no longer on my face. Instead, her eyes were focused on a spot behind me. Instead of showing love and support, her eyes transformed to display confusion and wariness.

Chapter 5

Saturday 9th January 2021

“Who’s that?” Lizzy asked. Her question causing my sleep-deprived brain to ache with a slowly dawning realization.

I was exhausted. I’d been so focused on completing this last task so I could shower and enjoy those crisp white sheets that I’d totally blanked on one key fact.

I’d missed the fact that Anong had not simply made sure I safely arrived at my room on the thirty-fourth floor. Instead, in typical Asian ‘looking after her man’ mode, she’d followed me into my room and started unpacking and putting away my clothes.

And as I pivoted the swivel chair around, I saw with a terrible sinking feeling what Lizzy had just observed. I saw what had stopped Lizzy in her tracks – making her look confused and wary.

“Oh! That’s just Anong. She met me at the airport. She’s been assigned to be my assistant while I’m in Bangkok.”

This explanation provided little comfort to my wife as she stared goggle-eyed at a beautiful, braless and large-breasted Asian woman of similar age to herself.

And that wasn’t even the worst part of it. Because as Lizzy asked who she could see in my hotel room, Anong was holding a pile of my boxer shorts. She did so as she folded and put them away, but not before she’d examined each and every one of them. The method of her examination looked odd to me, but it must have looked a thousand times more troubling to my wife who’d read lots of articles that indicated that Western husbands were seen as a highly desirable commodity by many Asian women.

“Hi, Mrs. Sharp! I’m Anong. It is so nice to speak to you. Jim has told me all about you and Caitlin and Rachel Jr. I want to let you know that you shouldn’t worry about anything. I’ll be taking good care of your husband while he’s away from you. I’ll be your husband’s Girl Friday as long as he’s here in Bangkok.”

Anong's statements caused the following thoughts to race through my brain, 'No, no, no...'

'Please, Anong ... I know you mean well, but please, don't say anything more!'

Another thought shimmied into my head immediately afterwards. Anong's actions and the words she'd just spoken were construed by me as innocent but misguided. But was this true? Just how innocent had her statements and actions been?

On the ride over, I'd been exposed to some of the real Anong.

I'd heard about the Anong who'd judged her French husband to be surplus to requirements and had managed to dispatch him whilst keeping most of his money.

I'd met the Anong who dressed appropriately enough to meet a senior Western visitor during the weekend, but who'd somehow forgotten to wear a bra. I'd also listened as she happily told me that her enhanced boobs were paid for by her ex-husband the week before she served divorce papers on him.

The Anong who, still holding a handful of my boxers, was now standing just a foot away from my PC's camera lens. From this position, she continued to present her nipples and fake tits to Lizzy as she repeated her earlier words.

I've rarely seen Lizzy lost for words. But she seemed totally stumped about how to react to what she was seeing and hearing. Anong filled the space Lizzy left before I had a chance to intervene.

"Would you believe it, Mrs. Sharp? I feel like we have so much in common. We've even got daughters who are of similar ages ... my Malee, and your Caitlin ... I think they're only a few years apart," she beamed.

Then there was silence. Thankfully it appeared that Anong had run out of things to say. After a moment, Lizzy finally found her voice.

"Well, nice to meet you, Anong. Thanks for offering to take care of Jim. I can see just how tired the journey has made him.

The words coming from my wife's mouth were friendly enough, but the look

in her eyes and the tone of her voice were anything but.

Lizzy wasn't outright hostile – that wasn't her style. Especially to a total stranger who she'd just met. But I could tell that Lizzy was shellshocked, and that I would receive the third degree when our conversation was just between her and me. Her next words told me it wouldn't be long before we had that conversation.

“Well, Anong, it's been lovely talking to you, but Mr. Sharp and I have a few things to discuss. So, would you please give us some privacy? Perhaps, we can catch up again soon.”

Anong could have played dumb, but she took the hint and said her goodbyes. But only after offering Lizzy a cheery wave, and very ostentatiously placing my boxers down on the desk – right in front of the camera.

'Is she trying to get me in trouble with Lizzy?' I exclaimed quietly to myself as she left. This was a question I didn't want to contemplate. Especially as the look on Lizzy's face had me focused on another source of trouble.

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“Jim, what the hell was all that?” Lizzy shouted. My jaw dropped as I scrambled for words, “and, more to the point, who the hell was that? And since when do secretaries look and dress like that?”

The blood had drained from my face, and I was at a loss for words. “I'm as stunned as you are, honey,” I groveled apologetically. “I didn't ask her to do any of that stuff. I didn't ask her to put my stuff away.”

“Your stuff? Lizzy exclaimed. Anong was putting away your boxers, Jim! Your freakin' boxers! Then she told me she's gonna be your 'Girl Friday' for the next month. While I'm here in South Carolina, you're all alone with little Miss Nancy Big Tits on the other side of the world. You're going to be consorting with a woman who doesn't even have the decency to wear a bra. She stood in your room putting her big tits and sticky-out nipples on full display for you, my well-paid, away-from-his-wife husband.”

'Sorry' was all I could squawk as we stared at each other. While we did, I could see the anger and indignation fizzing off Lizzy's incandescent face like neutrons pinging off of Uranium.

“Sorry, honey,” I shrugged. “I had nothing to do with any of what you just observed. The first time I met Anong was when she picked me up an hour ago at the airport.”

“Really?” she spat back accusingly. “Anong seemed to know an awful lot about me and you and our family for someone you only met an hour ago! ‘Oh, Mrs. Sharp ... so nice to speak to you ... Oh, Mrs. Sharp, I feel we have so much in common,’” she parroted. Normally kind and empathetic, if Lizzy had not been nine thousand miles away, I swear I’d have had a cat fight on my hands. That most UnLizzy-like look shouted ‘*hands-off, my turf,*’ with a side order of ‘*scratch your eyes out if you don’t behave.*’

Lizzy continued to look at me with her eyes blazing and her arms crossed. I gulped in response, as I realized Lizzy was actually expecting me to provide some kind of explanation for what she’d observed.

“We had to talk about something in the car. As we road to the hotel, she told me about her life as a single mom. Among the things we discussed were her daughter, her divorce, and her French ex-husband. I couldn’t say nothing in response to her disclosure. It seemed only right to...”

I never finished my sentence. Listening to each word echo in my head, like some TV soundtrack on a three-second delay; I realized my attempted explanation was not helping and was just getting me in deeper trouble.

‘*Single mom ... divorced ... already married to a westerner once ... daughter to support...*’ How could I be so stupid? Each word I spoke just made matters worse. Each explanation I offered was more likely to convince Lizzy that this sexy Thai beauty was after her man.

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“Sorry ... I’ll try not to be so stupid next time!”

Finally, I saw a chink of light. My unconditional admission of my naivete was just what Lizzy was looking for. It gave Lizzy a feeling that I’m sure is familiar to husband’s all over the world. It provided confirmation to my better half that she is indeed better and smarter than me. Such an admission never grows old. It somehow nudged me from messing pup in the doghouse to loveable but fundamentally stupid pooch. More importantly, the admission showed Lizzy that her pooch was not to be played with or tummy-

tickled by any other lady owner!

“Okay ... forgiven!” she finally declared, like a judge passing sentence.

“But you need to be less trusting. Don’t be so naïve. There are people out there who’ll take advantage of you. Don’t let yourself be taken advantage of by someone you wouldn’t suspect.”

In spite of my earlier thoughts about Anong’s motivations, my instincts told me Anong wasn’t one of the people Lilly was warning me to be aware of. – But I knew better than to voice my thoughts. Instead, I just nodded my agreement and changed the subject.

“Anyway. More importantly, happy birthday, honey! I am sorry I can’t be there to celebrate your birthday today. I love you. Did you get the card and present I left with Caitlin?”

Lizzy’s face broke into the broadest of smiles, and things shifted back to where they belonged. Lizzy was beaming as she presented her wrist to the camera. As she did, the gold of the bracelet I had given her glinted when she wiggled her wrist. Her voice was full of happiness as she told me off for spending too much money on her gift. Babbling away that this gift was good for both her birthday and our upcoming anniversary. (*Yeah, right ... Having just escaped the doghouse, I’m not stupid enough to fall for that old trap and turn up on our anniversary empty-handed!*)

As she jangled the three-thousand-dollar bracelet I’d bought for her, I took a longer look at the outfit she was wearing.

It was eight P.M. on a Friday evening on her birthday, and she was wearing my favorite dress. This dress was an extremely tight fitting green backless halter romper dress. The bodice front included a deeply cut V-neck that showed Lizzy’s cleavage to full advantage. The whole outfit was completed by a short, flared mid-thigh skirt that reminded me of the skirt Marilyn Monroe wore when she twirled and did that whole ‘wanna be loved by you ... you and nobody else but you ... poo-poo-pee-do’ routine.

Lizzy knew I thought she always looked hot as hell in that dress. More often than not, Lizzy wore it for my birthday, knowing that whenever she did, I found it impossible to keep my hands off of her.

But I was confused to see Lizzy wearing her number one sexy dress when I

was nine-thousand miles away.

I didn't expect her to stay home like some locked up nun while I was away on my corporate crusade. But I also did not expect her to be out dressed like she was trying to score herself a new man when she'd kissed me goodbye less than two days ago! Seeing her wearing my favorite dress was torture.

—Though my brain was fogged by tiredness, lack of sleep, and the argument we'd just been through, I tried to work out why she was wearing such a sexy dress. As I did, Simon's words from that boozy New Year's Eve came back to me.

'Don't worry, Lizzy ... we'll show you a good time on your birthday!'

There was no way that Caitlin was taking her mom out dressed like that. And it was highly unlikely that any of Lizzy's girlfriends were taking her out on the hunt to relive their past glories. And though Ted might be up for a quiet meal and a nightcap or two as he slowly rejoined the human race after his recent bereavement, he wouldn't expect to see her dressed as she was.

But of all the people we knew, my instincts told me that Simon was the only person who possessed the selfish, self-centeredness, and 'grab life by the balls' attitude to make good on what I'd assumed was just a booze-induced, high jinks, New Years joke.

But judging by the way Lizzy was dressed, Lizzy's birthday celebration was going to be anything but a mere joke! That dress, and what it showed, and what it said was very, very real!

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Lizzy saw the change in my expression before my scrambled brain was able to form meaningful words. A playful smile appeared on her face as she beat me to the drop.

“Simon said you'd react like that! It was his idea for me to put on the dress when I knew you'd ring. He even laughed, said he warned you, but that he thought you thought his plan was all a big joke...”

If the dress had confused me, I was confused and pissed after Lizzy's explanation. But I was pissed with a strange undercurrent of excitement.

I knew that, in spite of his six divorces, Simon was considerably wealthier than me. He earned his wealth from the large earnings he'd made during his career in the eighties and the more modest monies he'd collected from his recent efforts at a reboot.

I also knew from his stories and from his online profile that Simon had bedded a parade of beautiful women. Even if he was now paunchy, blessed with a receding hairline, and wouldn't see sixty again; he still had an enviable record of success with the fairer sex.

But until the last few minutes, I'd always prided myself on being much smarter than Ted's often arrogant and self-absorbed brother-in-law.

But from what Lizzy was saying, maybe I even needed to reevaluate him on this metric. I was surprised by the way in which I was apparently so easily predicted and manipulated.

"Oh, Simon said that ... did he?" I spat back. In so doing, I knew that I sounded as bitter as Lizzy had sounded just five minutes ago when she challenged me about how Anong had been handling my boxers and pushing her big boobs at the camera. The turnaround and irony of this situation wasn't lost on me.

"Don't be like that, honey!" Lizzy cooed. I knew that little girl voice, and I knew what was coming next. "Simon's made the arrangements, but it should be a lovely evening for all three of us. I think it'll help bring Ted out of himself a little. He can't live like a hermit and mourn Rachel forever. It'll be good for all three of us to get out.

A short silence descended as I sat grumpily at my hotel desk. I was still amazed at how quickly things had turned.

"So, are you okay with it? With the three of us going out to celebrate my birthday?" Lizzy asked in her *'twist-me-round-her-finger'* little girl voice.

"I guess," I finally conceded, doing my best impression of a crotchety crab. After enforcing another long silence, I asked, "so, where you all going?"

Lizzy didn't sense that I was still barely sold on the proposed evening. Consequently, she didn't temper her explanation of Simon's plans at all, and didn't apply any thoughts to how I'd be likely to receive them.

“Well, Simon managed to get us free tickets to the JB Roof Garden. Apparently, he offered to do a trade and was able to obtain free entry and free food for us if he promised to perform four of his old hits.”

I was just swallowing that ego-shrinking news when she hit me with another shot to the solar plexus.

“Apparently Paul and Eric are playing the Capital One and have promised to come across and say hi afterwards. I’m sure Simon is only teasing, but he’s said he’s told them it’s my birthday and that I need cheering up as my Brit hubby’s away on the other side of the world. He said, as they’re Brits like you, they felt they needed to help out a fellow countryman ... nothing to do with him telling them the birthday girl’s a hottie,” she giggled.

*‘Oh great!’ my mind moaned. ‘So now Ted’s womanizing brother-in-law is grooming my wife to be some kind of groupie for ageing megastars! A groupie for two of the world’s biggest has-been rockstars! Things just keep getting better and better.’*

But from some deep place in my fatigued grumpiness, the mood of the real Jim reached out and gave me a wake-up slap. *‘Don’t be such a Killjoy ... you’re the one who’s not there for her ... don’t you want her to have a great time? This could be a night of amazing memories for her. And Ted will be there. You couldn’t ask for a better guy to be present to keep things okay. You couldn’t ask for a better man to keep Simon the wolf under control.’*

“Well, hun ... I hope you have an amazing time ... I’m sorry if I was a bit grumpy ... I’m dog tired, a little jealous, and hate it when we argue.”

Seeing Lizzy’s happy, loving smile appear in response to my statement made me glad that I’d found within me the ability to take the high road.

“Have a great time, sweetheart. Happy birthday. I look forward to hearing all about your celebration in the morning...”

# Chapter 6

*Saturday 9th January 2021*

It was only my extreme tiredness that allowed me to sleep. I hated when Lizzy and I argued, and I hated even more that nagging, gnawing feeling I had in the pit of my stomach when I thought of Simon and how he'd behaved around Lizzy these last few weeks.

Just like Ted, Simon had been subdued and withdrawn during the first few weeks and months after his sister Rachel had passed, he'd been someone to be helped and pitied. Simon was a friend in need of support. We'd never be especially close to him, but we did what we could for him to honor Rachel's memory.

But Simon slowly adjusted to life without his only living relative. As he found his footing in life again, he'd slowly reverted to type. He possessed charm if he wanted something or wanted to impress. But Simon was fundamentally loud and self-centered. He lived life in the moment and pursued whatever it was or whoever it was that excited him at a particular moment in time.

It wasn't that Simon was some ogre or beast. But I resented his belief that he could bend people and the universe to his will with a smile and a song.

Like Lizzy, my own upbringing had been painful. Both of us were products of broken homes. We survived homes where egotistical and self-centered fathers had walked out on their wives and young children in pursuit of their own pleasures with younger women.

As a result, both Lizzy and I had been brought up in homes dominated by our moms. In our homes, we both were taught to respect women and put others first. So, when we encountered a man who behaved like Simon, we were reminded of the dangers of self-centeredness. No matter how charismatic and charming Simon could be, something about his conduct conflicted with the values we'd learned since childhood.

And from how Simon had started behaving around Lizzy these last few weeks – during New Year's Eve and Rachel Jr's birthday for example – I had

the distinct feeling that what Simon currently desired was my wife, Lizzy!

Simon's sister Rachel had never worn rose-colored glasses when it came to her brother. She loved him, but she harbored no illusions as to what type of a man he was. More than once, she'd described in garish detail pictures of how Simon had seduced women regardless of whether they were married or in a relationship. If Simon wanted a woman, then he wanted her, and pursued her regardless of the consequences!

My shoulders physically shivered at the thought of Simon pursuing Lizzy. And now I'd allowed him to take the lead role in organizing Lizzy's birthday celebration. It went without question that Simon would organize an evening that was bound to impress Lizzy by taking her on a voyage into his world of celebrity, romantic ballads, and shared nostalgia for a time when we'd all been younger.

Shivering again, I said a little prayer, and thanked my lucky stars that Ted (honorable, reliable, not to be messed with, Ted) was going to attend the evening celebration with them.

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Despite all of these dark thoughts, I was so dog tired I fell into a deep sleep the moment my head hit the pillow.

The next thing I knew, my eyes were slowly opening. As they did, I felt that troubling, disorienting feeling when you look around and don't recognize where you are or what time it is.

Everything slowly came back to me. Picking up my phone I saw the time, did the math, and blanched. Shit! I'd slept for nearly half a day! Had I really been that tired from the flight? That stressed by our fight?

'Our fight?'

As I slowly came around, I winced at the memory of the argument Lizzy and I had about Anong. I thought about Lizzy's concern about Anong's over familiarity and about how I'd shared too openly about our family.

Lizzy!

I suddenly remembered seeing her in *'that dress'* – my favorite dress. As I

did, I recalled my fears about how Simon had been behaving around her.

Thank heavens for modern technology. My woozy head didn't have to calculate the time difference. The clock face on my phone showed me it was seven p.m. for me which meant it was seven a.m. for Lizzy.

Lizzy was normally an early riser, so it shouldn't be too early to call her even after her birthday evening out.

But when I did call her on WhatsApp, all I got was the dial tone ringing unanswered. Ringing her phone directly and calling her on FaceTime got the same result.

I fought back against my fragile condition. I told myself that, even if Lizzy normally arose at six, her failure to answer was probably attributable to consuming a few too many drinks and to having Ted and Simon insist that she experience a good time. I expected that Ted and Simon made sure her birthday wasn't a bust even if I wasn't there.

'Ted.' Thinking of Ted's presence filled me with confidence and helped me to push away fears about Simon's motives. Fortified with these thoughts, I grabbed myself an energizing shower.

My body clock was all over the place. Looking out the window, I enjoyed the nighttime view of Bangkok from the thirty-fourth floor. I beheld lots of twinkling lights and buzzing little ants. I saw the darkness and movement of Bangkok nightlife. Even if my body clock was telling me it was time for breakfast and for my morning routines and rituals.

After exiting the shower and freshly rested from half-a-day's sleep, I grinned as I opened the drawers and grabbed today's boxers. I smiled at how witnessing Anong examining my boxers must have looked to Lizzy. I then thought about how Lizzy reacted to Anong as she said her hellos while holding my boxers. As she did, the shape of the nipples that topped her big fake tits were unmistakable thanks to my laptop computer's high-definition camera.

Munching on a room service meal, I mused about how sleep makes the world look better. Then I pondered how to spend the next few hours.

Scanning my phone for any emails, I saw a message from Anong.

I'd barely spent more than an hour with her, but I smiled to myself as I read her email. The politeness, the work ethic and dedication to duty were cliched, but they were consistent with the character of the person I'd spent an hour with yesterday and who apparently was to be my 'Girl Friday' for the next month.

The gist of Anong's message was that she was hugely sorry but that she felt I needed to know that the client's program director had scheduled an eight-a.m. meeting on Monday morning. Never mind that I was fresh off the plane and was almost guaranteed to still be suffering from jetlag. The client's program director wanted this meeting to learn about my plans for fixing the mess my company's local team had created with the software which was intended to integrate the control systems for the other vendors' expensive equipment.

Typical Anong, she informed me that she'd put her family plans for Saturday evening on hold and was standing by. When I'd rested and was ready to work, she offered to take me through the various reports and give me the lowdown on the team members that would be available to support me.

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I really didn't want to work or to call Anong. *(When I finally got through to Lizzy, how would that look? Late evening, just a few hours after our earlier 'difference of opinion' on the topic, and my forty-something Thai 'Girl Friday' camped out back in my hotel room at an hour she should have been back with her family!)*

But what choice did I have? With this thought I contacted Anong and invited her over. This was the biggest project my company had ever landed, and I had a meeting first thing Monday. I needed the updates Anong had offered to provide.

If we didn't get the client onboard and clean up the mess, then contract penalties and litigation could sink my whole company. And that was if the reputational damage didn't get us first. Our competitors would love the opportunity to badmouth us based on what was happening here.

The only upside as I ushered Anong into the room was that at least working would take my mind off my inability to contact Lizzy.

At first, Anong sat opposite me, sat in a chair three or four foot away with a

small glass-topped coffee table between us. Fully refreshed from my rest, I got into productive business mode despite the late hour. For the most part, I was able to concentrate as Anong walked me through various reports and people profiles. The profiles she reviewed covered our team and the vendors whose systems our software was integrating.

But every so often my mind would wander. In those moments, I'd think less about the topics and people, and more about the woman who was performing the review.

Anong had obviously been home and changed since earlier in the day. But her mode of dress hadn't changed appreciably from what she'd worn at the airport. Her clothing was not over the top or wildly inappropriate, but it was provocative and sexy enough to ensure any red-blooded man would think about what was underneath the wrapping. She wore four-inch heels, fashionable hip hugging jeans that showed her ass and legs off perfectly, and a tightly fitting black ribbed sweater that again did nothing to hide the imprint and location of her nipples.

*'What is it with this woman? Doesn't she own any bras?'* I found myself thinking. I was half annoyed by the distraction she presented, and half happy that she hadn't changed her attire. The scenery she presented forced me to be discrete as I repeatedly adjusted myself.

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After a while, Anong had to point to specific words and sections in an especially complicated document. As she did, she moved across to sit next to me on my room's sofa. This allowed her to point and touch my screen.

Fuck! Within minutes I was really struggling to concentrate. A mix of her perfume, the accidental rubbing of her boob on my arm as she reached across to point, and the strong suspicion that she was sending signals about her sexual availability combined to scramble my defenses.

The final piece in the jigsaw – I told myself – was how Lizzy had responded to Anong earlier that day. I can honestly say that before Lizzy's 'hands off, he's my man' reaction, I'd really not thought of Anong in a sexual way. In spite of the way she was dressed, I hadn't thought of Anong as a woman who might be interested in me.

All my life I'd just been one of the 'in the background' guys. I was never one of the guys who gets hit upon and flirted with at social events and parties.

Sure, coming to the States with my English accent had given me some novelty value; but still I'd never received much attention from women.

So, until Lizzy's little feline meltdown, I really hadn't been thinking of Anong *'that way.'*

But now that I could feel her warm thigh pressed next to mine, now that my nostrils were filled with the delicate floral note of her perfume, and now that I held my breath every time I sensed she was going to reach across to touch the screen; now I was very much thinking of her in *'that way.'*

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Looking at my watch, I was amazed to see two hours had already passed. *'Time to try home again,'* I thought - lump forming in my throat as my anxious brain wondered what I was about to hear.

"Anong ... umm ... I need to ring home to talk to Lizzy. I'm sorry to ask," I blushed, "but would you mind waiting in the other room?"

For a moment, there was an awkward silence. The awkwardness was decidedly one-sided. After a moment, an understated but knowing smile broke out on Anong's beautiful face.

"Ah ... yes, I understand, Jim." (By now at least I'd gotten her to stop calling me Mr. Sharp. Mr. Sharp was the name I reserved for my absentee, good-for-nothing father.) "Us girls, we can be a bit presumptuous. No. I mean we can be a bit possessive of our men folk."

She was nowhere near as innocent and naïve as I'd originally assumed. She waited a few moments after her statement. She was smiling, enjoying my evident discomfort.

Then she went for the follow-up.

"You want me to wait in the other room?" she asked.

'Yes,' I thought.

"In the bedroom?"

*‘Oh fuck, how’s that going to look if that ever comes out?’ I realized.*

But what choice did I have? However bad it might look for my sexily dressed Thai PA to be in my hotel bedroom at nine on a Saturday night – and no matter how much she was grinning, there were no other good alternatives. What else was I going to do? The optics on asking her to wait in the bathroom were just as bad.

With my cheeks approaching re-entry heat levels of redness, I nodded a small ‘yes’ and gathered my thoughts as I tried to calm myself to call Lizzy. The last thing I needed right now was her wifely intuition picking up on my unsettled demeanor and forcing the truth out of me. If I fessed up to Lizzy that Anong was back in my hotel room just hours after we’d quarreled about her. And Lizzy learned that Anong was not just in my hotel room, but was present and quietly waiting in my bedroom; I feared that I would have an even larger argument with Lizzy on my hands.

After praying Anong wouldn’t find some pretext to suddenly emerge and make an appearance on camera, I took several deep breaths and called Lizzy.

As my phone rang and rang, I looked at its clock. It was nine a.m. in Charleston, but there still wasn’t any answer from Lizzy.

I’d put myself through all of that stress and blushing awkwardness for no good reason.

I called Anong back out and we worked diligently for another two hours. During this time, my nostrils had to deal with Anong’s delicate floral scent. The passing time was agonizing. I held myself stiffly every time Anong moved, because I wasn’t sure whether I wanted her boob and nipple to brush against my arm. I also found myself listening to the hypnotic gentleness of her voice as she deconstructed complex technical issues and evaluated people with a similar level of professorial precision and perception. I marveled at the fact that Anong wasn’t in a more senior, better paid role. Then I remembered how asymmetric promotion was for women in many parts of Asia. I recalled how the glass ceiling could easily hold back ambitious women like Anong.

Despite all of these distractions, we did get a fair amount of work done. This was just as well, because when my phone showed eleven p.m. local time It

was time for me to try to call home again. After I made another stumbling request, Anong again hid herself away in the hotel suite's bedroom!

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When I called, Lizzy finally picked up. "Hey honey ... how are you? I'm so happy to reach you!" I babbled.

Unlike when I'd called from the hotel earlier in the day, this time it was my turn to be filled with energy, and it was Lizzy's turn to look sleepy and barely awake. She was just waking up in spite of the fact that it was nearing lunchtime back home.

"Hey, Jim ... Hey ... what time is it?" she asked through bleary eyelids. The way the picture on the phone was jumping around told me that she was fumbling her phone in that '*damned thing just woke me*' way.

"It's Eleven o'clock, baby. Rise and shine," I smiled.

The look I received in return made it clear that she didn't appreciate me using my time zone advantage to be perkier than her.

"Sorry, babe. But it's late here and I wanted to catch up before I turned in. Do you need me to give you a few minutes to wake up? Do you want me to call back in a while?"

"No. It's okay," she stumbled slowly. Her demeanor was painful to behold. She was like an old engine that was firing up one cylinder at a time.

"I just need some coffee to wake up," she added. With that, she began padding bare foot down to the kitchen. The image on the phone bounced as she walked making me feel nauseous.

"Belated happy birthday! How was your evening?"

Her description started off as '*okay ... fine,*' but as the caffeine kicked in and as she rubbed the sleepiness from her eyes, she soon painted a much more gushing picture of her birthday celebration.

"Honestly, Jim ... I wish you could have been there. Last night was absolutely amazing. I knew Simon was a good performer, but I was really impressed seeing the way he held the audience in the palm of his hand. It was fun to see how he worked the audience, pulled at their heart strings,

connected with them emotionally, and made each audience member think he was singing just to them. His performance was wow! Just, wow!”

Listening to her, I felt a real mix of emotions. I was genuinely pleased that, despite my absence, Lizzy had a great birthday celebration.

But I’d be lying if I didn’t admit that the little green-eyed monster of jealousy was dancing around inside my skull. I was happy for Lizzy to have a great night, but maybe not quite this great. A night that - from her flushed look and rapid, staccato speech seemed better than any night I could recall giving her. The fact that Simon, a man I didn’t particularly like, had given her one of her life’s most exciting nights just added to the sense of jealous inadequacy that I was feeling.

All us guys intuitively know the power of music to woo the female heart. Why else do so many thirteen-year-olds suddenly develop a burning desire to play guitar! And Simon had that power in industrial quantities!

And even though he’d never see sixty again, and his face and tummy more than a little fleshy – he was still a handsome man with broad shoulders and a sportsman’s six-foot plus build. All that and a bank account that was more than healthy, despite the demand of multiple ex-wives and estranged children he’d sired.

So, yes, the green-eyed monster and a very rationale set of back-of-the-mind fears were very real as I reflected on everything Lizzy was telling me.

“And then,” she beamed as my chest tightened even more, “they came. Just like Simon said they might ... Paul and Eric ... Paul and Eric came to our table!! They hugged me, and talked to me for more than an hour After that, they sang to me, and even got me up on stage...”

Lizzy looked like she might physically explode as she described two of the world’s biggest music stars treating her like one of them, and then serenading her and making her feel like the most important person in their world. The tale Lizzy was telling left me even more emotionally confused. I was certainly consumed by feelings of jealousy and inadequacy, but I was also genuinely overjoyed that she’d got to live this experience. The fact that she was gushing over two stars who put Simon into the shade did somehow ease my pain and confusion.

Lizzy carried on and on describing her evening. My joy at hearing about her evening grew exponentially, and strangely, even my jealous sense of inferiority developed a pleasurable undertone.

When she'd finally reached the end of her story, she smiled at me like the happiest of little girls, and said, "Honestly, Jim, I really wish you could have been there."

In response, I thought to myself, '*you might have wanted that, but I'm damned sure your new best friend, the crooner, wouldn't have wanted me there.*' The other thought that occurred to me was that Lizzy was so tied up telling her story that there was no way she was going to ask me anything about Anong. '*Every cloud ...*'

As Lizzy found a last spurt of 'little princess' energy, I did the math – the twelve-hour time difference making things straightforward.

"Honey, I'm really happy you had such a great night. Please say thanks to Simon for me." *Please do no such thing.* "I'm off to bed, but if I call around my nine in the morning, nine your evening time, does that work for you?"

Lizzy's smile told me we had a deal.

When I did ring back at the agreed time on Sunday morning, Anong wasn't hiding in the bedroom. But when I did, my emotions were subjected to an even more intense work out than they had dealt with the night before.

Chapter 7

Sunday 10th January 2021

I enjoyed a wonderfully satisfying night's sleep. My residual tiredness allowed me to rest even though my body clock was telling me it was still daytime. After consuming some good coffee and eating a well provisioned buffet breakfast I was ready to ring home. I hoped to enjoy some quality time talking to the birthday girl, and then to use the rest of my day to make some serious headway preparing for the next day's make or break meeting.

This time there was no fumbling or sleepiness when Lizzy picked up.

"Hey, babe, prompt as ever," she beamed, as the screen of my phone gave me a full view of my wife's beautiful face.

"Well, you know me," I grinned back, "besides, I didn't want to wait a minute longer than necessary before talking to my wonderful wife!"

But even as I spoke – and I meant every word – half my brain was focused on the background. Through it was nighttime in Charleston, the backdrop behind Lizzy looked familiar.

"Hey, Jimbo!" I heard shouted loudly by Simon's loud, self-absorbed voice. The backdrop behind Lizzy was the wooden privacy fence behind Ted and Rachel's hot tub. It was an area that had inspired us to install our own hot tub.

Just as I recognized the backdrop, Simon appeared to the right of Lizzy, and then Ted – looking more hesitant – appeared to her left.

With Lizzy's phone pulled back so all three were visible, I could now see which swimming outfit Lizzy had selected. She was wearing a white bikini that reminded me of the one Ursula Andress wore in the James Bond movie Doctor No. Though Ursula's bikini was quite revealing in 1962, Lizzy's bikini was updated to be lower cut and show even more flesh.

"Hey Simon," I grimaced.

Simon knew I disliked being called 'Jimbo'.

“As she’s not working til Monday and it’s only Saturday night, me and Ted thought we owed it to Lizzy to give her the best birthday weekend ever! You don’t mind, do you?”

The embarrassed expression on Ted’s broad face suggested this had all been Simon’s idea, not his. Ted could see how things might look to a husband who’d be away for weeks and months when he rang home and found his wife in a hot tub with two other guys.

Simon was playing mind games with me. How could I possibly say that I did mind, right here in front of Lizzy?

“No ... no I don’t mind,” I answered through gritted teeth. I was glad that Lizzy looked buzzed enough not to notice my less than enthusiastic tone.

With that, Simon raised his glass to toast me and started a blow-by-blow description of what had happened last night.

Listening to Lizzy’s telling was bad enough. But in Simon’s version, he was the biggest music star on the planet, and Lizzy came across as a giggling, infatuated high-schooler who’d been totally bowled over by the most exciting night of her existence. Then as he talked, as if it was the most natural thing in the world, Simon threw his arm around Lizzy’s shoulder and pulled her in close.

The two of them barely seemed to notice Simon’s arm around Lizzy. For Lizzy, I attributed it to the booze. For Simon, I suspect he simply didn’t care. But I certainly did notice, and it also registered with Ted. I saw him wince and subconsciously move just a little further away. It was as if his movement was signaling to me that he wasn’t part of all this.

As Simon droned on and on, I realized that I’d already heard this once. But every time Lizzy giggled at the retelling, I felt a stab of jealousy thrust through my gut. As it did, I also realized my pulse was racing. In some strange, strange way I found I was enjoying the feelings of bitterness and envy I was experiencing. Then when I saw Simon’s fingers idly playing with the strap of Lizzy’s white bikini, I felt a noticeable swelling in my groin.

From the way Lizzy was giggling and behaving, she was acting more like a fourteen-year-old than a forty-three-year-old. It was clear she’d drunk more than I realized. This realization made me feel strangely less angry and more

sympathetic to her.

Lizzy had coped with a helluva last twelve months.

Her good friend Rachel – who'd become a cross between big-sister and surrogate mother to her – had passed. Then there had been all the stress of supporting our unmarried daughter through childbirth and Rachel Jr's first year.

And now I wasn't there to help her celebrate her birthday. After considering all of these extenuating circumstances, I didn't have it in me to stay angry or jealous at her behavior.

Listening to Simon's stories from last night, hearing the way Lizzy giggled and laughed, seeing the way she cuddled closer to him during the most special parts of their remembered evening, I found myself recalling all those times we'd shared bedroom fantasies of Lizzy having sex with another man.

Even last night, when Lizzy had made me feel jealous and a little inadequate as she'd talked about her amazing time with Simon and then Paul and Eric, I'd never once doubted her love or loyalty. My jealousy and insecurities were understandable and just very human, because I couldn't give her those 'star' moments that Simon had given her.

Even if I didn't like the Simon, and even if I didn't trust his motives towards Lizzy; I was glad that he'd been the vehicle to give her such a great night.

But now, seeing them so close together in Ted's hot tub, I felt a gnawing, hollow feeling in the pit of my stomach. My mind returned to the numerous times Lizzy and I had roleplayed about her fucking with another guy during our private bedtime games.

But those guys had been make-believe. They'd been faceless, nameless and imaginary men who had no interests or desires of their own. Their sole purpose was to spice things up and increase the mutual pleasure Lizzy and I shared.

But Simon was the antithesis of these imaginary, fantasy men. He was very real. He had a very well-defined set of interests towards my wife, and possessed a track record of busting up his own marriages and who knew how many other couples marriages.

Despite these concerns, as I sat nine thousand miles away sipping my second mug of morning coffee, I couldn't stop myself from relating what I was seeing now to all those times Lizzy and I had roleplayed about her and another man.

In the end Lizzy and I didn't manage any personal, one-on-one time during that call, and after nearly an hour I made an excuse to kill the call. Though I loved looking at Lizzy and hearing her voice, this conference call was a poor substitute for what I'd been expecting. There was only so much of Simon and his ego that any human should have to endure at one sitting.

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The moment the call was over, I noticed a WhatsApp message. This message was from Anong instead of Lizzy.

*'Morning Jim. Hope you slept well. Let me know when you want to resume the briefing. It'll just take me a few minutes to throw something on and get up to your room, Anong'*

My stomach was still swirling and twisting from what I'd seen and felt during the conference call. My skull felt decidedly light-headed from my mixed-up emotions. The prospect of completing some work and spending some social time with my beautiful Thai assistant seemed to be an appropriate and not entirely unpleasant prospect.

*'If you're having fun with our friends, I don't see the harm in a little light flirting myself, Lizzy.'* I thought to myself. The light, delicate scent of Anong's perfume in my nostrils seeming more real than memory as I smiled to myself and messaged her back.

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"Thanks for coming ... I hope I haven't screwed up your weekend too much."

Anong smiled.

I continued by saying "I hope you at least got some down time this morning and got to spend some time with that daughter of yours."

Anong smiled again. She appeared flattered that the big boss from the Head

Office had remembered her family details.

“It is a difficult time for my daughter and I. Girls that age can be challenging. This is especially true in a conservative culture like Thailand. I find myself telling myself that “Parents remember how they were with their folks, so they bite their tongues when their own kids are a little more *‘independent’*...”

Anong laughed. “Yes – *‘independent’* – that’s a good word for my daughter ... *‘independent’* and *‘head strong’*,” she grinned. I’d never met her seventeen-year-old daughter Malee, but I was beginning to get the picture! If she acted anything like her mother, then I’m sure she possessed a quiet, understated steeliness that ensured she was skilled in getting her own way. And if she looked anything like her mother, then I’m sure she’d be able to effortlessly wrap boys around her little finger before they even realized what was going on.

We soon got down to work. Despite working late last night and now working again on Sunday, Anong was in an excellent mood. Her mood no doubt could partly be attributed to the fact that I’d shown an interest in the business update she was providing. Something I guessed wasn’t always true in such a hierarchical society.

At first, my mind was all business. But as Anong had immediately plonked herself right next to me on the sofa (no opposite seats like the night before) it didn’t take long for my mind to start wandering between work and the pleasures of sitting next to a beautiful, sexy woman. Even when she was describing yet another problem that we’d have to resolve in the coming days, she seemed to spend most of her time smiling at me.

By now I was convinced that Anong didn’t own a single bra or a single top or dress you’d describe as *‘loose’*.

Yet again she’d chosen to go braless with her two best friends – the best friends that had suckled her daughter – poking out and saying *‘hi’* against the stretch fabric of her pale pink knitted dress.

In some ways, the dress was more conservative and *‘work appropriate’* than yesterday’s outfit. It had long sleeves, a high turtleneck collar and came mid-thigh. But, in my mind, these more understated elements just served to draw

even more attention to Anong's chest.

As we worked through the early afternoon, I wondered if Lizzy would call me to say goodnight.

When no call or text materialized, I have to admit to feeling a combination of anger and disappointment. But when my mind wandered to the images I'd seen of her in the hot tub with Simon and Ted, these negative emotions soon became mixed up with a weird sense of excitement.

No call from Lizzy, we carried on working. During one short work break, I pondered why these images should excite me. Enjoying a Eureka moment, I realized I was excited because I trusted Lizzy's love for me. Consequently, I could wallow in the vicarious pleasure of her acting a little naughty without experiencing the pain and fear that would have killed the moment for me if we had a less solid marriage.

Reaching this realization freed me to feel less confused and conflicted whenever I thought of home. This helped me focus on work as we carried on through the afternoon until finally at around seven it was time to call it a day.

"Thanks Anong, the walkthrough that you provided has been really useful. I'll see you tomorrow. Please thank your daughter Malee for lending me her mom during family time," I smiled. As I completed this statement, I wondered what a younger version of Anong might look like. Then I said, "It's time for me to call home, and see how my own daughter and wife are."

"Don't mention it, Jim," Anong said to me with a hesitant smile. It looked like she was still a little uncomfortable using my first name as she headed for the hotel room door.

She was halfway out the door when she turned back. She had a pensive, slightly nervous look on her face.

"Just a thought, Jim. When you've finished speaking to your wife, would you like to grab a quick bite to eat?"

Seeing my slightly surprised look, and herself blushing a little, she elaborated.

"I thought it would be nice for you to see a little bit of the real Bangkok. I thought it might help for you to get out from this sterile hotel. I'm sure that

you spend half of your life staring at the four walls of hotels and their restaurants. Bangkok's got some great street food, and we need to maintain our well-deserved reputation for hospitality. I'd like you to join the ranks of people visiting the '*Land of Smiles*'." As she said this, she grinned. Her preceding sentence was a reference to Thailand's well-known nickname.

I pursed my lips, trying not to look ungrateful or standoffish. Then, I looked at my watch. As I did so, I thought to myself, '*How would this look to Liz? Me out on the town when I should be working my butt off to get home as quickly as I can.*'

Following my cue, Anong looked at her own watch. "If you're worried about tomorrow, we can be out and back in just over an hour."

She was really angling for this. This thought gave me a warm, squiggly feeling in my tummy. '*It's nice to be wanted! You're not the only one with admirers, my dear lusted after Lizzy.*'

"Sure, why not!" I grinned back. I was pleased to be able to make her happy, and I owed her for sacrificing her Sunday to provide me with the background update. The smile Anong gave me in return made it clear why Thailand had gotten its nickname. During the plane flight over, I'd read, '*in Thailand, a smile is much more than just a smile, it's a form of subtle interpersonal messaging...*'

From the way Anong's cheeks were still a little flushed, I couldn't help but wonder what kind of 'interpersonal messaging' her dinner invitation was meant to send me.

'*That can wait,*' I thought to myself. I have a wife to call. A wife to call and a hot tub session whose ending needs exploring. A strange rush of adrenaline buzzed through my veins as I thought about my pending conversation.

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"Hey babe!" I beamed at my half-sleepy looking wife.

"Morning," she croaked, her voice still a little hoarse and phlegmy.

I'd spent more than twenty years coming off second best to Lizzy in the '*who can be sparkier in the morning*' stakes. It felt good that the direction the earth chose to spin would give me victory for the next few weeks.

But it didn't take Lizzy long to recover her poise. I could tell there was something on her mind.

"Jim, honey, can I ask you something?" she asked. Her nervousness was instantly contagious. My body reacted as if I'd just drunk a quad espresso.

"Sure," I replied hesitantly, wondering where Lizzy's statement was going.

"Are you okay with what happened the other night? At the club? With Simon and the guys? And with last night in the Hot Tub?"

Upon hearing her questions, I smiled to myself. My reaction made Lizzy furrow her eyebrows in confusion.

Before I'd worked it all out, before I'd worked out how much I loved and trusted Lizzy and wanted her to have fun, her questions would have been more difficult to answer. But now I could answer her in the most honest and straightforward of ways.

"Yes, honey. I'm perfectly okay with the great time you had at the club, and also with the nice evening you enjoyed in the hot tub with Ted and Simon!"

"Really?"

"Yes, really!"

"You sure? You're not just saying that?"

"No, I'm sure. I'm really sure."

Upon hearing this, my wife's lovely face relaxed. There it was, that lovely open, happy smile that I could never imagine living without. Her smile made me – just for one instant – think of poor old Ted and how he must miss his beloved Rachel. If giving Lizzy permission to spend time with Ted meant we could offer him even a small semblance of solace, then it made me glad to do so on the basis of our friendship. Then a far less happy thought intruded. I shivered as I imagined being in his shoes. I considered how I'd feel if I ever lost Lizzy.

"Jim?" My expression had her confused, before hearing my name snapped me out of it, brought me back to the here and now.

"Sorry, honey!" I exclaimed. As I did the smile returned to Lizzy's face,

warming my heart.

“Lizzy?”

“Yes, babe...”

“What brought that on? What suddenly made you ask if I was okay with things?”

She blushed, hesitated and struggled for words. Then she answered with a single word. “Ted.”

“Ted?” Now it was my turn to look confused.

“Ted spoke to me last night. Or more accurately, early this morning. Simon finally stopped flirting with me when he realized Ted wasn’t going to leave him alone with me. After he finally went to bed, Ted pulled me aside and said he was pretty sure he’d seen a pissed off look on your face. He thought you looked upset when Simon got all snuggly with me. He said he didn’t think you looked happy when Simon started telling you how amazing he was, and how I loved him at the club and loved every moment of the evening...”

I smiled at my wonderful wife. My smile was happy, indulgent, and loving.

“He’s not wrong. I guess you don’t get to command hundreds of young marines without being able to read a face or two...”

Upon hearing that admission, Lizzy looked worried. So I quickly jumped back in to calm her nerves.

“I did feel like that. I won’t deny it. The green-eyed monster well and truly sunk its claws deep into my psyche. And you already know my thoughts on ‘*Simon the Humble, Simon the Meek.*’ but after our call, I thought about how much I love you, and how much I trust you. The magic key was acknowledging my love and trust for you. Recognizing these feelings helped me overcome the jealousy. I recognized how stupid I was being. It made me realize how happy I was for you to experience such a great time...”

As I shared every word, Lizzy’s smile grew wider and wider. As it did, my feelings soared. I loved that my honesty and openness could make her feel so happy. This feeling gave me the courage to overcome my nerves and share an additional thought. The thought I shared was something I’d been fifty-

fifty about sharing with her.

“And, you know what, hun. Last night, I got excited watching Simon so shamelessly flirt with you.” As I shared this, my wife’s cheeks colored at the mention of Simon’s behavior. “Watching Simon come on to you made me think back to all those times in bed, when I whispered in your ear about some big-dicked stud fucking you to heaven and back as I made love to you.”

Lizzy’s cheeks had gone four more shades of red after I reminded her of these fantasies! They had not colored because she was embarrassed at how she’d let Simon flirt with her. Instead, they’d gotten red, because she was remembering the bedroom sessions I was describing – she’d blushed, because I was pretty sure she’d made the final leap. A leap I’d not been brave enough to make myself – or at least, not in my conscious brain.

We both looked at each other.

Looked, but stayed silent.

We both knew exactly what each of us were thinking. And it was the most scary, sexual moment that I could ever recall.

“Are you saying what I think you’re saying?” she asked. As she did, her voice was barely a whisper.

Seeing the look on her face, and hearing my own words play back in my head, I suddenly was overcome with an urgent need to clarify.

“Hang on, hang on. I didn’t mean I wanted you to fuck him. I just meant I’m okay with and have no concerns about what happened this weekend. Like I said, seeing you in the hot tub with a couple of guys reminded me of some of our more racy fantasies!”

Lizzy giggled at my quick clarification. She appeared to enjoy my evident discomfort.

“Well, for a moment there, honey, you really had me wondering. I mean ... Wow! Wow! You had me wondering whether Ted was wrong. You had me thinking that you might be giving your lovely wife a hall pass.”

“Just a fantasy ... nothing more,” I said with attempted finality. I wanted to slam the door shut on my teasing wife’s sense of fun.

“Are you sure honey? There wouldn’t be any shame in admitting it. I wouldn’t think any less of you if you wanted to give me a hall pass.”

“JUST A FANTASY!” I spelled out for her in block capitals.

“Ah well,” she sighed, “You can’t blame a girl for trying. After all, it’s not every day a girl gets three rock megastars making eyes at her.”

“You had two wrinkly, probably impotent, rock megastars and Simon making eyes at you. I’d hardly call Simon a megastar,” I corrected.

“Mmm, I think I like my husband feeling a little jealous and insecure,” she teased again.

“You can like what you like, Mrs. Sharp so long as we’re clear on the fact that, whatever fantasies my warped brain might conjure, I have not, under any circumstances, given you a hall pass or anything resembling a hall pass. Understood?”

She was still loving this. Her conversation with me had been very different from the conversation she’d expected to have.

“Okay. I understand that you haven’t given me a hall pass. But for the sake of clarity, you’re okay with me hanging out with megastars as long as they’re old and wrinkly and are not young and hunky like my wonderful, absentee husband.”

I had to laugh at this statement. It was a shining reminder of why I’d fallen in love with Lizzy. I appreciated her quick wit and sense of humor. Consequently, I counted every day we were together a blessing. Even if I was on the other side of the world.

“Well, I agree when you describe it like that. Hanging out is approved, Hanky-panky or monkey business is definitely not approved. Are we clear on that?”

“Crystal clear,” my darling, said Lizzy with a laugh. “I’m crystal clear that my husband has given his wife permission to hang out so he can enjoy his naughty fantasies and daydreams. But, he hasn’t given his wife permission to engage in hanky-panky even if it would help her satisfy her normal, red-blooded urges while he is on the other side of the world. I find this funny since he’s giving me these boundaries while he’s letting some Thai strumpet

get all familiar with his boxers and briefs.”

“Good,” I grinned at her *‘butter-wouldn’t-melt’* face, “I’m glad we got that straight. Now, if you wouldn’t mind slipping into that chastity belt that I left you and mailing me the key, then we’ll finally have gotten everything shipshape and squared-off.”

“Of course, my lord and master. I’ll do so as soon as Simon gives me a minute,” she sweetly needled. “Now, is there anything else, your highness?”

“No, that will be all for now,” I chortled. Lizzy’s mention of Anong did make me wonder whether I should mention the dinner invite I’d received from Anong. But, after giving it a moment’s thought, I decided not to mention the invite to Lizzy. Instead, I blew Lizzy a kiss, told her once more that I missed her and couldn’t wait to be home with her. Then I hung up the phone.

# Chapter 8

*Sunday 10th January 2021*

I was still floating on cloud nine when I met Anong in the hotel lobby. As I walked to meet her, I was humming happily to myself. The call to Lizzy, a piping hot shower, and the prospect of good food and beautiful female company put me in an exceptional frame of mind.

“Someone’s happy?” she remarked. “Good call home?”

“Yes, thanks. This call went much better than the one when my wife caught me with my assistant eyeing up my underwear!”

‘Oh fuck!’ I was in such a happy mood, that the words were said and out there in the world before I realized my humor could easily be misinterpreted as a rebuke.

“Now, why would any wife get upset at a thing like that?” Anong teased back with a playful smile. “Especially with me being an old ‘*maiden aunt*’ type. Not some sexy woman showing off her tits in front of another woman’s husband!”

Anong wasn’t kidding. The way she dressed for dinner emphasized her most ‘*un-maiden aunt*’ charms. As it was now evening, and we were off duty, Anong had replaced her tight but semi-corporate clothing with an even tighter, most uncorporate brown jumpsuit. The most notable feature of this jumpsuit was its deep cut V-shaped plunge neckline that left little to the imagination. A feature which – surprise, surprise – left Anong no possibility to wear an accompanying bra. If Lizzy had seen how much of her husband’s dinner companions cleavage was on show, Lizzy would have had a heart attack!

Seeing my startled look at how openly she was describing how she’d pressed Lizzy’s buttons, Anong grinned even wider and doubled down. She appeared to savor my confusion. “Jim, it would have been hard not to notice the way your wife was looking at my tits. Back when I had a husband, I’d have reacted in exactly the same way.”

By now we had left the hotel lobby and had walked halfway down the street.

As we did, our conversation was progressing much faster than I could have imagined.

In for a penny, in for a pound. Though my comments might cross all sorts of HR boundaries, I could not stop myself. Besides which, I reminded myself that she had been the one to raise the topic after my arrival during the ride to the hotel in the airport limo. When she did, she'd been totally unabashed as she'd told me her boobs' origin story!

“So why did you push your tits at the camera like that? And why do you continue to choose not to wear a bra?” I asked with a smile.

She smiled back at me playfully. I don't want to fall back on racial tropes, but her smile fit the definition of *'inscrutable'*! I'm not sure a western person could have produced a smile like hers. It seemed like she'd been training for it since birth! So much for *'The Land of Smiles.'* There was definitely some *'interpersonal messaging'* going on with that damned grin, but I didn't know what it meant!

“Why did I push my tits out like that? Why have I been allowing my boobs to have a little more air than normal?” she mused, as if speaking to herself. As she did, I realized that she was playing me. She was stringing me along until I reached my limits. Once I did, she took pity on me.

“Well, I could use an old American expression to explain myself ... *'when you got it, flaunt it'* ... and, there's some truth to that. But I guess the main reason is that I enjoy having fun and playing games a little.”

When Anong looked at me, she saw I was still a little confused, so she continued.

“Isn't life too short to be serious all the time? I thought it might be fun to see how you and your wife responded to some innocent provocation!”

“You didn't think she might get mad at me?” I gasped.

Anong just laughed and smiled. “Oh, come on, Jim. Lizzy's a beautiful woman. How many times has some guy made eyes at her in a bar or at a party? Are you telling me Lizzy didn't enjoy it? Are you telling me she didn't enjoy your jealous, possessive reaction?”

I blushed, and my cheeks went beet red. Anong's comment suggested she

had been a fly-on-the-wall for the last twenty years of my marriage.

Anong smiled knowingly. She was enjoying the reaction she was getting from me. “I just thought it might be fun to let you be the one to enjoy the feeling of desirability for once. I thought it would be fun to let you be the beneficiary of your wife’s reaction and worry when some provocatively dressed, big boobed, braless woman makes such an obvious play for you!”

“So, you knew exactly how she’d react, and you did it anyway? It was all part of a game?” I croaked.

“Why do you think I made those comments about her and me being so alike?” she chuckled. Then she transitioned into an over-sweet, over-exaggerated impression of herself. “*Oh, Mrs. Sharp ... I feel like we have so much in common. Our two daughters are nearly the same age. My Malee, your Caitlin ... they’re only a few years apart.*’ If holding your boxers and wiggling my boobs didn’t do it, then that statement was guaranteed to press her buttons.”

I considered these statements as we continued to walk. After reflection, I chuckled out loud, as Anong added an equally valid second motive, “Also, what you told me in the airport limo about Lizzy’s preconceptions about my country ... that all us Thai girls are out to steal away husbands ... that she’d chop your bits off ... I think Lizzy’s a nice woman, but it did make me a little mad ... make me think of getting my own back!”

Us men never had a chance! We were babes-in-the-wood compared to the females of our species. We’d always be innocent and naïve compared to the labyrinthian plans our females weave in their feline minds.

Chuckling more loudly so Anong would know I understood her point and was okay with her game, I asked her another question. My follow-up was prompted by her recent confession.

“And what about tonight? How do you explain tonight’s invite to dinner? How did you expect my wife to react to that?” I challenged. I hoped to prove to her that I wasn’t as clueless as I currently felt.

“Oh, come on, Jim. Give me some credit. I know you’re smarter than that. There’s no way you told her about tonight. At least not yet. You might slip this dinner into a conversation in a few days or weeks’ time. But after she

reacted when I said ‘hi’, there’s no way you told her about this evening’s dinner plans!”

So much for proving I wasn’t clueless! Anong had only known me for a couple of days, but she already had me fully worked out. ‘*Are guys really that predictable?*’ I found myself wondering. I didn’t like the answer that came back to this question.

“So, if tonight’s not about winding up Mrs. Sharp, what is it about? Is there some ulterior motive? Just like your motive for how you said ‘hi’ to Lizzy? Or is tonight’s invitation like you said just giving me an opportunity to get out of the hotel? Are you merely trying to provide a stranger some Thai hospitality and to show off how much better your street food is than the food that is available in the States?” I asked.

As I did, I was grinning widely. I was surprised at myself for just how forward I was being. I was acting in a most ‘unJimlike’ fashion; but then again, Anong had been the one who’d opened this particular door by the way she’d shamelessly admitted to pressing Lizzy’s buttons.

“Now there’s a good question,” she laughed back. “But if I answered it, where would the fun in that be? Isn’t not knowing the answer to this question far more fun than knowing?”

Oh, shit. Anong was good at this game! I remembered even in the car ride from the airport - when she’d described how she’d got the better of her cheating French husband. Any man that got on the wrong side of this particular lady would have to be brave or stupid.

Raising my hands in resignation, I shook my head. “I give in. I’m not going to win this discussion, am I?” Seeing Anong’s coy smile told me I had reached the right conclusion. So I said, “Let’s just have a nice quiet meal and talk about something else!” That peace offer won me a silent smile of agreement. I sensed the game playing was over, and finally I could relax and let my guard down.

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Ten minutes later we’d snagged a table in a bustling outdoor food market, ordered a couple of local Singha beers to hold the table, and were now returning with two plates piled high with all kinds of local specialties. In

addition, we had two bowls of spicy Tom Yum soup which Anong told me would blow my socks off!

I've always loved spicy food and I'd had Tom Yum soup before so I bragged, "This spicy soup won't be a problem. I grew up in Birmingham Balti in the UK. My hometown is famous throughout the UK and Europe for its curries!"

I was wrong, very wrong. The Thai street chefs seemed to have gone overboard with the ginger and chili. Even going slowly, it was quite a struggle for me to finish the soup. Doing so required plenty of swigs of beer to douse the fires. As I fought to finish my soup, Anong just looking at me and smiled. She seemed amused by my struggles. Her smile kept saying 'told you so' as she wolfed down her soup as if she were drinking water.

I'd struggled so much with the soup that Anong had taken pity, and had not tried to engage me in conversation. But as we moved from the soup to the other dishes, we held a nice conversation. It was probably the most normal talk we'd had since those first few minutes in the airport limo. No teasing, no game playing, and no flirting. We just talked about our respective families and life experiences.

Totally in keeping with our conversation, I suddenly heard a loud shriek of 'Mae' from across the market. Seconds later an attractive young woman had her arms wrapped tight around Anong's neck, and they began jabbering away at high speed.

After a minute or two, Anong turned to me. "Sorry, Jim. Where are my manners? Jim, this is my daughter Malee. Malee, this is Jim, my boss from the States. He's flown in to try and rescue the project. He's been given responsibility to fix all the problems my company has been having. On the personal front, he and his wife have a daughter just about your age."

I thought this was an interesting detail to add. I considered whether – 'Anong was just building bridges, or whether she had some other agenda,' Since no statement or action by this easily underestimated woman seemed to occur by accident, the way she also mentioned that I was married made me wonder.

Pushing these thoughts to the back of my mind, Anong, Malee, and I chatted about a variety of topics. As we did, the closeness between Malee and her

mother was evident. I suspect this was an inevitable and positive consequence of the otherwise sad situation where a child only receives the love and presence of one of their parents.

Observing the two of them interact was a pleasant way for me to spend our meal. But it would have been so for any man with a pulse. It was easy to see a physical resemblance between these women. They possessed the same buzzing energy, always bubbling over or simmering just beneath the surface. They also had the same mischievous sparkle in their eyes. Not to mention the same long black hair framing two sets of pretty features. As I set at our table, I thought, ‘they are obviously related.’ Any passerby would definitely have recognized they were related, but would more likely have guessed that they were older and younger sisters rather than a mother and daughter.

Aside from their respective ages, the only obvious difference between the two women related to their womanly curves. Malee brought this difference up when she told her mom about some elective cosmetic surgery her best friend, Sunny, was about to undertake.

“Honestly, mom,” Malee whined. “Sunny’s only three months older than me. She’s obsessed with her TikTok following. One of her friends obtained a few thousand additional followers after getting a boob job. So now, Sunny’s trying to keep up with this friend. She’s got an appointment to get Botox, a nose job and bigger boobs! For heaven’s sake, mom, she’s only seventeen!”

I agreed with her perspective, but I also had to smile at it. It was funny to see this beautiful, vivacious seventeen-year-old sounding more like a ‘*world’s going to shit*’ middle-aged grouch than a radically minded youngster.

“Well, honey, the heart wants what the heart wants,” her mom comforted her with an understanding smile. Although I swear her gaze seemed focused on me rather than her daughter as she said this!

‘Would this woman ever stop playing and having fun at my expense?’ Anong was meant to be here to help me, and she was doing that; but she was also consuming a considerable amount of my mental capacity and diverting my focus from the pressing work matters we had at hand.

A few seconds later, Anong gave her daughter a warning dig in the ribs. As she did, another beautiful young woman approached and wrapped her arms

around Malee.

“Jim, Sunny. Sunny, this is Jim.”

With that statement, Anong completed introductions. After a few minutes chatting, the two young women went on their way. If they were anything like Malee’s mom, I had no doubt that they’d soon be meeting up and running rings around some hapless young men who’d likely be wishing they’d set their sights on two girls who were more in their league.

After exchanging goodbye waves, Anong watched them leave with a philosophical look on her face. Then her waspish grin returned.

“To youth,” Anong toasted. As she did, she clinked her beer bottle against mine. Looking in her eyes, there was something that set me on edge.

“Tell me, Jim. Did you and Lizzy ever discuss cosmetic surgery? I hear it’s all the rage in the US ... when wives reach ‘a certain age.’ Maybe Lizzy would be interested in a tummy tuck, or some Botox. or a boob job like mine...”

“Excuse me,” I spluttered. As I spoke, I choked on my beer, and nearly sprayed a passing waitress.

I didn’t know which topic to focus on first. Should I react to the topic of cosmetic surgery, or to the thought of how Lizzy would have reacted to being referred to as ‘*a woman of a certain age.*’

Drying my shirt and gathering my thoughts, I fought back. “Anong, I think you’ve got South Carolina confused with California and Hollywood. We’re more normal in Charleston.”

Anong wouldn’t accept my statement. “Oh, come on Jim,” she challenged, “the way Lizzy looked at my boobs the first time we met. You’re not telling me that Lizzy doesn’t harbor a little jealousy, a little desire and a little ‘*I wonder what*’. Or maybe Lizzy has some insecurity. Have you asked her to get her boobs done, but she said ‘no.’? Does she have some self-doubt that’s making her insecure when she saw mine? From the way she viewed them, she seemed fascinated by them.”

Arguing with Anong was like wrestling with an eel, but I did my best.

“Anong, I can honestly tell you that we’ve never discussed getting Lizzy

bigger boobs. It's never even entered my head. Why would I ask her about it? I think she's sexy as hell just the way she is!"

"And there we have it, voters," Anong beamed. It seemed like this had been her plan all along, to get me to sing my wife's praises.

Her change in tone made me think, 'Maybe she and Lizzy were somehow in cahoots!' After a moment, I dismissed this fanciful thought with a shake of my head. The way Lizzy had berated me after her meeting with Anong, there was more chance of peace in the Middle East than of Lizzy and Anong working together!

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Over our many years together – I've often suspected one of Lizzy's great, great, great grandmas must have been a witch or something. Maybe the family home originated in Salem.

Because Lizzy has an unerring ability to call me the instant I'm feeling guilty about something. On countless occasions, she's contacted me just as I'm in the midst of doing something which I know she'd hate.

And being out on the town with a beautiful Thai woman wearing a dress that revealed more than it hid while discussing whether Lizzy needed a boob job met the textbook definition for a guilty moment.

Looking down at my buzzing phone, I was forced to make a quick decision. Even allowing for jetlag, it was too early for Lizzy to believe I was already asleep. So I couldn't choose to ignore the call.

And since it was mid-morning in Charleston, Lizzy would certainly be expecting to make our call a video call. She would expect me to turn my camera on. So I didn't have the option of being evasive or half-truthful about where I was or who I was with.

Steeling myself for the possibility that I was about to undo all the good produced by our recent call, I pressed answer and turned the camera on.

# Chapter 9

*Sunday 10th January 2021*

“Hey babe!” I answered with my best sunny, guilt-free demeanor. The dark, noise-filled market backdrop immediately alerted Lizzy to the change since we’d spoken barely an hour ago. What she could see put her on notice that wherever I was, it most definitely was not the Four Seasons!

“H-h-hi, honey,” she stammered. The catch in her voice provided my first warning that whatever she’d been calling to discuss was now relegated to a secondary issue. “Where are you?” she asked.

“Just in the market. I’m grabbing a quick dinner before hitting the sack.”

I could see the wheels turning behind Lizzy’s skeptical expression. Lizzy knew my patterns based on many years of travel. She knew I rarely ventured outside the hotel, especially not so early on a trip. Consequently, Lizzy’s antenna were up, and this made her next question inevitable.

“Sounds adventurous! Good for you. Someone must be taking good care of you. Whoever it is must be really dedicated to show you around this late on a Sunday night. Which of the other team members are keeping you company?”

*Oh fuck?* I was fresh out of excuses and had only the flimsiest of cover to offer.

“Anong and her daughter Malee offered to show me the best local places to get some street food,” I answered. My response was not dishonest, but it definitely attempted to put a slant on the evening. I threw Anong’s daughter in as half softener, half mitigation for my defense.

The worst part of Lizzy’s response was the resulting silence. The silence as she thought. Pondered. Worked out her conclusions.

Our last conversation had been so positive.

Our prior conversation about Anong had been less so.

But still Lizzy’s wheels were turning. She was pondering the meaning of what she had learned. Her jaw started to move and then stopped as she

resumed thinking. It started and stopped again. And then finally Lizzy offered her response.

“Is this why you encouraged me to hang out with Simon and Ted?” Lizzy asserted. “So, you could have your ‘hanging out’ time with your Thai tramp?”

*‘I never encouraged you to hang out with Simon and Ted. I merely said it would be okay,’* was what my logical, male brain wanted to point out. But twenty years of female cohabitation had taught me that such a response would lead to a painful dead-end. Mars and Venus, and all that.

So instead, I offered “You know how important hospitality is here. Anong and her daughter only wanted to show me some of the real Thailand.”

“I bet she wanted to show you some of the REAL Thailand!” Lizzy spat back. She didn’t seem to mind that the person she was taking in vain was likely located just a few feet away.

I don’t know what possessed me.

Whether it was Lizzy’s mean-spirited, unjust statement. Whether it was the thought of how Anong would be feeling after she heard herself talked about this way. Or whether it was just damned stupidity on my part. But, whatever the reason, I chose to hand the phone to Anong. I gave up control of the conversation and decided to see what the two felines of my species would do if I turned them loose on each other.

“Well, Anong happens to be right here. Her daughter just left after bumping into a friend, but Anong’s here so you can say ‘hi’ if you desire”

Before Lizzy had a chance to respond, I thrust the phone across to Anong. I felt some guilt for this action. But, my intuition told me that Anong would be more prepared for this feline two-step than Lizzy might.

“Hi, Mrs. Sharp. How are things back in Charleston? I heard that you and Simon and Ted had an amazing birthday night out! I’m so, so jealous!”

Fuck. I didn’t remember sharing all that with Anong; but I guess we’d talked about so much tonight that I must have mentioned it in passing.

Still, Anong had taken my simple statements of fact and weaponized them.

Words which sounded so innocent to me seemed guaranteed to trigger Lizzy who'd already scolded me for sharing too much.

*Oh fuck!* As I'd handed the phone across, the phone's camera had only caught Lizzy's attire for a fleeting moment. But having been with Anong all evening, I'd forgotten how Anong was dressed. I'd failed to remember how much flesh she'd exposed. I'd neglected to think about the bait she was revealing for any male brave enough to pursue her. I may have forgotten, but - in that fleeting moment when I'd caught Lizzy's expression - I knew Lizzy had forgotten nothing and had noticed everything.

"Hi Anong, we did have an amazing birthday night out, thanks!" Lizzy finally replied in a sweet and friendly way. Hearing her response told me what plan Lizzy intended to deploy. She was going to ignore me and ignore the evidence she had witnessed. Instead, Lizzy was going to double down on the *'you're welcome to him, I have bigger and better'* card.

"It was so, so amazing," she continued. "Can you believe it, Paul was there, and Eric was there. They both hugged me and made me feel like the Belle of the Ball. They spent more than an hour talking to little old me! Can you imagine! It's still like a dream to me."

"Then there was Simon's performance. Simon is such a smoothie. He's quite a romantic. He made me feel like the whole night, the whole weekend in fact, was just about me. Simon's such a sweetheart, such a darling. After the weekend, I honestly think he's received a lot of bad press. I think he's just never found the right woman."

*'Mission accomplished'*, Lizzy must have thought after this statement. She'd discharged both barrels with her description of the weekend. Barrel one, she'd directed at the woman hunting her man. It was intended to blow her out of the sky with a terminal case of inadequacy. Barrel two, she'd targeted at her beloved husband. It was designed to increase his worry about the ageing rocker who was pursuing his wife. Her statement was intended to make her husband aware that Simon was keen to add her as the latest on his list of top hits.

"Wow." Anong responded. "Your weekend sounds absolutely heavenly. All Jim and I have got to look forward to is long, long hours holed up in the hotel room working out how your clever husband can fix the situation he's been

dropped into. All we have time for is to develop a plan to work the situation out; and then months and months of making sure the plan works. We're going to be focused on bringing the project home, so Jim can bring that bonus home for you and Caitlin and that granddaughter of yours."

I felt more than a little disloyal, but a part of me admired the way Anong returned serve to my sassy and sharp wife. The whole 'you're a grandmother now' vibe provided a particularly effective shank to bring into this particular feline knife fight.

Anong had neither insulted nor directly confronted Lizzy, nor had she rolled over and acted subservient to her. Anong had found an appropriate balance – just as she'd done that first night that she and Lizzy had clashed during the WhatsApp call.

There was another prolonged silence. It felt long for Anong and Lizzy, it seemed never-ending for me. The silence caused me to wonder just how startling Lizzy's reply was likely to be.

"Well, I won't keep you, Anong. I'm sure you and my husband need to be getting back to the hotel for some more last minute, late night 'preparation.' I'd better go, Simon's taking me to lunch. Tell Jim I'll try and call him the next time I have a minute. But I'm not sure when Simon's going to let me go. Anyway, it was lovely talking to you again."

And then the line went dead. Lizzy killed the call, starting the first part of my punishment. This part of my punishment would be physical. The loss of contact would be a physical punishment to go with the multiple instances of psychological punishment she'd just meted out to me.

'Oh fuck!' How bad was this going to get? Lizzy breaking contact with me was hardly the ideal event before one of the most important meetings of my career.

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"Mr. Sharp ... I don't disagree with your diagnosis of the problems," said Mr. Fung, the client's Taiwanese Program Director."

But the only thing my company really cares about is how long it will take before we start to see real improvements. And, quite frankly, the fact that you

didn't arrive until after the first week of isn't the best of signs, is it?"

'What a way to spend a Monday morning,' I grimaced – struggling with jetlag and having your legs pulled off by the humorless equivalent of a young boy being mean to insects!

There was no point in me mentioning Rachel Jr's first birthday. Mr. Fung struck me as the kind of man who didn't believe in birthdays. I didn't want to press my luck, I'd already used up my allowance of conversational missteps with last night's bravura performance with Lizzy!

Mr. Fung was a formidable man. He wanted to explore the detail of every problem and solution I'd raised. As part of each conversation, he seemed to identify five other questions that I hadn't thought about. I was two days into the turnaround project, but Mr. Fung had been living and breathing the project for a whole year. Though the meeting seemed a disaster on the surface, Anong had previously warned me about his style.

I was sweating buckets as we left Mr. Fung's office. I was embarrassed by the stains under my arm pits and loosened my collar the moment we exited.

"Well, that went well," Anong smiled. Her statement caused me to touch her shoulder and stop her in her tracks. The look I gave her asked *'are you insane, what planet are you on? Were we in the same meeting, or have I just gone mad?'*

"You don't look well, Jim," she replied with genuine concern. As she did, she led us out so we could talk more freely. *"You don't know Mr. Fung, Jim. For him, that definitely counts as a good meeting. In actuality, it was a very good meeting. Nine out of ten guys that meet with Mr. Fung don't make it past five minutes. He simply presses a button and gets his PA to usher them out. In your case, he listened and responded to your points. He gave you ninety minutes of his precious time. He thought you were sufficiently worthwhile that he invested some special efforts in sharing his thoughts. He believes that the company has finally sent someone who can fix the issues he has raised."*

Put like that, her conclusion made sense. I knew from the ride over that Anong had attended multiple meetings with Mr. Fung in the last year. She had no doubt networked to obtain additional intel about Mr. Fung.

I was a little happier after Anong's explanation, but I was still sweating a river and feeling decidedly weak as we stepped outside to get in our car.

My last memory after exiting the car was nodding to the doorman who'd opened my door. I nodded and then the whole world went dark. This darkness was then accompanied by muffled sounds first sounds of voices, then voices and sirens, and finally voices again. After hearing voices and seeing bright lights, I heard and saw nothing.

A long period of nothing.

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My recollections of the next few days are extremely hazy.

It was only later that I was told what had actually happened.

But in terms of what I remember, I only recall fragments of garbled, interwoven dreams from the next few days.

At the time they occurred, these dreams felt more real than imagined. The scenes that played in my mind were vivid and intense.

All of the scenes displayed by my fever-crazed mind involved Lizzy. Simon was the other common denominator in most of the pictures in my mind. Sometimes Ted was involved as well. But for the most part, my mind presented views of Simon alone with Lizzy.

My memories certainly weren't clear, but I do remember that in some images the two of them were just casually talking, or maybe flirting. But in other images, my brain presented Simon and Lizzy kissing, or tenderly making love, or indulging in raw, hard sex.

It's difficult to describe something which was so hazy. But certain fragments were so lifelike and powerful that I don't think I'll ever forget them.

I recalled images of Lizzy's lips smashed against Simon's as the woman who'd sworn loyalty to me hungrily tried to eat the face of the once famous rockstar. Visions of my wife gawping with undisguised lust and admiration at Simon's erect, throbbing manhood. In my mind, it jutted out long like a broom handle and thick like a bratwurst. Pictures of her slobbering and salivating all over his manly cock before giving herself to him with

undisguised need and passion. Views of Lizzy laying on her back or kneeling submissively on her knees as Simon thrust his monster cock in and out as he took my wife from me.

And the things she was saying in my dreams were so dirty, so subservient, and so demeaning to me. *'Oh Simon, you're amazing. Your cock feels so great. I've never had sex like this before. I've never cum like this before. You make me feel so stretched, so full. Jim's never done me like this before. I need you, Simon. I need you always. I need you more.'*

This stream of visions ignores the blurry recollections I had of the times I'd see her break off from giving all her attention to Simon in order to belittle and berate me. *'You see, Jim. Do you see Simon? He's a star. He's a legend. He knows how to fuck a woman. He knows how to make love to her. He knows how to take her to the skies and back. Not like you.'*

Even in my blurry dreams, I seem to remember thinking that the nasty, painful words Lizzy was saying were somehow linked to that last argument we'd had. It seemed like they were related to when she'd taken affront at me being out having a late-night dinner alone with Anong. But her words were also linked to my need to live up to my brilliant but absent father. They somehow related to the man whose influence and absence had so deeply scarred me when I was younger.

Aside from all these images and words burned into my brain, the other thing I recalled was how I sweated, sobbed, and screamed as these thoughts and dreams ran amok through my brain.

These remembered reactions were mixed in with vague, fleeting memories of women trying to comfort me as these nightmares tormented me and as the fever racked my body.

My memories of the faces of these women was weak. I think I remembered Anong's face I also recalled the face of a nurse I met later. I even thought I could remember some thin memories of Lizzy's face comforting me. But that last recollection made no sense. Lizzy was back in Charleston. She was not in Bangkok. Nonetheless, I still thought I remembered Lizzy's face and her calming, loving voice.

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“Where am I?” I croaked. As I spoke, I looked around observing plain white walls and metal bars at the end of my bed.

“You’re in Bumrungrad International,” replied a uniformed young lady in the quietest of voices. It seemed as though she was afraid that if she spoke too loudly, she’d break me.

Damned, I felt bad. I felt really weak and washed out. Merely speaking or keeping my eyes open felt like Herculean tasks.

Swallowing twice, I attempted to wet my throat before I could manage more words. I tried to make sense of my situation. “What about the Four Seasons? I’m in the Four Seasons, I’m not in the Bumrungrad International,” I replied. I was totally unable to remember or pronounce what she’d said.

“Mr. Sharp. Don’t be silly. You’re in the hospital.”

“Hospital?” I tried to compute. “Did someone spike my drink?”

“No, you are recovering from a very bad case of Dengue Fever. You’ve been in and out of consciousness for nearly a week. After reviewing the timeline since your arrival, we think you must have been really unlucky. It’s our suspicion that you were bitten sometime between landing in Bangkok and arriving at your hotel...”

Her words made my dazed, confused mind think back to when I slapped the back of my neck just before I climbed into the BMW at the airport. I remember slapping my neck and seeing that squashed, splodge of an insect. Shit, how could something so small do such damage? I guess it could. One week of evidence was hard to dispute.

Now armed with a basic understanding of my situation, I swiveled my head. I swiveled it painfully and slowly. Even this simple movement required a huge effort and caused jarring sensations to shoot up my neck and into the base of my skull. My eyes now taking in unmistakable proof of where I was. I saw a heart monitor, a saline drip, a Formica beside table, and a little locker for my possessions. I even saw the little metal clipboard that no doubt held my name, date of birth and next of kin.

‘*My next of kin.*’ The thought flashed through my brain like an electric charge. Had someone told Lizzy? She’d be worried sick.

“I need a phone!” my feeble voice tried to demand over the sandpaper texture of my throat. “Please bring me a phone!”

The young nurse gently touched my shoulder. “I’ll do better than that.

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Lizzy?

Lizzy was standing there.

I must be hallucinating again.

No, please, no. No more fever. No more of those haunting images and dreams.

It must be a nightmare. Lizzy was standing there at the end of my bed. She stood there with the young nurse on one side of her, and with Anong on the other. The three of them were positioned in a line at the foot of the bed.

*Nooo!!*

*I must have died and gone to hell! Lizzy and Anong are going to rip each other to shreds. And when they’re done with each other, they’re likely going to turn on me. Just about the last thing I remembered was the two of them talking on WhatsApp, pretending to play nicey-nicey while their words really meant the opposite. I knew that neither of them had been taken in by the other’s words, even for one moment. And now they are, standing next to each other in my hospital room. Since this couldn’t be true, I decided that I’ve definitely died and gone to hell!*

# Chapter 10

*Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2021*

“Why don’t we leave them alone for a few minutes,” the young nurse said, speaking behind Lizzy’s back to Anong. Anong reacted by giving me a compassionate, tender smile before she followed the nurse out of my room.

*Oh fuck, now I’m for it!*

Lizzy’s first words to me were, “Oh Jim, I was so worried.” Now alone, Lizzy came around to my side of the hospital bed. With her face just inches from mine and tears in her eyes, Lizzy touched my feverish brow. She said, “I thought I’d lost you. I never would have forgiven myself if our silly argument had been the last words we shared!”

In response to her words, I reached out and grabbed her hand. I squeezed and discovered that her hand was real. She was real. This was real.

“Lizzy” I squawked. This drew an immediate concerned look from her.

“Save your strength, honey. The doctors have said you really need to rest. If you want to tell me something, then do so, but what is it? Take your time, I’m not going anywhere...”

“Was that Anong?”

“Yes.”

“You and Anong?”

Without me having to say a word more, Lizzy saw my question. She saw it in my eyes.

“Yes,” she blushed, looking guilty and embarrassed. “Anong’s been a real rock. When you were first taken ill, she stayed here by your bedside night and day. She called me immediately and kept me apprised of your prognosis until I could travel to Bangkok. Anong and I were on the phone night and day. She kept me fully involved and informed. If it hadn’t been for her, I think I’d have gone insane with worry. Those days of not being able to be here for you were really hard. But because of Anong, I felt I was

almost here with you. She's a woman., She understood. She knew what I was going through."

'Those days of not being able to be here...'

She saw my confusion, and quickly explained that both Caitlin and Rachel Jr had gone down with a bad case of flu.

Explaining the terrible dilemma she faced, Lizzy told me it was only because she knew the nurses and Anong were taking such good care of me that she felt able to stay in Charleston until Caitlin was recovered enough so she could look after Rachel Jr.

Lizzy talked a little more. She reassured me that Caitlin and our granddaughter were fully recovered now. But I could see her words slowing, see her emotions building until finally she couldn't hold it in anymore. She wrapped her arms tight around my neck, nearly smothered me in her long brunette curls, and sobbed like there was no tomorrow. A whole weeks' worth of pent up fears and emotions spilled out now that Lizzy finally had me back, knew I was out of danger.

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Saturday 23rd January 2021

After another week of enforced recuperation in the hospital, I found myself climbing the walls with frustration. Hell, I was even looking forward to my upcoming Monday morning meeting with Mr. Fung.

He'd been remarkably understanding about my absence from the project for the last two weeks. He couldn't argue about my week in the hospital, but I'd half expected him to object to my one-week convalescence in the hotel. But fortunately for me, one of the other suppliers had started to experience delays and cost overruns so Mr. Fung's attention was diverted elsewhere, and my absence became less of an issue.

Hell, Mr. Fung had even sent me a 'Get Well Soon' card and fruit basket. Upon reflection, it was more likely that his equivalent of Anong had sent it!

With Lizzy, Anong, and the medical staff watching over my nutritional intake and exercise regime, my recovery had progressed more quickly than I should have had any right to hope. I still needed to be careful not to overdo it, but

tonight I was finally back in the hotel and was going to get to eat my first non-hospital meal and drink my first alcohol.

One hour to go. Damned if I wasn't acting like a small child at Christmas looking forward to Santa appearing down the chimney!

The strangest part of the last week was how Lizzy and Anong seemed to have bonded like long lost sisters.

Freed from the need to fret and stand over my bed twenty-four seven, Lizzy and Anong had found themselves with time on their hands. They used this time to shop, explore Bangkok (cafes and nightlife!), and generally become BFFs!

Seeing the two of them spend so much time together left me feeling somewhat confused.

At first, I was still too exhausted from the Dengue Fever to worry too much. But then, as my energy returned, I started to worry. I remembered clearly how they'd clashed and fought on the only two occasions they'd interacted before I was taken ill. My brain told me that, while I'd been feverish and semi-conscious, they'd bonded; but even so, I was still concerned.

It was only gradually after I saw them repeatedly return from whatever they'd been doing and observed them walking arm-in-arm and laughing about someone or something that I started to worry less.

And now, here we were. I felt like a prisoner who had just been released from jail after a twenty-year stretch in solitary.

After I'd been released from the hospital, I'd been switched to a two-bedroom suite. Lizzy and Anong were in the suite's second bedroom, applying their finishing touches to what they'd be wearing tonight. I was reading the menu for the umpteenth time. I didn't want to overeat, but I was wondering just how many starters, entrees, and desserts I could wash down with a couple of beers. I planned on enjoying some post meal spirits to seal the deal.

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“What do you think?” Lizzy teased. “Are we enough for you? Your ‘*Girl Friday*’ and your ‘*Girl Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday*’.”

Even after observing their pally, best buddy closeness for the last week, hearing Lizzy utter the phrase ‘Girl Friday’ made me shiver with trepidation. I well-remembered the first time Lizzy and Anong had spoken. I recalled when Anong had used her braless tits as a visual weapon and had tease-taunted Lizzy about being on hand to see to all of Lizzy’s husband’s needs while Lizzy was isolated several thousand miles away.

The two of them stood there in the doorway looking like two peas in a pod. They wore matching brown, low cut jump suits. It was the same outfit Anong had worn when Lizzy and I had fought. As they emerged, the pirouetted and giggled to each other. The good news, I thought, was that they seemed more intent on having fun together than they were on teasing me.

How wrong could I have been? Lizzy’s opening words, the outfits they’d chosen to wear were symbolic of where their minds were at. They were suggestive of where they wanted to take this evening’s events.

Still giggling, one on either side of me, they helped the invalid make my way down to the restaurant.

The Maître D’ seemed to know my story and gave us one of the best tables in the restaurant. The table at which we were seated was one which seemed quieter and slightly separated from the other tables. This was just as well bearing in mind where my dinner companions took our conversation.

We were barely through the starters when I knew something was up. Speaking as calmly as if she was discussing the next day’s weather, Lizzy made a casual announcement between spoons of crab and corn soup.

‘You know, Jim. I’ve learned so much from Anong about Thai culture. I think their attitude about sex is so right. They’re so casual about sex. They’re very practical and down-to-earth about it. They see it as mainly just functional. They recognize how love and emotion can be totally separated from sex.’

I spluttered in my soup. Luckily our triangular seating pattern meant that neither of the ladies got splattered by my reaction. I wondered if Lizzy had been drinking before dinner.

It wasn’t that Lizzy was a prude. She was far from it. But what she was saying was a million miles from what she’d previously thought and said to

me about the links between sex and love. *Had Anong really changed her views so much in just one week? Or was Lizzy just playing games with me?*

As I sat there assessing her words, I gazed at these two sexy, dolled up to the nines ladies. Part of me felt lucky as hell. But another part of me felt nervous as hell. Just what the hell had Lizzy and Anong spent the last week discussing. And what were they scheming for tonight?

Seeing Lizzy and Anong dressed so sexy, and seeing them dressed identically was extremely arousing. If I hadn't been recovering from serious illness and under strict medical supervision, my hopes would have been for a little girl on Jim, Jim on girl, girl on girl action. The later was one of my all-time favorite fantasies, as Liz well knew.

But however frisky and feisty Lizzy was, I knew her too well to expect her to embrace anything that might jeopardize my medical recovery.

This just left me fretting about the odd million or two other possibilities of what her fertile and furtive mind might be up to.

"Okay. You got me. Thai culture, the separation of sex and love, you almost make it sound like the separation of church and state. Where are you going with this statement, my dear?" I asked nervously.

"Oh no, not yet, my sweet, loving husband. I haven't made you suffer nearly enough yet to put you out of your misery. I'm not ready to let you know what's running through this naughty, complicated little head of mine."

"Honey of mine. As much as I love you, I'm prepared to punish you for being so naughty. You spent time out on the town with this Thai floozy of yours," I insinuated.

Lizzy grinned in response, and looked across at Anong whose grin was even wider.

"You spent time on the town while I was working so hard. You were keeping Simon and Ted company in the hot tub and spending nights at the club while I was working."

Lizzy challenged me in response. "What were you doing while I was keeping Simon and Ted company. What about all the time you were being naughty, and disloyal to your loving wife? What about when you told your

little Thai tramp all our family secrets? What about discussing me getting a boob job? And what about sharing our bedroom fantasies?”

My face was getting paler and paler with each new sentence. But Lizzy’s last revelation made me nearly fall off my chair. No way had I shared bedroom fantasies with Anong! And the other things, Lizzy and Anong, these two partners in crime, had spent way too long together for the good of my sanity. Lizzy had me dead to rights. But the fantasies! No, she saw the look of shock when she mentioned those. But my look of shock just spurred her on.

“You see, husband of mine. That’s the unfortunate thing about spending a week in a fever delirium. Well, unfortunate for you, and fortunate for me and Anong,” she grinned. As she did, she cast a telling look at my Thai assistant, “delirium!”

“Delirium, and loose lips,” Lizzy grinned. She looked down at the table and idly twirled her fork. Then she looked up and gazed at me directly between my eyes.

“During your delirium, your loose lips told me your deepest thoughts and fantasies. I heard you repeatedly cry out about me and Simon fucking.” Lizzy almost whispered this last word, so as not to alert the other diners. I heard as you “Cried out about how big you thought Simon’s cock is, about how you loved watching me cum all over him. and about how you loved it when I teased you, and told you how much bigger and better than you he was.”

If my face had been losing color before, it now transformed to shine in a bright burgundy red. Shit, in my fevered state, had I really said all these things out loud? I must have done, otherwise, how would she be aware of them?

But, she’d got one thing horribly wrong. And it was the single most important thing of all!

“What you’re describing are not my fantasies. They’re not what I want. Those things you heard me jabbering about were what I was dreaming about, and what I fear. I had no control over these dreams. They weren’t things I want to happen. They were reflections of where my fevered mind went,” I hissed in desperation. Like Lizzy, I kept my voice low in an effort to avoid

alerting the other dinner guests.

“Of course they’re not, honey,” Lizzy smiled wickedly. As she did, she stroked my cheek and looked into my eyes. Her look made it impossible for me to know if her statements were real, or if this was all this was a huge tease.

“Don’t think I don’t remember all those bedroom games we played, honey,” Lizzy purred.

*‘Oh shit, Lizzy was linking my very real and very specific fever dreams to all those harmless and non-specific bedroom scenarios we’d used to heighten our excitement. Lizzy was moving from something very safe and very fun to something very real and very dangerous.’*

I just looked at Lizzy. As I did, I felt weaker than ever. I was shaking as our eyes locked. I knew more words would just be useless – that in her current mood, she’d just turn them back on me, loving the fact I didn’t know if she was for real or not.

# Chapter 11

*Monday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021*

Lizzy's teasing was not unpleasant, but it was still, slightly emasculating.

"Cum for me, baby. Cum for me," she grinned. As she did she slammed her hips up and down on mine, her boobs bouncing up and down like two things of utter beauty as she rode me for all she was worth. Her eyes screwed shut, her breath ragged and needy, Lizzy was as close to cumming as I was.

This was my reward for a successful first day back at work. Our first love making session since I'd been discharged from the hospital and since Anong had checked herself out of the second bedroom in our suite. My heart and lungs were groaning in happiness. The only downside to our copulation was that I'd have loved to have been the one on top thrusting and reclaiming just a little more of my self-esteem.

But Lizzy – Lizzy who'd trained as a nurse before converting to teaching to spend more time with our young daughter – had stuck to her guns. She told me it was either cowgirl or no sex. And as she was flying back to Charleston on the early morning flight, my little head and my big head had agreed that cowgirl was far better than suffering from blue balls as I took her to the airport.

Lizzy might have control of position, but she couldn't stop me wrapping my arms tight around her waist and doing my best to fuck my cock right into her tummy.

Damn it felt good to be inside her. It felt good to be back close to the woman I'd missed so much these last few weeks. Just the touch of Lizzy's skin, its warmth and its softness, was enough to send me insane with love and desire.

Why the hell had I agreed to this overseas posting? I must have been a fool to give this up, even just for a few weeks or months. A belief that grew and grew the faster I thrust, the tighter I squeezed her hips, and the closer my tingling cock got to the edge. Until finally I screamed out at the top of my voice and kissed her like there was no tomorrow. Kissed her like I'd never see her again. Kissed her like this was the last time we'd ever make love!

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Lizzy and I snuggled afterwords. Together, we rode the most wondrous post sex euphoria, post shared climax ecstasy. But I could tell there was something on her mind. I was not surprised, because tomorrow she'd be going back Charleston, and tonight would be our last night together for nearly a month.

"Honey, I've been thinking," she smiled. Sharing the teasing, troubling, thoughtful smile I'd witnessed many times over the years. This smile was typically accompanied by a slightly masked, almost distant look in her eyes. It was a smile she offered when she prepared herself to share a topic with me that she'd been thinking deeply about. Lizzy proffered this smile when she knew she was about to start something that wouldn't be an easy discussion.

"Yeeess," I answered nervously. I had no idea where this conversation was going.

"Remember, honey, how you said you were okay with me to hang out with Ted and Simon, but only to hang out, and not to do anything more?"

"Yeeess."

"And remember how we joked about, how did you so delicately put it, '*my womanly needs and urges.*' You then said that after giving it some thought, you were worried about how much I'd miss real sex."

"Yeeess."

"Well. I was thinking that ... bearing in mind that we'll both be lonely for the next month ... and bearing in mind I've got a couple of friends, and you've got your 'Girl Friday' ... I was wondering whether maybe we should consider taking a leaf or two out of the Thai cultural book. Since, you know, sex and love are two different things according to the way they look at it..."

"Wife of mine, what exactly is it that you're suggesting?" I asked. As I did, my voice and body were both shaking with nerves as I tried to lighten the mood.

"What do you mean by '*Take a leaf or two out of the Thai cultural book,*'" I mimicked. "Lizzy, honey ... what exactly is it that you're proposing? You'd better spell it out to avoid any misunderstandings."

In response, Lizzy snuggled against me, her beautiful face propped up on her elbow and hand, her big hazel eyes no longer distant, but boring directly into my soul.

“What I was thinking, honey is that, bearing in mind how love and sex are different, and bearing in mind that we’ve both got ‘company’, I was thinking that there might be a way for us to both see to our different needs when we’re so far apart. I was wondering what you’d think if we gave each other a one-time ‘*hall pass*.’ You know, a hall pass just for while we’re away from each other.”

I shouldn’t have been surprised. Hell, her last five minutes had telegraphed her proposal better than Western Union. But I was still stunned by it.

Stunned because the last time we’d spoken seriously about it, the joking earlier tonight over dinner didn’t count, was during our telephone conversation on the night after Simon had flirted so wildly in the hot tub. At that time, I’d made it clear that finding comfort outside our marriage would be a step too far.

At the time, which seemed a lifetime ago now, Lizzy had been just as happy with this joint decision as I was. But I guess her last week becoming best buds with my beautiful Thai assistant had provided her with an opportunity to rethink a number of things.

“I ... I,” I tried, but Lizzy wasn’t done yet. She still had more persuading to do.

“Obviously not all in one go. We could take things slow and gradual. We could do this so we can check and make sure we’re both okay with everything. Starting slow would allow either of us to call a halt if we had second thoughts. And remember, the hall pass **WOULD** only be good while we’re apart and while we’re not available to meet each other’s needs.”

Now she was done.

“I ... I...”

“What do you think?” Lizzy couldn’t help herself. After offering her proposal, she was too impatient to give me room to breathe or think.

“I ... I...”

“Jim?”

I held my hand up, and begged Lizzy to stop. I simply needed some breathing space and room to think.

I jumped up off our bed and was aware of her worried gaze at me. I strolled butt naked to look out the window. As I did, I looked out at all the people who looked like little ants scurrying around the streets down below. I looked at all those little ants who were supposedly so much better than me at separating love and sex. I stared at them and didn't care if by some miracle they looked up thirty-four floors and saw my sticky junk.

Turning back, I looked at Lizzy relaxing on the bed. I felt a strange, and surreal amalgamation of fear and excitement at the thought of giving the woman I loved a '*hall pass*' – even a small '*hall pass*' – and sending her back nine thousand miles with it wrapped tightly in her handbag.

Fuck! Lizzy's proposal was insane! But it was also tempting and exciting.

I'd spent our early years together terrified that some more handsome or more manly and assertive guy might steal Lizzy away from me. Then as I'd grown more confident that Lizzy and I were for keeps, were forever; I'd settled into a slow, steady, repeating pattern of watching other guys flirt and hit on her. Maybe the action occurred at a neighborhood party, at some PTA event, or even in our local grocery store. I viewed her get hit on even though they could see she wore a wedding band. My wedding band!

But now here we were, twenty years together, one grown-up daughter and one young granddaughter later; and I was contemplating opening our marriage by agreeing to give each other a hall pass.

But if I did, it would only be for 'as long as we're apart.' The careful caveat Lizzy had included with her ask – in a final attempt to win me over – was a very important part of my deliberation!

As I looked into Lizzy's big, beautiful, and now very needy hazel eyes; I can honestly say that the quid pro quo part of Lizzy's offer – giving me a '*hall pass*' with Anong – didn't even register with me. I was too preoccupied with images of Lizzy together with some other guy.

I considered who would most likely be the lucky recipient of Lizzy's hall

pass, and concluded it would be Simon. He was who my fevered mind had imagined so he was who first came to mine. Although, when I paused to think about it, I realized that the uber manly, ex-Marine Ted was also hovering at the margins of my thoughts. Recently bereaved Ted who'd sometimes figured in our past bedroom fantasies could also be the lucky recipient of Lizzy's hall pass.

What was to say that Ted wouldn't be the guy rather than Simon. This thought sent an extra shiver of trepidation and arousal scuttling through my bones.

Fuck! And the most confusing thing of all was how my body was responding to the thought of Lizzy using her hall pass. 'Just how in the hell could I find this whole game so terrifying and so titillating at the same time? Surely it was either poison or it was paradise. How could it possibly be both? How could it be both at the very same instant!'

"Jim?" Lizzy asked again. As she did, the tension was clear in her voice. Her face showed more than a little panic. It appeared as if she was worried that in a moment of fleeting stupidity, she'd torpedoed two decades of love and happiness. Lizzy looked like she was worried that her foolish words might cause me to pull the emergency ripcord and seek an exit.

"Lizzy, sweetheart," I breathed, "this is some major shit you're suggesting!"

In response, Lizzy gave me a small, guilty nod of her head. As she did, she looked down. Just for an instant, Lizzy was unable to look me in my eyes.

"Honey, please think carefully before you answer," Lizzy sighed. As she did, she raised her eyes to mine and gave another small nod. At this point, she stared deep in my eyes and nibbled her lower lip. It was clear that she was holding her breath, wondering how I was about to respond.

"Lizzy, baby, I love you, I said with desperate urgency. And I love us with all my heart. I'll do absolutely anything to make you, to make us happy."

"But this thing you're suggesting, it excites me like I can't begin to describe, and it also scares me witless. It terrifies me, terrifies me more than anything on God's green earth..."

"It scares me too," she confessed. Her words gave me surprising comfort.

“But that doesn’t mean my proposal is wrong.” The smile she gave me was ninety percent nerves and ten percent the strong, smart woman I was privileged to call my wife.

“Honey, I love you,” I sighed. Before I answer, I want to ask you one last time, is this really something you want to try? Is this an option you want to pursue?”

I didn’t ask her if she was ‘sure’, because that wouldn’t have been fair. I was near certain that, like me, she had doubts. No, my question was about the balance of probabilities. Before giving her my answer, I offered her one last chance to think and reflect.

“Yes,” she whispered. As she did, I saw the same excitement and fear I was feeling flash through her eyes. Lizzy only said one word, but it was enough.

After her confession, Lizzy continued, “Yes, honey. Thank you, baby, for caring about us so much to be so super careful. But yes, I am super sure. This ‘hall pass’ is something I want to try.”

I smiled tenderly following Lizzy’s response. I was full of love for this amazing woman. But I was happy that taking this step this was just as difficult for her as it was for me.

She continued by saying, “But I want to take this slowly ... like I said ... one step at a time. Either of us has to be able to tell the other if we’re not happy. or if we’re finding the risk too difficult...”

I smiled at her, if possible, loving her even more., because I was happy to see that she was just as nervous as I was. Then I jumped back into bed, determined to make the most of the remaining hours we still had together.

Chapter 12

7 AM, Saturday 30th January 2021

What a week! But finally, Saturday morning had arrived – a Saturday morning I needed to try and restore my sanity. Finding out how things were back home.

First weeks back are never easy. But after recovering from dengue fever, surviving hospitalization, and, dealing with my wife trying to renegotiate the terms of our marriage, well, week from hell doesn't even begin to describe it!

Although 'week from hell' is a little under-nuanced for how I was feeling after awakening from a sleep that felt like it had qualified me for the Rip Van Winkle gold circle of sleepers.

I'd gotten back to the hotel six p.m. on Friday and had enjoyed a brief dinner with Anong. After dinner, we made plans to meet again on Saturday. Then, despite my exhaustion, I'd somehow summoned the energy to ring home. I was desperate to talk to Lizzy but couldn't reach her. After coming up blank, I recalled that she was taking her class on a school trip which meant she had a really early start from home.

Groaning at my stupidity in forgetting her plans, I wished I'd skipped dinner so we could connect. Wallowing in self-pity, I collapsed on my bed and was out for the count before my head hit the pillow.

Eleven hours later, it was only my desperate desire to talk to Lizzie that overcame my longing to spend the entire morning hitting snooze. I stumbled into the shower before arriving as the earliest guest at the hotel's Saturday breakfast buffet. All the other guests apparently had the good sense to still be sleeping at the ungodly early hour. But then again, none of them were likely as eager as me to call home to finally have a proper visit with their nearest and dearest.

I ate as fast as I dared, because I didn't want to risk another trip to the hospital. As I did, I thought about how little opportunity Lizzy and I had to talk all week. Since I'd ridden with Lizzy to the airport in the early hours on Tuesday morning, I'd only enjoyed three very brief calls with her.

The first call was to check that Lizzy had arrived home okay. She gave me the low down on her long and tiring journey before she hit the sack. Then a day later - my Thursday morning, her Wednesday mid-evening – we had a quick call where she told me about her last day resting and about a nice meal she'd enjoyed with Ted and Simon.

At the end of that call, Lizzy added that, as a thank you, she planned to cook for them the next night. '*Them*' was a loose term; however, because it would only be Simon and her sharing the meal. Ted was out of town participating in a Black Knights motorcycle club ride with his buddy Nine-Iron. He was christening his 'new' old Harley. He'd just purchased the motorcycle as part of his baby steps to build a new life after Rachel's sad passing.

Finally, on my Friday morning (her Thursday evening), Lizzy and I had only managed a very rushed call. She was in the midst of cooking, and I had to dash out to attend a breakfast meeting with Mr. Fung. His attention was now focused back on me and the steps I was planning to propose to address my company's failings.

Friday was the worst day of the whole week for me. Not only did I have to suffer through Mr. Fung's interrogation. But I also had to deal with the gut-churning knowledge that Simon and Lizzy were eating alone together, and that they were doing so after Lizzy and I had instituted our 'limited' '*hall pass*' arrangement.

So finally – after eating eggs and breakfast meats and chugging my coffee down in record time, I returned to the privacy of my hotel room. I sat on the very bed where we'd last made love, called Lizzy feeling like my heart was in my throat.

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“Sharp residence,” a deep, booming voice answered.

“Ted?” I squawked.

“Indubitably ... what can I ding-dong-diddily-do for you, neighbor?” he chuckled. For a man who'd spent his working life killing or training young men to kill, he had a decidedly silly side to him when the mood took him. Maybe he fancied seeing his golden years out more as Ned Flanders than The Terminator!

“Hi Ted. I was hoping to catch Lizzy?” This statement was blindingly obvious really, as I’d rung her cell number; but it was a more polite sentence construction than just saying ‘*What the hell? What the F are you doing answering my wife’s phone, neighbor?*’ Silly mood or not, Ted wasn’t someone you cussed unless absolutely necessary.

“Lizzy? About yea high? Deep, hazel eyes you could lose yourself in? Butt, legs, and boobs to die for? Oh, that Lizzy!” he chortled. “I’ll just holler upstairs to let her know you’re calling. She’s putting her glad rags on for later...”

My eardrums were then treated to the unmistakable sound of ex Master Gunny Edward Washington hollering up the stairs. The depth of his bellow caused one part of my mind to wonder how many nervous recruits had been terrorized by that voice. The other part of my mind went into overdrive. ‘Just why the hell did Ted have Lizzy’s phone? And what was this ‘later’ he was referring to? And why did she need her glad rags for whatever it was that was planned for ‘later?’

Shit. Had I been a damned fool? Was I looking in the wrong direction? Was I busy worrying about Simon when all along I should have been looking at another party? Given his recent heartbreak, I hadn’t considered Ted as a likely recipient of Lizzy’s hall pass privileges. But maybe he’d been a stealthy submarine. Maybe he’d been lurking under the surface while I focused my attention on the arrogant ageing rocker from my home country.

After discharging his holler, Ted returned to the phone.

“Hey, Jim. This may be none of my business,” Ted stated.

This caused me to think, ‘oh fuck, where’s this going?’

Ted then continued, “But I heard something kinda strange from Simon, and as a friend, I just wanted to check out that it’s all above board...”

Oh fuck! Was Ted going to spell it out? I could feel my cheeks blushing red already. How insanely embarrassing would it be to discuss Lizzy and my arrangement with a guy as manly and primal as Ted. Ted would likely have knifed and gutted anyone so foolish as to even look at his beloved Rachel in the wrong way. And here he was inviting me to confirm that I was okay with my woman taking other men to bed – just because my dick wasn’t within

hailing distance.

“Urgh. Yeah, that’s right,” I admitted. We talked about it. With me being over here for so long, and, with Lizzy being a very ‘passionate’ woman, we both agreed to give this a try.”

Oh shit, I was so full of shame at this admission. My face felt hotter than a baboon’s red ass as I blurted out a last vain attempt to appear more manly. “But our agreement is only in effect while I’m away. Once I return, then it’s back to normal. And it’s only about sex, it not about love.”

Oh shit! Did I really say that last bit out loud? To Ted? To manly, Marine Corps Ted? That last statement really made me sound like the kind of bro he’d want to chug a beer or two with! *‘It’s only sex, not love!’* What a chump!

Desperate to change the topic, I remembered why Ted hadn’t been able to join Liz and Simon for dinner last night.

“Anyway, less about me and Liz and our boring lives.” As I said this, I could almost see the smirking look on Ted’s face, *‘ain’t nothing boring ‘bout what you and Lizzy are doin’ bro.’* “So, Ted, tell me how was the ride with your new Harley? How were the rest of the Motorcycle Club? I must say, I never saw someone of your military past signing up to ride with a bunch of long-haired, ill-disciplined outlaw types...”

That earned me a big belly laugh, making me feel infinitely better as the new topic was so much less embarrassing.

“Me neither, me neither, Jim,” he snorted. “But it’s that damned ex corporal of mine. Even in the Corps, Irons was always getting me to do things I didn’t want to. Some of the scrapes he got me into, it was a miracle I didn’t get busted down to corporal the same as he was.”

“Well, you obviously returned in one piece. In spite this Irons fella, was the ride good? Did you enjoy the experience?”

“Yeah. The ride was good. Maybe not as good as being here with your Old Lady,” he chuckled, making me color up all over again. “That’s why I was asking earlier. We both know what Simon’s like with the ladies. Hell, even his sister called him a ‘man slut.’ So, I’m glad what I heard is all above

board. Talking of which, here comes Lizzy. Take care, Jim. I'm glad you're on the mend from that nasty insect fever you caught..."

"Thanks, Ted."

"No worries," he grinned at me, having finally activated the camera as Lizzy approached. "And don't worry, I'll keep an eye on '*Love's young dream*' for you. Or should that be '*Love's old dream*' bearing in mind my over-sexed, over-married brother-in-law ain't gonna see the right side of sixty again."

"I'll make sure things don't get out of hand. We both know what a heartbreaker and lothario that one is."

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I heard Lizzy before I saw her.

I heard the unmistakable sound of her happy, high-pitched giggle. She'd obviously heard what Ted had said to me about Simon, and about his ironic offer to chaperone the ageing rockstar and my wife. An offer – or more likely his choice of words – that earned him a punch on the arm.

"Hey baby," Lizzy greeted me as she shooed Ted away. Then, as she gave me her undivided attention, she turned on her million-watt smile.

Shit! She seemed totally full of energy. Her vitality was the opposite of how I was feeling at this early hour in Bangkok.

Was Lizzy's energy a good thing or a bad thing? Or no thing at all? And what did it imply about what had happened between her Simon when they were alone at dinner last night? And what were her plans for the 'later' that Ted had teased me about? Plans that seemingly necessitated my beautiful wife putting on her glad rags.

From the way she held her phone, I couldn't see what clothes she was wearing. But what I could see was that whatever was planned for later had gotten her to up her game. She'd taken her level of make-up from normal (small dabs and subtle highlights) to full on Defcon One. '*Action imminent, use all means at your disposal to ensnare and gain the full attention of the target.*'

Even on an off or ordinary day, Lizzy always had that wholesome 'girl next

door' beauty. She possessed such beauty even when she didn't make much effort.

But when she did try, she could make herself as alluring and irresistible as any woman in the state. And she was definitely trying tonight. At least, that's what I thought as I looked at her. As I did, I recalled the number of evenings that I'd spent other guys get in trouble with their wives and girlfriends for sending one too many wistful looks across in Lizzy's direction.

Lizzy's excitement couldn't have been more obvious. She was virtually buzzing like a high-tension cable. Her make-up incorporated a mixture of brown shades and light, sky blue around her eyes. These colors accentuated her beautiful, sparkling hazel eyes. Her eyebrows, eyelashes, cheeks and lips were all made up either with bold, sharp strokes of emphasis or with layered, softly transitioning brushes which subtly blended one area into the next.

Lizzy had obviously been into town and had visited the hair salon. Her long, soft curls were freshly styled. All the time and attention she'd spent preparing for her evening was accentuated by the way her whole face gently pulsed with pink, flushed anticipation.

"Wow, you look like a million dollars!" I raved. When I sat alone over breakfast, I'd thought of a million things I'd wanted to say and ask. But as I sat on the hotel bed where just days before we'd made love, these unplanned words were what came out naturally.

"Thanks, honey," she giggled. "I would say the same."

"I know, I know," I added, "but then you'd be lying. I know I look like shit. But what do you expect? I've only just dragged myself out of bed."

Lizzy giggled again at my honesty.

"Well, I guess you want to know all about dinner last night. I guess you want to hear happened between me and Simon at dinner..." Lizzy trailed off.

Now she was just plain old teasing. The look in her eyes told me she was having fun. She was playing with me like a cat plays with a mouse. The strange thing was that I didn't mind. Even though my heart was pounding against my chest, and even as it tried to leap past my esophagus to freedom; I experienced an unusual surge of delight.

Back when Lizzy had suggested this incremental *'hall pass'* idea, it had been all her and none of it me. This was the case even though I'd always been the one to initiate the whispered, imagined bedroom fantasies.

But now that Lizzy's whole demeanor was screaming out that things had indeed moved on with Simon last night, I was overcome with excitement and the need to know. It wasn't just the early hour that meant I looked like shit. My palms were sweaty, and I could feel the perspiration running down my face. For good or bad, I wanted to know. I needed to be put out of my misery and to have the fires of my imagination stoked. Each need was just as strong as the other as they fought for control of my very being.

"Lizzy, I love you dearly, baby. But I swear, if you don't tell me the truth right now, if you don't tell me the whole truth and nothing but the truth, then I swear, I'll divorce you. Even though you're my everything ... either that, or I'll put out on a contract on you!"

Her smile and laughter were priceless to me. They told me that whatever had or hadn't happened between her and Simon, she and I were as strong as ever. They told me that we were in just as much in love as we ever had been.

"Well, the first thing was that we talked..."

What!

They'd talked!

I'd built myself up for a mountain, and my loving wife had delivered a molehill! A tidal wave of disappointment rolled through my chest and gut, as I looked at her with accusing, confused eyes. As I looked, I saw the start of the smallest of smiles at the corners of her lips. Lizzy was playing me!

"It was important to talk, so Simon understood that anything that happens isn't behind your back. I told him that I plan to share with you anything and everything that happens between him and me."

As I watched Lizzy's lips move and took in every word, a parallel thought came to my mind. The way Lizzy was describing her conversation with Simon, there was no sense of doubt about whether she was going to use her *'hall pass.'* There was no thought that maybe things would happen, or maybe they wouldn't.

When Lizzie had sat on this very bed and originally pitched her *'hall pass'* idea to me, she'd made it sound like there was some doubt in her mind about whether or not she'd really want to move things forward and break the vows we'd honored for so many years.

But listening now to her describing the first evening she'd spent alone with Simon, I was getting no sense of doubt or hesitation. I was receiving the picture of a woman who knew Simon desired her, and who desired him just as much. I was seeing a picture of a woman carefully and methodically setting out the terms of trade as though she already knew where things were ultimately headed.

"You really want him, don't you!" I blurted out. I was unable to control myself. I couldn't block this parallel train of thought.

Chapter 13

In response to this statement, Lizzy suddenly dropped her playful, teasing mask. In its place, I found the honest, heartfelt look of the woman I loved.

“Is that terrible of me, honey?” Lizzy asked. Do you hate me for it?”

It’s strange how sometimes so many years, so many events can flash by in the fraction of a second. Because that’s what happened. As I looked at Lizzy’s nervous facade, I witnessed an almost child-like look of anxiety. As I did, I remembered all of the special moments we’d shared including times from early dating, through when she’d said ‘yes’ and then accepted my ring ... through the joy of finding she was pregnant all the way through Caitlin’s early years and blossoming into becoming a mom herself ... through to the day we’d stood shoulder-to-shoulder and hugged and wept as we watched Ted bury his beloved Rachel.

All of my memories – and I do mean all of them – flashed through my mind as I looked at Lizzy’s guilty expression, and considered the frightened, stressed look on her face.

The teasing had all just been a front. It was a mask, it was part of her natural playfulness, but it also helped hide her own nervousness about the huge step we were taking. The fact she was so nervous made me correspondingly less nervous, because it told me just how much she loved me and just how much she’d sacrifice to avoid damaging our love.

“Sweetheart, I love you,” I said gently. I wanted to comfort her and wished more than anything I could be present there to provide her with physical reassurance. “It’s all okay. I could never hate you. I love you, and I am excited to hear what actually happened.”

As I said this, I thought ‘*Excited and also terrified,*’ but Lizzy didn’t need to hear this second bit. It was just for me, and I planned to lock it away until we both had the strength for total honesty.

Lizzy’s smile to me was so sweet and tender. In response, my own heart broke from the depth of my love for her.

“Honey, I really do need to know, now,” I challenged. As I did, I kept my

tone as patient and gentle as I could manage.

“Oh, yes ... that,” she replied, as if she’d genuinely been so caught up in her own fears that she’d forgotten what she’d started telling me.

“Well, honey. After I’d made it clear to him you knew about everything, he just smiled at me. It seemed like he knew, like he knew everything.”

“What exactly DID you say to him?” I was genuinely intrigued. After all, the talk wasn’t exactly an everyday kind of talk.

“Well, I told him that you and I had talked, and agreed that sex is sex, and that love is love. I also told him that while we’re apart, we have agreed that we both have the freedom to see other people in order to take care of each of our ‘physical needs.’

“And how did he respond to that?” I exhaled.

“He was cool. He just paused for a heartbeat and then smiled at me in a way that said, *‘oh baby, you and me, we gonna have some fun’.*”

On reflection, I guess I wasn’t surprised. After all, he must have had hundreds of women throwing themselves at him in the height of his popularity. And even now, three decades on; I dare say there was more than the odd middle-aged groupie who wanted to claim his scalp.

And then there were those six failed marriages. Not one of the women Simon married was lower than a nine. Most of them were ten-pluses. Finally, there were all the other dalliances his big sister and brother-in-law had laughed about.

So, yeah, the fact Simon played it cool was hardly surprising.

“Okay, but then, later, what happened later?”

And it was back!

Lizzy’s feline, teasing smile was back! For what seemed an eternity, she stayed silent and simply grinned. When she finally did speak, part of me wished she hadn’t.

“What would you have liked to happen?” Lizzy asked.

Ahhh! Don’t do this to me, honey! Don’t torture me so!

“Tell me, baabbee, otherwise I won’t know that you really are on board with this,” she teased some more. But there may have been a grain of truth hidden in her words. As she challenged me, she showed that her own nerves were not as well hidden as she thought.

“I don’t know. Maybe you kissed a little,” I offered through my desert-dry throat.

“Would you have liked that, honey?” she grinned. “Would you have liked it if your naughty wife kissed Ted’s bad boy bro-in-law? Kissed the man who’s had more women than hot dinners? Kissed the man who according to the gossip columns got a cock you can hang a towel on?”

Oh fuck! She’d never said anything like that before. Not in all our years of knowing Simon. So how come she was suddenly armed with such facts? Had she been preparing herself by reading internet scuttlebutt? Or did she know this from firsthand experience? Firsthand and first mouth experience?

Lizzy had always been an enthusiastic lover in the use of her mouth. I had no doubts that if, armed with her new hall pass; she suddenly found herself up close and personal with an over-sized cock she’d want a taste or two. Even if the cock in question was attached to a guy who before the last few days had more often than not annoyed Lizzy with his arrogance and conceit.

“Oh, I see that little dart hit home!” she gently taunted. “Me telling hubby that Simon’s dart is more of a javelin than a dart. Maybe that news is why hubby had all those dreams about me and Simon and what Simon would do to me with that huge dart of his!”

“Lizzy,” I was physically shaking now, “please, honey, put me out of my misery. I need to know. What did you and Simon do last night?”

Sensing my desperation, another of those shape-shifter moments overtook my wife as her face transformed from minx to mama bear. Knowing for the sake of my sanity that she had to share what had happened, but also concerned in case her revelations pushed my buttons too hard.

“Well, nothing much happened over dinner. Simon was a perfect gentleman.” Lizzy blushed as she remembered the meal. “Except he couldn’t keep those mesmerizing cobalt blue eyes off me. I know he’s not young anymore, but honestly as he kept fixing me with his eyes and flirting and

telling me how beautiful he'd always thought I was, I felt like I was watching those old music videos of him. I saw him like he was when he was in his prime. He was speaking with the same confidence, the same all-consuming passion."

Fuck. As Lizzy spoke, I was really beginning to wish I hadn't asked. Lizzy was reliving the moment as she described it, and from the lost, distant look in her eyes, I could almost picture the scene myself. I could picture the way the ageing lothario, almost twenty years my wife's senior, had effortlessly held her in the palm of his hand.

What could a man who can charm a stadium full of women do when he has just a single woman in his sights? Especially when there are no stadium-sized distances to insulate her from his hypnotic charisma.

"But then, when the meal finished, I made coffee and started stacking the dishwasher. I told Simon to relax on the sofa. But he didn't do as he was told," she giggled. "Standing with my back to the door as I worked, I suddenly felt his hands on my hips and felt his hot breath next to my ear."

The giggle was gone, and the distant look was back. Even on the small phone screen we shared, I could almost see her shiver at the memory.

"Honestly, honey. I swear, Simon's some kind of magician. He's some kind of hypnotist. I mean, I enjoyed the other night at the club; and even though he's not so young anymore, I appreciated how he's flirted with me these last few weeks. Well, it's felt nice. All the attention he's given me has felt nice."

"But last night, when I felt his large, strong hands on my hips, when I felt his breath and heard him whisper in my ear how long he's wanted me ... how much he wants me and what he plans to do to me..."

Lizzy was momentarily lost to me as she recalled last night's moment. Her reaction frightened me a little. It was scary that he could have this kind of impact on her, even so many hours after the event.

But then she was back, or at least half back. She was half talking to me, and half caught in last night's moment. "Jim, baby, it was the way he said he wanted to make love to me. He said that he'd start by kissing every inch of my body ... from my closed eyelids, all the way down my neck, licking each of my shoulder blades, kissing and nibbling at each individual vertebra,

before turning me over, kissing my chest softly, suckling my boobs like an animal ... before kissing all the way down to my temple.”

Lizzy’s eyes were screwed shut as she repeated Simon’s sweet whispers.

Fuck, I don’t know how, but he wasn’t simply capturing her. After Lizzy’s retelling, I was hooked. I was totally ensnared by the vision that she’d described. And this was merely her reaction to him talking about what he was going to do. It wasn’t her remembering what he’d actually done.

Suddenly Lizzy snapped out of her trance. She stared at me with a look that was a combination of panic and pure lust. her eyes connected with mine, but they were somehow also far away.

“Jim, baby ... then he turned me around, made me put the dishes down and kissed me softly, so tenderly on the neck ... trailing little butterfly kisses all the way down my neck before going back up and just touching his lips to mine ... almost taunting me, teasing me, daring me to give in to my desires ... his lips barely touching mine ... the most delicate of contacts...”

She was back in her trance – back yesterday, only now she was making me complicit in the moment, the moment of her and another man.

“Then he just looked deep into my eyes, his hands making the tiniest of contacts with my boobs, just gently stroking the undersides before the slightest of grazes to my nipples ... Jim, he had me almost cumming ... just from that!”

Lizzy and I just stared at each other ... her reliving the actual moment, the feelings ... me, for the first time getting a heart-shredding sense of what this hall pass arrangement might mean for my emotional sanity.

But she wasn’t done yet, her face giving her away before she spoke, as she recalled the final part of Simon’s game.

“Then, when he saw me trembling from the kisses and touches to my boobs, he just grinned ... grinned and took my hand and put it on the bulge in his pants ... put it on his hard, throbbing manhood,” she panted, as if asking for absolution.

“Honey, he was fucking huge ... even through his pants, I could feel the size of him ... it was like squeezing a freakin’ Salami ... so thick and long ... and

throbbing, I could actually feel it throbbing...”

Not exactly what a husband on the other side of the world wants to hear. She didn't say the words out loud, *'shit, honey, he was so much bigger than you,'* but she may as well have done.

I knew my cock was 'okay', but like most men I'm always worrying – and now Lizzy was giving me something to worry about. My emotions now a total rollercoaster after everything Lizzy had told me about what had happened between her and Simon the night before.

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Lizzy's reliving of last night had finally come to an end – not a moment too soon as far as my ego and sanity were concerned.

Whether anything else noteworthy had occurred would have to wait for another day's conversation. Lizzy had come out of her trance-like state and was now back in the present. Her cheeks were flushed from the memory of what Simon had done and how he'd made her feel, and also from her embarrassment that I'd just witnessed her loss of control. She was self-conscious that I'd seen how strongly she'd responded to the memory of another man.

“And tonight? Later?”

I posed a simple three-word question. One of the words wasn't even mine. I'd borrowed it from my earlier conversation with Ted – *'she's putting her glad rags on for later.'*

“I can call it off, if you want,” her voice said, “that was what we always said, right.”

But her eyes were saying something very different – and, so help me God, my groin was echoing her eyes.

I looked at Lizzy. I looked at the woman I loved. I studied the woman who'd been my everything for longer than I can remember. As I did, I knew I didn't have it in me to deny Lizzy what she so obviously desired to do.

Of course, there was still a part of me that was scared witless at what was about to happen. What husband, unless he was a total fool, wouldn't be shit

scared at the borders that were about to be invaded? Who wouldn't be frightened by the new experiences that were about to be thrust into his marriage?

And honestly, it was my desire to see Lizzy happy and fulfilled – to let her live her dreams and have her fifteen minutes of fame – that provided far more motivation than the hard, throbbing feeling tenting the front of my jeans.

Sure, the excitement was there for me. The perfect counterbalance to my gut-wrenching fears – but seeing that look of excitement there on her face!!

This was about letting the woman I loved live her dreams. Our 'hall pass' may have started as a discussion about meeting our physical needs and accommodating our physical separation. But when I saw the look on Lizzy's face after a single evening of exploring; I knew I had to say yes in spite of how terrified a part of me was. I knew I had to ignore her offer to call it off – whatever Simon had planned for her and him '*later.*'

# Chapter 14

Our call ended abruptly.

I heard the doorbell ring.

“Oh, that’ll be Simon!” Lizzy gushed. As she did, the flushed happiness on her face said more than words ever could. Her obvious excitement was in direct contrast to the aches and pains twisting in my gut.

I’d given Lizzy my permission to play, both before she’d flown back, and then again, a few seconds earlier. I didn’t think Lizzy was about to run off with the ageing rockstar. Simon had just turned sixty-one and was definitely what might be called ‘well worn’. But there was just something about the man that would never sit easily with me.

Though he was Ted’s brother-in-law, I couldn’t think of two more dissimilar men. Ted was a man I’d trust with my life. If Ted had a problem with me or with something I did, he’d come straight out and tell me. And once we resolved the problem, then everything would be forgotten. I knew what type of man Ted was, because I’d seen him demonstrate his character over many years. Ted was a man who could exhibit a towering rage, but he was also a man with a heart of gold and an integrity that shone for the ages.

Simon couldn’t have been more different. Simon was a self-important, narcissist. He focused on himself, and he didn’t try to hide it. With Simon the implicit deal was that if you could put up with him, then you got to bask in the reflected glory of his charisma, mid-level fame, and that parts of the wealth and trappings he’d not managed to burn through or owe as alimony to one of his six ex-wives.

If you embraced Simon, then you got to experience some of the rock and roll lifestyle. You got to meet famous people, go to the off-limits clubs, and eat Caviar and drink Krug. As you did so, you got to enjoy his undoubted charisma and charm. But you had to be careful, because he could turn this charisma and charm on and off at the flick of a switch.

But as you spent time with Simon and enjoyed the temporary trappings of his lifestyle, you were never under any illusions that you remotely mattered to

him. You were just a fleeting satellite orbiting around his star. He was the Sun King, and you were merely there so he'd have people to occasionally talk to, to appreciate how amazing he was, and to pay homage to him like a serf might do to their lord in the middle ages.

This was generally the pattern we'd observed amongst the various hangers on and groupies we'd met during the evenings we'd spent in Simon's company.

Of course, with Ted and his late sister, the vibe from Simon had been very different. Not in the sense that Simon changed how he acted. He only had one gear, and one way of being. But neither Ted nor Rachel treated Simon like a famous music star. They didn't extend him deference or treat him with kid gloves because of his fame and money. To Ted and Rachel, Simon would always just simply be Rachel's younger brother.'

If Simon occasionally stepped out of line or said something or did something that wasn't politically correct, ex Master Gunny Washington wasn't the only person who'd bawl Simon out. Rachel never have served in the U.S. Armed Forces. Like Lizzy, she was an elementary school teacher. But everyone who knew Ted and Rachel agreed that Rachel could be even more intimidating than her husband. I guess that air of authority goes with the territory when you're trying to teach, corral, and control six- and seven-year-olds for six or seven hours a day!

Part of Ted and Rachel's intolerant attitude toward Simon's self-centered persona inevitably rubbed off on Lizzy and me. After all, until last night, it had been rare that either of us spent time with Simon without Ted or Rachel. Consequently, we typically drew our cues for treating Simon from them.

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But after observing the animated, amped-up look on Lizzy's face when Simon arrived and she urgently ended our call, my mind compared Lizzy's reaction to the excited, flushed look I'd seen from female groupies we'd seen when we'd been out with him. Lizzy's look was similar to the excited, flushed look I'd witnessed on the various blondes, brunettes and redheads that were shamelessly vying for Simon's attention.

Lizzy had that same flushed excitement. But, unlike his groupies, she wouldn't have to fight for Simon's attention.

The conversation between Simon and Lizzy last night that Lizzy had just shared with me made it crystal clear what Simon's plans and intentions were for tonight.

'Tonight'.

Shit, just considering the word made me realize that I didn't know what or where the two of them were going.

Lizzy and my conversation had been consumed by other, more pressing topics, and then Simon had arrived before Lizzy could share more information.

Shit, shit, shit!

Were they off to a club? Off to a fancy restaurant where only his connections could get him in? Or did he intend to forsake the normal romantic pleasantries so he could get to the carnal climax of the evening more quickly?

Oh fuck!

That train of thought raised an even more frightening gap in my knowledge about what was going to happen nine-thousand miles away at home.

What were the limits of tonight's activities between the two of them? This was another topic that Lizzy and I had run out of time to discuss.

I remembered the words Lizzy had said as if they were only yesterday. (In reality, it was just last Monday – shit, had things really moved that quickly?) In her efforts to get my consent, she'd assured me that we'd take our explorations slowly to give us time to check that we were each okay as our explorations progressed. This approach recognized that there is often a difference between plans and reality.

'Obviously not all in one go ... we could take things slow ... gradual...'

Those were the exact words Lizzy had said to me.

The only trouble was that the words Simon had whispered to her last night didn't sound like *'gradual'* was what Simon had in mind. And from the excited look I'd seen on Lizzy's face earlier, I wondered whether she would have the willpower to stick to our agreement that we'd only move things forward slowly.

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“Jim, you in there?”

Damn! I needed to snap out of it. I’d been lost in my own little world. I was so busy regretting the boundaries that Lizzy and I hadn’t discussed that I’d ignored the loud rapping on my hotel door.

“Anong! I’m so sorry. I was lost, deep in something,” I apologized. As I spoke, I opened the door and invited her in.

“Deep in something’,” she grinned knowingly. “I know what you were deep into. Us girls, we do like to talk!”

Oh shit! My face was already coloring again. I blushed at the thought of how much Lizzy had likely shared with her new best friend. I was intrigued by the woman who’d influenced Lizzy so much during their week together.

“Relax, I’m not about to judge you for letting Lizzy have a little fun. The way I see it, it takes a strong and loving man to be secure enough to let his lady explore a bit. Your courage and love for Lizzy makes you even more hunky and handsome than before,” she winked.

Oh great! Deeper and deeper we went. When Lizzy had first floated the idea of hall passes, she’d identified the fact that we both ‘had company’ that could provide releases for our physical needs while we were separated.

At the time I’d been pretty sure Lizzy was referring to Anong. But now seeing the look on Anong’s face, I was sure that the two of them had been talking and scheming. The ultimate clincher to this suspicion was how Anong was dressed.

When Anong and I had said goodbye on Friday evening, I didn’t have any knowledge of how Lizzy planned to spend her Friday night.

I’d known Lizzy had cooked dinner for Simon on Thursday. But after spending Thursday evening with him, in my stupid naivety, I’d thought she might want some distance on Friday night. I thought she’d be taking it ‘gradually’ as she’d said.

But Anong wasn’t simply dressed in her normal sexy work attire. No, evidently knowing more than I did about Lizzy’s plans (*‘Us girls ... we do*

*like to talk...*'), my stunning Thai assistant was dressed in full-on 'distract Jim' kit.

Just about the only thing she'd carried over from her normal daily attire were her 'sexy librarian' over-sized specs. The rest of her outfit had my eyes bulging like a bug on steroids.

Lizzy and Anong had definitely been comparing notes – because what Anong was wearing was a near exact match for a 'sexy hooker' outfit that Lizzy had once worn as a birthday present for me.

And even then, Lizzy had only worn it in the privacy of our bedroom. But the tinted glasses Anong was wearing suggested that Anong planned on wearing this outrageous outfit as she and I strolled through central Bangkok.

"You like?" she teased, giving me a model's twirl. She enjoyed the way I looked at her from bottom to top, lustfully taking in every detail of her attire.

She had replaced her normal elegant but business-appropriate three-inch heels with garish red five-inch heels that sat behind three-inch transparent platforms – aka 'hooker heels'. The soft, tanned flesh of her shapely legs then ran upwards from the red straps of her hooker heels until it reached the fabric of insanely tight and insanely tiny black cotton hot pants. Her hot pants couldn't have been more than nine inches from where they kissed the inviting skin of her inner thighs up to the flatness of her taut tummy an inch or two below Anong's pierced belly button.

Anong's lovely toned and taut tummy was totally bare. It was visible until a tight but flared matching black crop top came down to cover the swell of her boobs and the couple of inches of flesh that sat directly below her breasts.

The only non-erotic element to Anong's whole outfit was the small, smiling pink 'juice' faces that decorated the hot pants. These cute little faces were a token gesture to the light-hearted mood that Anong was trying to keep burning in my mind.

"Racy enough for you?" Anong asked. As she did, she jiggled her ass and then shook her shoulders. This motion made her juiciest parts wobble in a way that made me groan with frustrated desire. '*Gradual*' Lizzy had said. But nothing about how Anong was dressed or about what Simon seemed to

be planning seemed remotely ‘*gradual*.’

“I thought we were planning on spending a few hours working here in the hotel?” That had been my understanding when Anong and I had parted ways the previous evening. I’d known I needed to spend some time catching up after leaving the hospital, and I’d known that keeping my mind off what Lizzy might be doing was a good idea. But Anong, who seemed to be talking to Lizzy quite a bit, obviously knew my needs better than I did.

“No, Jim. Lizzy and I talked. We both agreed that you can work tomorrow, but that giving you a break today would be good for you. So today, I am going to show you some of the sites of Bangkok.” The way Anong pushed her boobs out made it clear that it wasn’t architecture or ancient sites that she planned to show me.

Locking eyes with her, I saw a beguiling mix of fun, empathy, and womanly charms. So I shrugged my shoulders and surrendered to whatever Lizzy and Anong had planned for me today.

Seeing my change of mood, Anong kissed me sweetly on the cheek and put her arm through mine.

“Shall we?” Anong asked. Then she led me towards the door. As we walked, part of me shook with anticipation and a little bit of fear at the thought of what the next few hours held for Lizzy and me.

# Chapter 15

She held my arm all the way down the corridor, down the thirty-four floors and all the way past everyone in the lobby.

It was only holding an arm – the kind of thing one does with an aged relative or close friend – but still it felt remarkably intimate, given all the conversations we’d had and the permissions that had been given to me and, more meaningfully, in the conversation between Lizzy and Anong. A conversation I could only guess at, and one that made me blush every time I thought about it.

Not that I objected to its likely content – I’m sure I’d do more than find out what they’d plotted. No, I blushed at the thought of being discussed and traded like some piece of meat. Even if their motives were pure – it was so different from the male ideal of *‘man the hunter, woman the prey’*, the tale all us boys (and girls) have implanted in our heads from the first days we watch TV or listen to a bedtime story. Bedtime stories filled with valiant princes and needy damsels ... you get the picture. If I’d been listening to Lizzy and Anong’s conversation, I dare say I’d have been the needy prince and they would be the pair of giggling, plotting princesses.

Thankfully, my company was one that took a very relaxed view of workplace dalliances, so I didn’t have to worry about some HR reprimand. And this being Bangkok, the sight of a scantily clad forty-something Thai woman on the arm of a slightly older and slightly paler Anglo-American didn’t even register as we passed through the lobby – no matter how conspicuous I was feeling!

Striding out into the early morning sun with Anong still on my arm, I felt a mood of brash directness come over me. Just like that time I’d asked her why she’d been so ‘in your face’ the first time she’d spoken to Lizzy, pushing her sexuality and boobs right in my wife’s face.

“Anong ... don’t take this the wrong way ... but, are you comfortable dressed like that?”

“*Don’t take this the wrong way,*” she mimicked back before adding a heavy dose of over acting, “what other way is there to take it, Jim? I’m deeply hurt

by what you've just said ... can't a woman be proud of her body without the brotherhood of penises drawing incorrect inferences?"

That told me – put me in my place! This woman was way to sharp. She may have been happy with a role as 'a mere assistant', but I'd already learned she was at least the equal of male colleagues who carried far more impressive job titles. And my earlier look at her résumé told me why – it was a virtual alphabet soup of different academic qualifications. 'Diploma' this and 'BSc' or 'MSc' that. Leaving me with a mental note to get deeper into the question of why she'd never pushed more at work.

"Sorry, Anong ... I didn't mean it to come across like that ... it's just that, back home in America, if a woman dressed as confidently and revealingly as you're dressed, certain inferences and conclusions would be drawn..."

"*'Confidently and revealingly'*," she teased, "yes, I like that ... good recovery ... Lizzy trained you well ... and I bet you suck good pussy too..."

What! Where the hell did that come from? She'd said it with such matter-of-fact nonchalance – as if it was the most obvious thing in the world. One and one equals two. Skilled verbal recovery equals well trained and desirous of pleasing my woman with my mouth. My face now burning as bright as the tropical sun. How the hell had this witch correctly discerned the main way I managed to make my Lizzy cum?

"Oh Jim ... you're sweet, so innocent ... even if I couldn't deduce it, do you really think us girls don't talk?" she laughed out loud, pinching my cheek. "You're like a loyal, lovable, labrador ... not too smart, but loved by your owner anyway..."

I think that was the moment I gave up the unequal battle. I was being ganged up and manipulated by one woman who loved me back in Carolina and one woman here in Bangkok who my instinct told me had a soft spot for me and who'd have my back in the most tigerish and protective of ways.

"Okay, it's official ... I give in! You, you and Lizzy got me," I sighed, making the universal finger across sign for 'zip it'. "From now on, I know my place!"

That earned me not a pinch on the cheek, but a soft stroke and two gentle kisses – one on the cheek, one the briefest of touches of her lips to mine. A

touch that instantly took me back to how Lizzy had described the teasing kisses Simon had given her after she'd cooked dinner for him.

I looked into her eyes. Eyes browner than my Lizzy's beautiful hazel eyes. A look that finally told her I was treating her as a full equal. That all assumptions about status and race were spent. A look that brought the smallest of knowing smiles from her – a smile that started around the eyes before causing the slightest of up-turns at the corners of her mouth.

Pursing my lips in symbolical submission to the Anong and Lizzy double act, my stress about what was happening back at home suddenly seemed soothed, and I blurted out the question that had been bubbling away at the back of my mind all the time we'd been walking along Bangkok's bustling streets.

“What do you think's happening right now back in Charleston?”

Anong's smile was something to behold. I was back in the territory of knowing I was outmatched. Well outmatched.

She stopped our walk, turned to face me and answered my question with another question.

“Do you really want to know the answer to that question?”

“Ye...” I started answering.

“Or, are the questions you really want to ask *‘Will our love be okay?’* and *‘Is my wife having fun, and just how sexy is it? What she's doing with Simon right now?’*”

I was struck silent – she was right. Again. I waited silently for her next words of wisdom.

“Jim, take it from me ... a woman who married a total shit ... a woman who only has one good thing to come out of my years of marriage ... you and Lizzy, you got it made ... you love each other more than life itself ... and fate has put you here ... and put Simon in the picture ... Simon with his big dick and even huger ego...”

“Let it go, handle it right ... let Liz have her fun,” she told me, suddenly looking more serious as she fixed me with a stern look. “Let her have her fun, ENJOY IT WITH HER, then cuddle, talk ... rinse and repeat ... it's the

perfect antidote to those midlife Blues ... you and Liz, you got it made ... you love each other SO much..."

I wanted to take her and crush her ... hug her tight.

Which is exactly what I did. Squeezing her tight. Suddenly feeling a transformational moment. Suddenly seeing Anong for who she was and what she'd done. Freed of our American models of what was and what wasn't, she'd seen past that to who Lizzy and I were as people, to what our needs were, our emotional and physical needs.

"Thankyou." A simple phrase, but I meant it from the bottom of my heart.

"You're welcome," she smiled, for once a little shy and embarrassed. The shy look on her face suddenly making me think of HER needs. I'd been so preoccupied with my own needs; I'd not seen the woman in front of me.

"So, they're going to be busy for what ... three hours? Four hours?"

Her expression said, *'and the rest'*, but I chose to ignore that sleight to my ego. Choosing to be more positive in my outlook.

"So, what says we turn tail and head back to the hotel ... prove to you I meant nothing by my earlier comment about how you were dressed ... by showing you I'm more interested by the woman inside the clothes..."

The look she gave me nearly made me cry. She was smart, she was sassy. She was definitely sexy – sexy with plenty to spare. But she was a woman, a person looking for appreciation and affirmation from someone she liked and considered an equal. Bland, clinical words – but that was what I saw in her eyes as I busted up the Lizzy-Anong gameplan. Our arms still joined, but me now doing the leading.

I didn't need to say anything. Anong knew where we were going and why. And like me, she knew the silence between us made it more special. More meaningful at the emotional level.

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Reversing track all the way – street, lobby, corridor – still arm in arm, but now with very different vibes – we both knew exactly what was coming.

I had the distinct feeling this is what Anong had been looking for from the

moment she'd met me – or maybe from the moment she'd gotten sight of the plans to send *'Sharp, J'* over from the States to fix things.

Having felt maneuvered and manipulated since I'd recovered from my fever, dominated by the two unlikely new feline besties, I savored this new vibe of Jim Sharp being the one doing the manipulation.

For once, Anong was quiet ... sensing I was about to assert myself, savoring the pleasures and surprises that awaited her ... I shut the door and bolted it – sending a message: *'You, madam, aren't getting out of here until I've had my most wicked ways, plural, with you...'*

“Now, are you going to get out of those hot pants of yours, so we can stop pissing about, get down to what we both know we want ... what we both know is the end game here...?”

And I did *'want it'* ... wanted her. Only an hour or so had passed since Lizzy had ended our call when Simon had arrived – an emasculating thought if ever there was one – so I was confident we were ahead of the curve. Not that this was a contest. *Right!!*

As I watched her mischievously wiggle – not once losing eye contact with me – my cock hardened as I saw the little white panties she was wearing underneath. Perfectly sized, perfectly opaque enough to show her last line of defense. The small, perfectly trimmed landing strip to guide my jet fighter into the cavernous hanger eagerly awaiting its attention.

Her hot pants now on the floor, I stepped toward her and wrapped her in my arms, kissing her as if we were the last two people on the planet, an intensity inflamed by days and days of flirting and mind games.

“I may not be Simon with his big dick, but I promise you Anong, you're going to get everything I have, and then some!” The way I saw her shiver and smile telling she was more than happy with her side of the deal – no matter what Lizzy might be getting from rockstar Simon.

Pulling the black crop top up and over those magnificent boobs - only stopping briefly to kiss and suck – I kissed my way down from her lips over each and every sensitive part of her flesh until I arrived at her holy of holies. Loving the way I felt her muscles tense as she realized my mouth was within striking distance. Her reaction partly physical, but much more emotional, as

she realized the barrier we were about to jump.

I didn't speak ... no words were adequate or appropriate ... I just gave one final kiss to her tummy, savored the shiver, and dove lower.

The scent of her need, of her womanly juices was sweet in my nostrils, like a clarion call, summoning closer – the aromatic equivalent of the siren song that called ancient sailors onto the rocks. Only this particular mariner was more than happy to crash his face into the waiting rocks. Anong's soft moans as I kissed the softness of her inner thighs making my heart warm with happiness. So much better than worrying about my wife and Simon – losing myself in pleasuring this wonderful woman. Strong but needy, the woman who I was told had hardly left my bedside when I'd been drifting in and out of consciousness.

Final kiss administered, I wiggled the tip of my tongue higher until I made contact – Anong's involuntary body shiver telling me I'd made contact with her little nub.

Worming all around, sucking and nibbling in delicate patterns, using my fingers to push and explore lower, it was only when I felt her hips starting to buck and her nails dig into my scalp that I really went to town on her clit. Working her hard, getting her to the edge – then backing off, gently soothing and bathing her pussy until it was time to build her back up again.

“You bastard, Jim! Let me cum ... let me cum!”

That just earned her one more round of high and low, her wonderful boobs heaving up and down as her lungs hunted for more oxygen.

“Please, Jim ... please...”

“Not yet, not yet ... I remember just how much you teased me all those days with no bra ... pushing those big boobs in my face...” I managed to muffle to her from my position submerged beneath her, legs wrapped around me, her sweet pussy doing its best to suffocate me. (*Argh ... but what a way to go!*)

Going on pure instinct, after one more round of savoring her sweet nectar, I gently prized her legs from around my head and presented my sodden face next to hers. No words were needed, she smiled at me ... a naughty, wicked, innocent moment ... before kissing me hard. Ending the kiss by licking

around my lips like a cat might lick their whiskers, savoring the taste of her own juices as she felt me moving my hips into position.

I nearly said something about wanting her since the day I'd arrived – in my mind holding up my ring to her to explain why I'd done nothing. But instinct told me not to cheapen the moment by making any reference to anyone else but her and me.

So instead, I just looked deep into her eyes, linking our two souls as I handled myself next to her entrance and pushed gently in. Feeling the change in her muscles, seeing the change in her eyes. Not due to my size, but due to the significance of the moment.

I remembered my first girlfriend, remembered her explaining to inexperienced Jim the significance for a woman of allowing herself to be penetrated by a man. The way Anong was looking at me took me right back, made me think of that significance. She might dress slutty, might use sex as a weapon – but from the way she looked at me as she took me in, I knew this was all just camouflage. The real Anong was far more vulnerable and sensitive than she'd ever let on.

Feeling her wrap her legs around my back, wrap her arms around my neck as she smothered me with non-stop kisses, my heart soared as I knew the dance was on.

For the next few minutes I was a man in heaven – everything coming together in the most perfect of packages. Selfishly, I loved the way my cock nerves buzzed from the way Anong's pussy enveloped and squeezed me. The feeling of her skin - so warm, so velvety – caressing my own skin at so many points was almost as heavenly.

But best of all was how my chest sang at the way Anong's body and face responded to me. Seeing her so happy at so many different levels had a deeply spiritual impact on me. It just felt so damned fine! So fine for my ego – especially given how keen Lizzy seemed on Simon right now – but also fine in that altruistic, 'feel good about yourself' way.

Enough of the psychobabble, I kissed her back just as hard as she was kissing me. All the time my hips strove for every ounce of speed, every quarter-inch of extra depth. I couldn't have been straining more had I been bench-

pressing eight hundred pounds, sweat pouring off my brow as she pulled me in deeper. Smiling to me as her nails drew blood from my ass and back.

“Come on, Jim ... fuck me harder ... fuck me faster,” she grinned at me, both of us knowing it just a front, this was far more about the emotions than the mechanics.

That’s why we both knew she stopped herself saying ‘*fuck me deeper,*’ because those words would have put the focus on what was happening back in Charleston. And selfishly both of us wanted this moment to be about no-one but her and me.

“You little bitch,” I gasped, both of us knowing I meant the opposite, “isn’t this enough for you?! Fuck, you’re insatiable. Do I need to call the army in?”

My hips were going even faster. She felt so good. Her skin ... her smile ... the squeeze of her pussy ... we were both in heaven and then I felt something push into my ass. Her smile telling me she was going to teach this innocent forty-eight-year-old a few new tricks as she started stroking my prostate – loving my look of surprise.

Now I was really gasping for breath ... gulping down huge lungfuls as Anong’s own sobs told me how close she was.

“Yes ... yes, Jim ... yes, baby ... oh fuck ... yes, baby,” she sobbed, her eyes screwed shut, now so close and needy for own cum she was forgetting to dig her nails in – her hands too busy clasping me and needing me.

“Arggggh!”

We exploded in fireworks of our shared climax. My cock shooting jet after jet of molten juice deep into Anong’s receptive pussy. Anong shaking from head to toe as she came ... my own eyes only half-functional as I strove to enjoy the sight.

Chapter 16

“Well, Mr. Sharp ... that was a long time coming!” she chuckled.

It was ten minutes later – it had taken us that long to recover from the tsunami of our shared climax – and we were cuddling up together, enjoying that unique closeness new lovers share.

Now was the time to lift my left hand in front of her and wave my ring. I didn't need to add words, and likewise, I knew she valued what we'd shared all the more because it wasn't stolen and dirty. It was officially sanctioned by her new bestie, my long-suffering wife.

She understood – she just hugged me and kissed me softly. “Thanks for respecting me.” Enough said. We descended into another long few minutes of just cuddling – just enjoying ‘being’, being together.

Eventually this almost platonic cuddling - just savoring each other, savoring the pleasure of being together, the pleasure of naked flesh against naked flesh – gave way to a slow and gentle round two. My forty-eight-year cock had recovered enough that after a few minutes kissing and caressing we were making love again. Making love in a slow and languid fashion. The orgasm we shared together, quieter and more tender than the first one.

But still, even if it wasn't as intense as round one, we cuddled like teenage lovers afterwards. Few words spoken until finally Anong spoke – sensing my mind was wondering.

“They've had three hours, do you want to give her a call?” she smiled softly. Her face showing she knew that now our distractions had died down, my heart was dancing on broken glass.

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No answer.

Not the first time, nor the second.

The third also drew a blank.

“Hey, babe, what did you expect?” Anong smiled sympathetically, feeling

my pain from the unanswered phone. “Let Lizzy have her fun. I know she’ll be bubbling over with love and thanks when they run out of steam, desperate to talk to the only man she loves.”

It wasn’t just her words, it was the knowing, wise female intuition that comforted me just as much.

“Come on, grumpy guts,” she teased, “let’s not let them have all the fun ... let’s get dressed and you and me go and have a nice romantic walk while Mister Naughty gets a head of steam back up.” Her squeeze to my sticky, spent cock making clear exactly what she meant.

Thirty minutes later – mostly Anong reapplying war paint and squeezing herself into those insanely tight hotpants and that crop top which barely covered her boobs - we were back walking arm-in-arm through the hotel lobby. My delicate Anglo-American sensibilities grateful for the anonymity offered by a city like Bangkok – imagining the looks Anong and my third appearance would have gotten us in small town America.

At first, when there was no answer from Lizzy, I’d felt like my heart was breaking. I was so desperate to hear her voice, to see her smiling face ... to know that all was still well between us ... that she’d not left me for Mister Big Cock, Big Ego Rockstar. *(However silly a thought it was, twisted paranoia does terrible things to the newly crowned cuckold mind.)*

But now that we were out and I had a beautiful caring woman on my arm and I was feeling the warmth of the tropical sun on my face, life felt a lot more bearable.

As we walked, we talked about all kinds of stuff. My heart singing as she opened up and I had the privilege of slowly unpeeling her life story – always shared with open honesty and more than a little humor.

One topic that made us both laugh was when I couldn’t resist reflecting on one of the most unlikely events of the last week.

“Who’d have thought it ... you and Lizzy, best of buddies! Partners in crime ... planning out how to enjoy your men!”

“A girl’s got to do,” she chuckled, her fingers squeezing mine as we walked, before, just for a moment, being serious. “As soon as Lizzy knew I was no

threat to you and her, and saw how I was there for you in hospital, well it changed everything around ... well, those two things and a bucketful of Mimosas while you were tied to your saline drip!” She could never stay serious for too long.

“Anyway, enough about her ... she’s there and I’m here ... I’m the one who lucked out getting the handsome Mr. Sharp as my bed partner and romantic roomie today,” she beamed, stopping us in our tracks and kissing me tenderly. Pressing her chest close to mine – hard nipples grazing my pecs - hand ‘accidentally’ rubbing at my groin.

We carried on walking hand-in-hand, comfortable in our silence. I don’t know what she was thinking, but my own mind kept thinking how unlikely this whole setup was. Four people playing a game I could hardly have imagined that day I took that stressed call from my boss.

We enjoyed a light lunch outdoors at a beautiful, very authentic little local restaurant down a back street, enjoying watching the world go by. Competing to imagine the lives and conversations of the people passing by.

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“Shall we head back?”

I loved this woman. Although not literally! Despite the lovely time we were having, she could see that I was itching to call Lizzy – which meant the privacy of my hotel room. But she wasn’t offended by my split attention – she just wanted to put me out of my misery!

Back at the hotel – this time two of the young female desk girls did nudge each other as we passed – I did the time zone math and tried again. Twelve hours different – it was just shy of two a.m. back home. Surely Lizzy would answer now?

Once, twice, three times I rang.

No pickup on any!

Despite my earlier Anong-induced happiness, my heart sank. *What happened to ‘gradually’? Not too quick, ‘we’ll have a chance to say stop’... A night that ran so long, especially after spending the previous evening together, had to signify something so amazing it was bound to leave Lizzy wanting more ...*

more and more ... leaving an indelible impression on our own marriage ... me suffering by comparison...

All these and a thousand other negative thoughts raced through my mind.

“Hey, hun ... it’s not the end of the world.” Anong’s words breaking through my down at mouth reverie.

“Get undressed, jump up on the bed and I’ll give you a genuine Thai massage ... work out all those worry knots in your shoulders ... make you feel like a new man...”

New man. Maybe not the best of phrases to use bearing in mind where my mind was currently at – but her heart was in the right place.

Moments later I was savoring the mixed feelings of Anong’s fingers running over my calves and hamstrings. Depending on her pressure, part sexy, part relaxing and sometimes borderline painful. She was a magician working her magic.

Mostly is was legit – medical and therapeutic. But Anong being Anong, and knowing my needs, just occasionally she couldn’t resist stroking my cock or tickling my balls.

Until, when all my muscles had been de-stressed, ‘just occasionally’ became something else. Just as it had done earlier when we made love, Anong’s finger slipping gently past my sphincter, massaging my prostate in ways that made me moan loudly and forget the rest of the world even existed.

Clever girl, when I’d been face down, somehow she’d managed to disrobe and so my next ‘forget about Lizzy’ treat was the feeling of her squishy boobs, diamond hard nipples and pussy rubbing up and down my back. I’d heard about body-to-body massages, but had always been too faithful to enjoy one. Oh boy! The feeling of her skin rubbing mine combined with that probing little digit soon had me rock hard and raring for release.

Turning me over, when I made to get up she gently pushed me back down.

“Just relax, Jim ... this is all for you...”

Then she kissed her way up from my ankles, along my inner legs and thighs until I felt her hair tickling against my groin. The teasing minx then ignoring

my throbbing member as she kissed all the way up my belly and chest until we were exchanging the most tender of little butterfly kisses.

I tried more aggressive kisses – but she didn't want that. Her mouth then descending lower – this time no more teasing as she swallowed my slender six inches all the way down with surprising ease. Worshiping and pleasuring my cock with a mix of kisses and vacuum level suction, all the time her finger still working me. Until finally my hips started pumping up and down and I howled out loud as I came harder than I ever remember before. Pumping jet after jet of my juices into her warm and soft mouth. The way she smiled at me making it even better - a smile that mixed lust, care and desire.

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“Thanks,” I grinned – feeling like a naughty schoolboy who'd won the sexual equivalent of a Wonka gold ticket. Lizzy and Caitlin were my life, but I'd sure lucked out when fate had made Anong my assistant while I was so far from home.

“No ... let's rest a little ... try her again in her morning time ... that'll be better...”

She'd caught me looking over at my phone. It was now two-thirty a.m. back home. However hard it was - she was right. And the way she'd just sucked the life force out of me, made my body nearly vibrate as I'd cum ... a few hours rest wouldn't be hard.

# Chapter 17

Normally I struggle to sleep for more than six hours. But I was so thoroughly spent from how Anong had sucked the very life out of me, that it was a good eight hours before I opened my eyes.

Staring bleary-eyed at my phone, I saw it was eleven p.m., meaning it was eleven in the morning back home. Surely, Lizzy would be awake and would answer the phone if I rang now?

“Hel-l-l-o,” the voice answered, unmistakably Lizzy’s but uncharacteristically ponderous and sleepy given the hour. Lizzy was usually the brightest and most bubbly of people in the morning – things that went hand-in-hand with having to face twenty or so seven-year-olds at seven-thirty each morning.

So, even just hearing her voice, I was already on edge at what such an e-typical Lizzy meant about what happened last night between her and Simon.

“Hi, hun ... can we FaceTime?”

I really, really needed to see her, to reconnect in the fullest way. She didn’t answer, but after a while, my sleepy wife turned the camera on.

She looked just as sleepy as she sounded, only seeming to keep her eyes open with the greatest of efforts as she blinked and struggled to focus on the lens. She looked for all the world like some miner emerging into daylight after a month or two underground!

“Wow! It must have been a good night!” I didn’t mean it to sound snarky or mean – the words just came out like that as Lizzy now managed to focus and stared back at me with a blank face.

“Sorry, hun ... let me start again ... I really missed you ... I’ve been on pins and needles waiting to talk to you ... did you have a great night? I really hope so.”

Life and color slowly started to come back into her face, and I could see the start of a small, coy smile.

“So, is that a yes, then?” I teased, my voice shaky with nerves.

“Yes,” she whispered, looking almost embarrassed, her voice barely audible.

“Hun ... don’t take this the wrong way,” I said in my most friendly, loving voice, “I’m dying here ... is that all you’re going to tell me?”

“Sorry ... this is all so new to me,” she blushed, her eyes wide, staring back at me with a real deer-in-the-headlights look. “What would you like to know?”

“Everything!” I squawked back, my throat seizing up as the pit in my stomach swallowed me whole.

“Everything?”

“Start at the beginning,” I offered, seeing her need for help. Suddenly feeling reassured that this was hard for her. If she’d taken to it easily, that would have been quite some warning sign.

“Well, we went out for dinner ... then we went to this fancy club ... went dancing...”

“How far did things go,” I interrupted, realizing although I’d asked Lizzy to tell me everything, I had nowhere near the patience for a blow-by-blow account, that I needed her to jump straight to the main course.

“I thought you wanted to know everything,” she blushed again, her cheeks coloring up even more than before, obviously stalling.

“I did ... but then I changed my mind...”

Lizzy fell silent, staring back at me, her mind churning away behind those big hazel eyes of hers, trying to find the right words.

“We went all the way...”

No camouflage, no sugarcoating; she’d obviously decided ripping the band-aid straight off was the best course.

The truth now out in the open, she fell silent – staring at me, her eyes boring into me, and her continued silence making it clear she expected me to speak next.

Part of me wasn’t surprised. Part of me had been thinking this is exactly what had happened – the most obvious explanation for why Lizzy hadn’t

answered when I'd called her in the early hours of her morning. But another part of me was stunned to hear it said out loud – to have what I'd only guessed at now confirmed by Lizzy herself. And confirmed in such a bold and direct admission.

“Say something, Jim! Don't leave me dangling here, honey! Tell me you're okay with it ... that you're not gonna divorce me or get mad at me...” Her tone was half in jest, but her anxiousness was obvious.

“Sorry...” Despite my own confused emotions, I felt for Lizzy, her anxiety shining like a beacon. “I am okay with it ... it IS what we agreed ... I guess it's just a bit of a shock hearing it out loud ... knowing it's true...”

“Now you're making me feel guilty and ashamed...”

“Sorry, sweetheart ... that's not my intention ... I guess I'd better man up,” I said trying to make us both feel a little better through lightening the mood.

“Thanks,” she smiled, the tension being to ease between us.

“So, how was it?” I asked.

“Good,” she replied. Normally bubbly and natural, she was being guarded – not my real Lizzy at all.

“Only good?” I teased, sticking with the humor. “Not awesome or amazing? I thought you said he had a huge cock ... when he put your hand on his dick the other day ... and the way he's so full of himself, you'd think he was god's gift to the ladies...”

The way Lizzy clammed up, and her cheeks started coloring up again told me I was onto something.

“Don't keep me in suspense,” I needled her, “if he were really that good ... you'd better spit it out ... just how good was he?”

For a few more moments, Lizzy was still silent, but then bit by bit, the dam wall started cracking. “Good ... he was really good ... if you want to know the truth, he was amazing ... the best ever ... I'd never experienced anything like it...”

Even though I'd asked for it, Lizzy could see how shocked I was, but having started and knowing that I'd asked, she didn't back down or stop.

“Do you still want to know everything, honey?” Now she was warming to her task, a loving but teasing smile on her lips.

Lost for words, I just nodded – making my lovely wife smile even more.

“He was so damned big, honey ... and boy, did he know how to use it!”

“How big is big?” I asked, voice box still spasming with nerves, for some strange reason, driven on to torture myself, wanting to know every little detail.

Even allowing for the small size of the screen, she had to see and feel the terrible mix of fear and excitement that were eating me up.

How else to explain the way she held her hands up, her grin getting wider and wider as she moved her hands further and further apart until my jaw dropped in disbelief.

“Are you shitting me, honey?”

“No ... honestly ... he’s really that big! He was so much fatter and longer than any of the toys I’ve got.” Toys we both knew she’d deliberately chosen to be the same length as my slender six inches – always saying that was plenty for her. My slender six inches being similar in size to the only two boyfriends she’d ever slept with before she and I had started dating.

“Fuck, Lizzy ... your hands ... your hands are nearly a foot apart ... no man’s that big,” my exasperation and disbelief making Lizzy giggle with mischievous glee.

She moved her hands just a tiny bit closer, appearing to think. “Well, maybe not a foot ... more like ten or eleven inches I guess,” she announced, studying my trembling face and enjoying my look of trembling shock.

“Mind you,” - *oh fuck, was there more* - “he was thick too,” she beamed, enjoying teasing the man she loved, the man who’d been unwise enough to give her a hall pass. Now switching from hands to arms, as she held up her forearm to the lens and rubbed it in a way that left no room for misunderstanding.

Even after such intimidating warmup facts, something deep within me drove me on with a need to know more – no matter how unnerving such

information might be.

“What ... what was it like to take such a monster?” I heard myself asking, in what felt like an out-of-body experience.

Was it really me whose trembling voice I was listening to? Probing with clinical detachment, somehow managing to ignore the fact it was Lizzy we were talking about. As if it was just the antics of some nameless good-time girl we were discussing – not the woman who’d sworn to be faithful to me and forsake all others.

Even as my cock flooded with blood, a conflict raged within me. A conflict between my excited need to know more, and a little voice in my head that kept nagging away. Kept nagging away with the most unhelpful of questions ... *‘Didn’t she promise to take things slow? To give you a chance to back out? To say ‘no’ ... didn’t she? Didn’t she?’*

“It was heavenly ... absolutely heavenly ... I just felt totally and utterly full of cock ... like he was stretching me to breaking point ... like the top of his cock was all the way up deep in my tummy, right under my ribs,” she giggled, her face flushed at the memory.

“Do you want me to go on?” she asked, genuinely wondering as she could see how my gaunt eyes and drooling tongue were competing within me.

“Jim?”

“Yes,” I whispered, “I need to know it all ... everything ... don’t hold back, even if it’s hard...”

“Okay, if you really want me to,” she said, her face full of love and concern. Her look of love comforting me but also making hearing her tales even more painful.

“I need to know ... go on...”

“Are you sure?”

“I’m sure!” I spluttered, my impatience showing through, making Lizzy giggle at how strange my impatience was to get all the dirty details about another man fucking her.

“Well, if you’re sure,” she teased, before pausing, pretending to think, to

tease me some more. “Hmmm, where to begin? Hmmm ... his cock, oh honey, his cock was so beautiful...”

She stopped, her naughty, twinkling eyes looking into mine – I knew what she was thinking. But would she say it?

“Honey, Simon’s cock looked so different to your cock ... I mean, I love your cock, baby ... your cock’s nice, it’s fine ... but Simon’s was so big, so manly ... it was thick, like my forearm ... crisscrossed with all kinds of veins, throbbing angrily, wanting me, wanting my pussy ... and it was so long, it seemed to go on forever, like some giant pink salami...”

She’d said it!

My heart was now thumping against my rib cage at the pain and pleasure of being compared to another man, of coming in such a distant second to the man who’d just fucked her. A man so much older than me, but a man with a cock I could only dream of.

“Oh, honey, I couldn’t resist ... I was drawn to it like a big, manly magnet,” she giggled, “I just couldn’t resist holding it, stroking it up and down, exploring it, feeling it’s weight ... popping it into my mouth, watching Simon smile as I sucked on it, played with it...”

“And then, after I’d played with it, made it even harder, I had to have it in me ... but it took him an age to get all of his cock into me, honey ... it wasn’t just the length, it was so thick ... at first I thought he wouldn’t even get his cockhead in ... it was so big, big like a fat mushroom ... but when I opened up enough, he just slowly, bit by bit, pushed the rest in slowly...”

“Honestly, hun ... it felt like he was splitting me in two ... my whole pussy was on fire, every nerve ending tingling as he stretched me out ... stretched me like I’ve never been stretched before...”

As she continued to describe sex with Simon and his huge dick, I could tell she was reliving every moment. She was lost back in the event, no longer aware of my sweaty, hollow-eyed reaction – her mind was elsewhere.

Me, as I took in every word, I struggled to breathe and felt an excruciating pain in my chest as I tortured myself conjuring up images of what Lizzy must have looked like lying on her back, legs spread wide, boobs jiggling as

arrogant Simon drove inch after inch of his huge spear deep into her womanhood.

“Did you love it? How many times did you cum? What positions did you use?”

“My, my, you really do want to know it all, don’t you?” she chortled, switching back from loving and concerned to playful and teasing as she smirked, “isn’t this hard for you to hear, honey?”

“Yes, but isn’t that the whole point?” I managed to force out. “It’s as hard as it is hot!”

“Hot just like in our fantasies?” she teased again.

“Hotter and harder...”

“Well then ... let me think,” she started, before a protracted, hammed up pause as she pretended to be dredging her memory banks for the answers to my questions.

“Did I love it? Hell, yeah ... what woman wouldn’t!”

Now I got the distinct sense she was playing to the gallery ... exaggerating what was already an awesome experience to maximize the impact on her sweating, stressed, clammy-foreheaded husband.

“I mean, honey ... he’s so charismatic ... wanted and worshipped by so many women ... and he chose little old me ... that’s every woman’s dream, to be picked out by the handsome rockstar...”

“And then, on top of that, he makes love like a god ... a god with a cock more like a spear or a club than what normal men have...”

‘*Normal men like me,*’ I could see her thinking - her smile telling me she knew I was thinking this as well.

“So, yes ... I loved it ... and as to how many times he made me cum ... hard to say, I sort of lost count after the fifth or sixth,” she beamed, knowing the effect it would have on me.

She’d still not answered my question about what position they’d used – but already this had been plenty enough for me, so I wasn’t about to press her on

it. But I didn't need to – her knowing smile told me she was just as aware of the omission as I was ... an omission she was just about to make good on.

“At first it was him on top of me ... he's such a big man ... he tried his best, but at times I thought he might crush me ... but this was how we could look into each other's eyes as he slowly worked that huge cock of his all the way into my tummy ... we could kiss and just look at each other as he played with my boobs...”

“Then when I'd cum a couple of times like that, he got me on my hands and knees ... did me from behind,” my wife for some reason blushing as she shared these details, hardly any more brazen or embarrassing than what she'd already shared. “He really pounded me in that position ... he gripped my hips so hard, fucked me so fast and so deep ... I actually thought he might pound me all the way through the mattress...”

“Was that it?” a tiny little voice that sounded like me asked, as if my brain was no longer in control of my tongue.

“No ... not even close,” she giggled, “he couldn't get enough of me ... he said ever since he first met me all those years ago, he's wanted to fuck me ... fuck me and make love to me ... but he never made a pass at me out of respect for his sister Rachel...”

*Oh, that's nice! Not out of respect for Jim, Lizzy's husband. But I guess that's entirely in keeping with the person we knew he was; a self-centered womanizer who in the past had thought nothing about ruining the marriages and relationships of others.*

Which really did beg the question just why the hell I'd given Lizzy a hall pass to go with a guy like Simon! A question that nagging little voice wanted to hammer center stage into my forehead – a hammering only stopped by the swollen state of my cock and how it was dominating my world view right now!

“Fuck you and make love to you?”

“Yeah,” she blushed, surprising me at such a demure, cutesy reaction after everything she'd already confessed.

“When he did me from behind, he was really fucking me ... power fucking

me really hard.” Hearing words like this from Lizzy who never spoke like this was stunning enough, but I had to put that on hold as more hammer blows rained down.

“It was the same when he used his height and strength to pick me up ... pick me up as if I weighed nothing and bounced me up and down on his cock while he walked around the room ... fucking me so deep I thought my pussy might burst as I hung on for dear life...”

My heart beating against my ribs, I barely dared to ask the question, “But love...”

“Right at the end ... when he was close and he knew I was totally spent, he was so gentle, so tender when he put me on my back ... teased me, stroked my clit with his huge mushroom cockhead ... got me to beg him to put himself back in me ... then made love to me in the most sweet and emotional of ways ... until we came together ... kissing, calling out our names as I held him so tight as he cried out and shot his load deep inside me...”

*‘Shot his load deep inside me...’* I’d always thought of my Lizzy as *‘my lady.’* Luckily for me, a lady who even after all these years still loved sex – hence the need for this temporary arrangement.

But listening to the gleeful, excited way she’d talked about the right royal screwing Simon had just given her, I struggled to think of her in a particularly lady-like way. *‘Sir Man-Slut’*, a description even his own sister had used of him, had well and truly deflowered this particular maiden. Deflowered her, showing her a level of sex she’d never experienced before.

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‘Shot his load deep inside me...’ Lizzy had started that last stanza as an act of teasing mayhem, but as she described it and looked at me on the small screen, I saw the sudden shift in her attitude. She was searching me, seeing if the man she loved, the man she’d been teasing and tormenting and mentally stroking for the last few minutes was okay – or whether between us we’d just engineered a huge and possibly irreparable fault line in our marriage.

We just stared at each other.

It was just like when she’d first started sharing – when we’d both been so

nervous.

Seeing her like this, knowing I wasn't the only one anxious and stressed, made me feel a whole heap better. It told me just how much she loved me – no matter how big Simon's cock had been and how much of an amazing time he'd shown her. It was me and the relationship and love we held between us that was still the most important thing in her life.

“Wow! I wish I had a cock like that! Wished I could fuck you like that! Love you babe ... I can't wait until I'm home and can hold you in my arms...”

Seeing the stress ebb from her face and shoulders felt really good. Of course, I'd felt jealous and more than a little inadequate as I'd been listening to her describe what Simon and she had shared. But I loved Lizzy way too much to ever feel petty or mean and want her to suffer even in the smallest of ways. Even if big parts of the last few minutes had been excruciatingly hard for me.

“I feel the same, sweetheart ... I wish you were here right now, so I could feel your arms around me ... look into your eyes, kiss your lips ... I loved last night with Simon ... but it's you I want home right now!”

There was a long, wonderful silence between us as we stared into each other's eyes with an emotional intensity that I remembered twice before – the first time we made love and on our wedding night.

We'd been talking about another man – another man making love to Lizzy far better than I ever had or could - but it really didn't matter. It was something I'd gifted her, and however hard and double-edged it was, it was something I loved that she'd enjoyed. And something which somehow seemed to have brought us closer.

As we gazed at each other with full-on twenty-four carat love, I saw that teasing twinkle reappear in Lizzy's eye as she pulled the camera a little further back - making me wonder just what was coming next.

Chapter 18

“So, do you want to see the evidence? See that I’m not just making it all up?”

Her face was still smiling, but the lens was far enough back to show her neck and her shoulders – her shoulders covered by the comforter she’d mischievously pulled all the way up and over her shoulders. Shit, I’d seen devout Muslims less well covered!

“Well, honey? What’s it to be?” she tweaked me, loving her power, smiling at the way I was struggling for breath. The way her hands were holding the corners of the comforter making crystal clear what she had in mind.

Oh shit! Were we really doing this? When had we stopped being a normal couple? Descended so far? Descended to this?

“Honey?” She needed to hear me say it out loud.

“Yes,” I hissed, insistent and impatient. Her words had built me up, had me already right on the edge - and now she was offering me a quantum upgrade.

“Don’t be shocked, darling, like I said, things got quite passionate and hot between us...”

Her hands rolled the comforter down from her shoulders, the pale skin over the blades setting me shivering as the fabric moved lower, teasing as it revealed first the initial swell of her breasts before moving lower. Moving lower to show her full breasts – breasts for the first time in decades touched and held by another man.

Lizzy’s breasts were reddened and marked in a way that sawed into my chest, making clear just how raw and heated the session between her and Simon had been.

Even now – however long it was after the pair of them had finished – Lizzy’s nipples were still more swollen and puffy than normal, still inflated from the blood flow and excitement from before, from how Simon had treated them.

And the soft, squishy boob flesh itself was marked with a veritable pathway of marks where Simon had sucked or squeezed or bitten. His intention – I’m

sure – to mark Lizzy so that I’d see him marking his territory when we spoke. She’d told him she had a hall pass, so he had to guess we’d be having this kind of talk.

“You want more, honey? Is that already too much?”

Marrying a smart woman – always a minefield of love and strained heartstrings – she knew the answer, she was just rubbing it in.

I just blinked my eyes – that was enough for her, she wanted to show me just as much as I was desperate to see as she started pulling the white, virginal comforter even lower. The map of red marks below her boobs and on her tummy telling the same tale. Backing up every word she’d shared about how many times Simon had gone at her – how many times he’d made her cum.

And then the comforter was hovering just above her mons – just above her holy of holies, and she was grinning at me as she slowly rolled it lower.

“More?”

Shit! She knew it. Why the hell did she have to ask me? She knew she had me hooked!

“Yes,” I begged.

The comforter moved lower, thighs – and what was between her thighs – all coming into view at the exact same instant.

“He fucked me so good...” It was as if she’d timed her words and chosen her words as the perfect match to what I was now seeing. She’d shared the words, but now I was seeing the actual evidence, the actual proof of what she’d told me. Of what she’d bragged about as her and Simon’s achievements.

As she started, she had to see the stunned, shocked look on my face, but it didn’t stop her even for a moment.

My eyes were on the image – the lips of her pussy still pulled wide and open in the most obscene of coke-sized ‘O’ shapes – as her words hammered home the message.

“Honey, I loved it ... he was so damned big ... you can see, I’m still stretched so wide, so open ... long after he’s fucked me...”

She wasn't kidding! Or even exaggerating – he'd stretched her so wide; I could see right up inside her, right up where I could see his sperm bubbling away, bubbling away and hunting for a target.

“Fuck me ... he really did a number on you, hun...”

My ‘bro style’ words – even to my wife – was the best I could do to inoculate myself against the remoteness and inadequacy I was feeling right now. Seeing the physical evidence of just how much another man can outperform you even when he's already left the scene is quite some experience.

“Baby ... Jim, honey ... I love you ... but he fucked me so good ... stretched me so good ... made me feel things I'd never felt before...”

Damn! How much of this was real? How much of this was Lizzy playing to the gallery ... playing to me and my fantasies? The split I reckoned in my head was way too scary to admit out loud ... this whole thing between Lizzy and Simon was way too real, way too intoxicating to be just fake or pretend.

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“You want more?”

Damn! I'd not meant to say that out loud, but despite how painful this was, I was hooked, sucked in by the excitement and eroticism of my flirty wife overstepping the boundaries by such a huge amount.

Lizzy looked confused. “What do you mean?”

“I mean, do you ‘want more’ ... like, see him again?”

*Fuck, was this me talking? Me suggesting something I'd been so dead set against.*

“Do you think that's wise? I mean, don't get me wrong ... it WAS great, really great ... but we said it was a one-time only thing ... I think anything more might be dangerous,” she added, her face showing the same confusion and anxiety as her words.

“Okay, I hear what you're saying Liz, honey ... I guess I'm just saying I trust you ... I know me being over here and you being there is really hard ... so, just use your judgment ... I trust you either way, whatever you decide to do or not do...”

*Fuck! Was I pushing her? Albeit in the gentlest, most guarded of ways? It sure felt like I was trying to nudge her into the path of the oncoming juggernaut – having seen and heard the damage and drama once, now excited and hooked to see what a second reel might look like.*

I could see she wasn't convinced – I could see it in her eyes. But I could also see something else – temptation and desire. Temptation and desire that burned with the heat of a forge now that she'd tasted a night of Simon's 'god-like' love making. Temptation and desire that were fighting a mortal battle against Lizzy's self-control and determination to stamp on anything that might inject trouble or risk into our relationship. No matter how sweet the taste.

"I love you honey," I smiled, trying to reassure her and lower the temperature. "Just do what you feel's right ... but, do promise me one thing ... if something does happen, don't beat yourself up ... and promise me no secrets! No secrets either way..."

My words made her think. I could see her thinking again – could see the temptation pushing the staid, conservative Lizzy back a stride or two.

The silence continued between us and I told myself I was just being loving and altruistic – looking after Lizzy's interests and needs – but in my heart I knew different. Knew my own motives were just as confused and conflicted as Lizzy's.

"Promise me?" I asked, trying to make her laugh by my silly choice of words. "No Lizzy beat ups ... no Lizzy-Jim secrets?"

"Promise!" she replied, half smiling, half serious, as the silence descended between us again. Before Lizzy made her own use of humor.

"Talking of no beat ups and no Lizzy-Jim secrets, am I gonna have to beat up on you when you tell me what you and my new bestie Anong got up to?"

Now it was my turn to stall and blush. Just like Lizzy, I wasn't used to describing my sexual activities with another person to my beloved.

"As good as it was for me with Simon?"

Talk about Déjà vu! It was Lizzy a few minutes ago – only in full-on reserve as I struggled to string even two words together.

Shit, this game we were playing sure was exciting – but we were babes in the wood, and I couldn't help but wonder where things would now lead. Now that the lid to Pandora's box had been thrown so wide open.

# Chapter 19

7 a.m. Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021

I'd rung off after my call with Lizzy just after midnight my time. I'd tried to sleep – what else was I going to do, with Lizzy and Anong both unavailable? My hyperactive brain - replaying every single syllable of what Lizzy had shared - had fought a battle against the lingering effects of my illness.

Meaning I did sleep, but it was short and fitful. My exhaustion from the dengue causing to me to sleep – but my fevered dreams about Lizzy and Simon together would then cause me to jerk bolt upright with sweat pouring down my forehead after a couple of hours. A pattern that repeated throughout the night until around six I gave up the fight.

Aware breakfast would be open soon, I dragged myself into the shower, loaded myself up with caffeine and carbs and then headed back to my room. Gazing at my phone as I pondered the question, *'Just how needy am I going to look calling Lizzy barely six hours after we last spoke?'*

*'Hey, maybe she'll think it's cute ... cute and adorable ... showing just how much you love her ... love her and miss her ... hey, what woman ever grows tired of hearing how much you love her?'*

*'Counsel for the prosecution, counsel for the defense,'* ... the two sides of me fought for a good five minutes before I finally gave in to my need to talk to Lizzy and find out just what had been happening during these last six hours.

A wry thought passing through my head as I dialed, *'That's the trouble with opening Pandora's Box, it may only be six hours, but after her last night's confessions of what happened between her and Simon, six hours was enough to conjure up all kinds of extreme and distorted scenarios.'*

If that thought was semi-humorous, the follow-up was less so. *'So, Jim ... what exactly is it you do or don't want to hear ... however mixed up your feelings are, aren't you the one who nudged her, asked her if she wanted 'more' when she said stick to the plan, one-time only is much safer?'*

As I waited for her to pick up – the first time we'd have spoken since her admission that she and Simon had become lovers – these were the thoughts

pounding through my temples.

“Jim, darling ... I didn’t expect you to call til later...”

*Did I detect guilt in her tone? Was she already up to something again? Did she seem just a little bit out of breath? Or was this just me being paranoid?*

As we settled into our conversation, I realized only the latter of my thoughts were true. As Lizzy clicked the video on, the evidence that she was pleased I’d called was plain to see.

Last night from the start of our call until the end, she’d morphed from nervous and anxious into full on teasing mode.

Today what I saw on her face was a woman who loved me and who was back to being anxious. A woman for whom my call, and the way we just chatted about normal family life, came as a huge reassurance. Reassuring her that, despite her using the hall pass far quicker and more comprehensively than we’d ever planned, nothing had been broken and damaged in our marriage. That I still loved, adored and cherished her more than I ever had!

The longer the call went on, the more I was aware I just loved talking to, looking at, and being with this amazing woman. Her experience with Simon just made me want her and love her even more – if that were possible!

But aside from these impacts on my sense of love and desire for Lizzy, the other thing thumping away in my skull was how knowing she’d now been with another man somehow changed the way I looked at her.

It was like now she’d been with Simon, I looked at her in a more sexualized and more insecure way. Just like when we’d first started dating – when I was painfully aware I just one of many options for a woman as wonderful and beautiful as Lizzy.

At that most raw and primal of biological levels, for the first time in twenty-three years I was painfully aware I was just one of several options for Lizzy. After many years with just me as a sexual partner, she’d just been with another male. A male who, as she told it, had satisfied her sexually in ways I’d struggle to match.

And he was still there – just a hundred yards down the street – and I was here, on the other side of the world! And from the way Lizzy seemed so

glowing and radiant with sexual energy, my whole body ached and tingled at the realization of just how significant her experience with Simon was after so many years of monogamy.

*'Monogamy. Wow! What a serious word!'* I thought to myself. A word and concept we'd almost casually just thrown out the window. After twenty-plus years when monogamy and love had been the twin foundations of our lives and happiness. A thought that made me shiver with apprehension.

Somehow, I managed to force my mind back to the family events Lizzy was talking about and by the time we finished we must have been talking for a good ninety minutes. Something we hadn't done on a call since our courting days. *'Surely that's a good sign,'* I told myself, using this happy thought as an antidote to earlier more fear-inducing reflections.

"I'm so glad you called, honey," Lizzy beamed, as she brought the call to an end, her smile underscoring every word, "but I'd better get on. I said I'd look after Rachel Jr. this evening, so that Caitlin can get a break from mommy duties and catch up with friends".

Message received and understood. More smiles and *'love yous'* and we were both happy to progress our respective days.

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Reassured by the call, I set about Sunday's work, knowing that Monday started with an early meeting with Mr. Fung. Suspecting that last week – my first day back – he'd gone easy on me but that tomorrow he'd be back to normal. Wanting to send a clear signal that, illness or no illness, he was holding me to my company's promises that I'd get the current shitshow back on track.

But even with this incentive to focus on the reports and calls I needed to make, my mind kept going back to Charleston. If it was morning time here for me in Bangkok, that meant it was prime evening and nighttime back at home. Prime seduction time for a guy like Simon – for a guy like him to find some half-baked pretext to pop over the hundred yards or so that separate our two homes. To pop over, say *'hi'* and help himself to some more of what he'd so freely helped himself to on Friday night and Saturday morning!

Damned, I was struggling to concentrate. As if these thoughts and Lizzy and

Simon weren't enough, there was also the distraction of thinking about my sexy Thai assistant. Wondering if at any minute I'd hear a gentle knocking at the door and would open it to find Anong keen to continue where we'd left off Saturday. Anong who was sexy and smart and who'd befriended my wife – but who was single and without a male partner.

Hell, however much I tried to concentrate on the process maps and issue logs, I was fighting a losing battle. In the end, the best I could do was force myself to keep going against a promise that I'd ring Lizzie at eleven p.m. her time – her normal going to bed time when I wasn't around.

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The last thirty minutes before the call seemed to crawl by with all the speed of an arthritic snail – but finally it was an hour before noon time for me and time to ring Lizzy.

A full three hours after our last call had finished.

“Hey, hun ... what a nice surprise,” she beamed. No evidence of mischief or betrayal in her relaxed, smiling face – and no sign of any male rivals in the backdrop or slamming doors in the background. Lizzy was in bed, makeup off and reading before sleeping her way out of Saturday and into Sunday

As we chatted away, I tried to disguise my real reason for ringing by telling Lizzy this was *‘just a bedtime call before I headed to bed’*, but she wasn't fooled for a moment.

“James Sharp, you weren't ringing to check up on your wife, were you?” she grinned, enjoying my squirming discomfort.

“No, absolutely not...”

She let it pass for a moment as we talked about anything but the elephant in the room, before finally she gently nudged us back to the gray, long-trunked pachyderm.

“You can relax, sweetheart ... like I said, I love you for letting me have my hall pass while you're away ... but like we always said, I think it's best it's just a one-night thing...”

Her smile widened as she saw the tension deflate out of my shoulders. A

smile of genuine love and commitment, before the mischief-making impish demons from last night gave an encore.

“That is, unless you’d rather I gave you a different kind of report about my day,” she grinned.

*Oh fuck!* Was this how it was going to be now? Was this the future as long as I was here, and she was there? A never ending mindfuck that would in equal parts torment me with fear and drive me crazy with lust! ‘*Oh Jim, just what the hell have you and Lizzy started here,*’ I thought to myself.

I called her twice more on Sunday – getting the same mix of happy to chat and have time together laced with a small side order of teasing. My last call at eleven, before I headed to bed, being typical.

“Wow, three times in one day. I really am a lucky lady ... you must be really, really missing me!”

For me, both calls and the time leading up to them were relatively low stress. It was my evening time which meant it was her morning time – not the time of day I was most fearful that Simon the Snake would slither his way down the street and attempt a second strike at the woman he’d now admitted to wanting since the very first time he’d seen her.

Monday morning – just before I headed off to work and my stressful meeting with Mr. Fung - brought my last chance to talk to Lizzy. Again, I didn’t sense or see anything out of the ordinary. But then again, it was only seven p.m. stateside, and my spidey senses told me that Simon was sneaky and smart to wait until he knew I’d be at work and out of the way. I’d be tied up at work and Lizzy would be at home by herself with Simon the Snake just a hundred yards down the road. Thoughts that sent my brain and stress levels straight back to where they’d been when I’d known Simon and Lizzy were out together on Friday night.

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The one good thing I could say about my Monday morning meeting with Mr. Fung was that it was so intense and painful that it crowded out any thoughts of home and what Lizzy may or may not be doing back home.

Just like that first day when I’d arrived – when he’d complained about how

long it had taken my company to send me – now that he knew I'd been back a whole week, Mr. Fung was back to his '*small boy pulling legs of an insect*' best.

I thought I'd prepared well – but he'd prepared better, going into every detail of the multiple work streams we had, calling out every problem I'd hoped he'd avoid and several new ones which even I didn't know about.

“Really Mr. Sharpe, with things like this, there's no way I can sanction you going back home anytime soon ... not even for a few days...”

When I looked at him in shock, he explained. “Didn't your boss explain? Aside from my doctors needing to sign off that you're well enough to travel, I have to be satisfied enough about progress to agree to you working for a week remotely back home ... and, quite frankly Mr. Sharp, right now I'm not even thinking of troubling my doctors for an opinion, because the projects are a million miles away from where I'd even consider letting you have a week working from home...”

Our meeting ended shortly after as, totally stunned, I left his office to be greeted by Anong's concerned face.

“Did you know about that? About that agreement with my boss?” My instincts told me that, even though she wasn't formally that senior, little escaped Anong and that through her Executive Assistant network either here with Mr. Fung's team or back home she likely knew about these new rules before I did.

“Sorry, Jim ... I didn't know how to tell you ... I never seemed to find the right time.”

My original plan had been to fly back after four weeks, have a week working from home so I could be with Lizzy and our family – and then return and start the whole cycle again for maybe three or four cycles. Until things were back on track.

But as Anong finally opened up about everything that had happened between my boss and Mr. Fung while I was in hospital, the full extent of the delay to my trip home came out.

The original planned date for my first return home was just a few days away

– Friday of this week, and I guess I'd expected maybe a few days delay given my hospitalization.

But from what Anong was now finally sharing, it seemed the absolute earliest Mr. Fung would consider me going stateside was two weeks after my original planned return. Meaning Lizzy would be alone and subject to Simon's attentions for nearly three weeks before I'd be able to be there for her.

Damn! It was a thought that made me physically shiver with fear. Yes, if I'm honest, of course there was also an undercurrent of excitement – but right now fear and anxiety were my dominant emotions.

Somehow, I managed to get through the rest of the day, but it wasn't easy. I felt like a marathon runner entering the stadium after twenty-six miles of grueling pain only to find the finishing tape has been moved ten miles down the road to the next stadium.

When the working day was over at least I had the comfort of my normal seven p.m. call to say good morning to Lizzy before she headed off for her Monday with her class of six- and seven-year-olds.

She immediately sensed my depressed state – she'd have had to be blind not to – and her love and concern, and the obvious scale of how much she missed me helped my state of mind.

Twenty minutes after we'd said our goodbyes, I got a text from Anong.

'Drink in the bar to cheer you up? Shoulder to cry on? I'm buying ... and my shoulders are pretty awesome, even if I do say so myself! A x'

I had to laugh. Her text had just the right mix of ingredients to carry on the work Lizzy had started in making me feel better. I also had to smile at her use of idiom and vocabulary – making me ashamed of my own lack of foreign languages.

Before, I'd have felt guilty and disloyal to Lizzy if I'd have accepted such an invite. But knowing how close they now were, and how they'd conspired together for me to spend all of Saturday with Anong while Lizzy was on her date with Simon ... well, let's just say it put things in a different perspective.

Half-an-hour later I was sucking the head of a foaming beer while Anong took her first sip of her white wine spritzer. Smiling and patting her tummy.

“A girl’s got to do what a girl’s got to do ... beer’s way too fattening to keep a figure like mine.”

After our difficult day at work, Anong had taken the time to go home and was back dressed in a way that meant every man in the bar – myself included – was guaranteed not to be looking at her tummy. Like me, with the short skirt, heels and top she was wearing, their eyes were either on her sexy legs, peachy ass or on the deep valley between her big boobs.

From the way she grinned, it was as if she could read my mind.

“Well, I’m glad I managed to put a smile on your face again ... me and Lizzy working together ... a team no man can resist,” she smirked.

After a Monday meeting with the ghoulish Mr. Fung, and knowing that I’d not have to see him for another week, I almost felt that ‘post exam’ sense of release. That, my chat with Lizzy and now the more than pleasant company of Anong, allied to a steady flow of beer, made me slowly feel happier about life.

By my fourth beer, without realizing how we’d got here, the conversation had wandered onto the topic of what had happened between Lizzy and Simon on Friday night.

After our own bedroom games on Saturday, Anong had left before I’d finally managed to get through to Lizzy and all through Sunday and Monday my and her priorities had been elsewhere. So this was her first chance to gently pry into the topic. Her evident interest, however well she tried to mask it, telling me that even though she and Lizzy had grown close, Anong was still in the dark as to what had happened.

I’d made some comment about her and me not being the only ones who’d ‘*gotten to know each other a little better*’ on Friday night and Anong had pounced on it with all the cunning and smarts I’d come to expect from her over the last few weeks.

“You’re not going to force me to play twenty questions, are you?” she sighed with mock weariness.

Looking into those dark brown eyes of hers, remembering the intimacies and friendship we’d shared, suddenly made me instinctively realize talking to

Anong about Lizzy and Simon would act as a balm and a pressure valve all rolled into one.

“Twenty!” I chuckled, playing along. “You’ll be lucky if I give you ten ... let alone twenty!”

Anong smiled her beautiful Thai smile with wicked intent, signaling the game was on.

“Huh,” she scoffed, “female intuition ... I’ll barely need five, let alone ten...”

Having laid out the field of battle, Anong pretended to go into a trance of deep thought – rubbing her chin and looking up at the ceiling.

“Strike one ... big, studly Simon ... big, studly Simon and his big dick became as well acquainted with your sweet little wife as you and your dick became acquainted with me,” she declared confidently. “Am I right?”

When I didn’t answer, she must have seen something in my eyes that just egged her on. “Okay, so that’s a yes then!” she offered before going back into chin-stroking, deep thought mode.

“Strike two ... Lizzy had an amazing time ... not only is studly Simon blessed with a huge dick ... but he’s got the confidence, the charisma and the brains to know how to use it ... aka ... he took your sweet Lizzy to places she didn’t even know existed until studly Simon stretched her out and made her see stars all night long!”

The way my face suddenly went baboon-ass red must have told her she’d struck gold – but rather than see my face and back off, it had the opposite effect. Anong just doubled down and dug deeper. Her digging hitting an unexpectedly rich seam.

“Okay, so strike three ... with the two of them getting together, and with Simon showing Lizzy such a mind-altering and amazing time, now her husband is not so much happy for her ... as being consumed by fear ... fear that Simon and his big dick and his magical love making will cause trouble in Paradise for Jim and his ladylove!”

She’d hit the seam – I exploded with the equivalent of an emotional geyser.

“Fuck, Anong ... are you some kind of witch or something? Or have you

been girl-talking to Lizzy even more than she's been talking to me?"

Anong just grinned, obviously enjoying the compliment. "What can I say ... me and your wife may have exchanged the odd text or three ... but for the most part it's feminine intuition..."

"Anyway, what I can tell you is, relax Jim, Simon's no threat to you ... yes, he showed Lizzy an amazing time in bed ... but that just means she loves you all the more for letting her experience her rockstar crush and his big dick and satisfy her needs while you're away..."

"Her rockstar crush?" I spluttered.

"Relax, Jim ... just a figure of speech," she reassured me before turning tack, "although I'm sure she's got the tiniest of crushes ... I mean, what girl wouldn't have ... but it's nothing to worry about, just a little mid-life girly fun."

I couldn't make up my mind whether or not to worry more or less after what Anong had said, so she tried another tack, leaning closer to me in the dimly-lit part of the bar where we were sitting. Her lips now just inches from mine as I felt her hand slowly stroke the front of my pants.

"Of course, if she does have the tiniest of crushes and is allowed to do something about it by her kind, loving husband ... then it does have some side benefits for others," she cooed.

"After all, what's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander," she beamed, rubbing even more firmly against my swelling cock.

"What do you think, Mr. Sharp, shall we take this discussion about your wife's transgressions somewhere more private where we can *'talk'* about them more *'thoroughly'*? After all, such wicked transgressions require quite some *'deep'* conversations. Who knows, they may even need more than one *'conversation'*!"

She couldn't have been more obvious if she'd laid it on with a trowel.

Despite my hardening cock and the more cheerful mindset she'd helped me achieve, I felt a strong sense of guilt as Anong and I locked eyes as she nodded toward the waiting bank of elevators.

Lizzy's words about the amazing sex between her and Simon were still ringing in my head, but so were words about how she felt it best to limit herself to a single time with Simon. Which wasn't the same as saying I should limit myself to a single time with Anong, but it sure as hell piled some serious guilt and doubts onto my shoulders. Shoulders which right now were trying to decide between getting up and staying put.

"She'd be fine with it! Trust me, Lizzy and I talk ... talk a lot," Anong smiled sweetly. Anong who was smart – not actually saying Lizzy had told her, 'yes', but implying it strongly enough to chip away at my cracking flood wall. My cock now fully swollen and my heart racing like a galloping stallion.

Five minutes later I wasn't thinking of Lizzy anymore. The only woman on my mind was the beautiful Thai lady who was lying naked next to me playing with my cock, teasing my nipples and kissing me as we rolled around my hotel bed like a couple of fresh-off-the-leash teenagers.

Her lips tasted so good – the allure of a new woman, a new person to make love to was the sweetest of nectars and my cock was straining at the leash as she teased me to an insane level of hardness with her long red nails as she rolled onto her back and pulled me on top.

She locked her legs around me and pulled me all the way in like the sexiest, most feminine of man-catching fly traps. This man in particular being more than happy to be caught and trapped as she pulled me down so we could smother each other's mouths with passionate kisses.

That first time, with so much to prove, I'd been the aggressor, determined to make up for the fact Lizzy had been out with another man. But now it was Anong who was making the moves, signaling how much she wanted me as she raked those long, sharp nails up and down my back. Calves tight like a steel band around me, digging her heels into my ribs to spur me on like I was a contender in the Kentucky Derby.

I was soon close and the presence of her finger stroking my prostate as she smiled up at me and kissed me hard, had me screaming at the top of my voice as we came together. Clinging to each other's needy, sweaty bodies with a wonderful and fulfilling intensity.

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As we lay there slowly recovering, the softness and gloriously lush appearance of her long black hair splayed out on my chest was wonderful. Almost as wonderful as that indescribable feeling of her warm, naked body touching mine as we came down from Mount Olympus back into the world of the mortals.

But as the warm, tender minutes passed, even these marvelous feelings weren't enough to hold my guilt in check.

Anong had reassured me, and she was telling the truth – probably. Although implied approval from Lizzy isn't the same as hearing it said out loud.

But that really wasn't the point, was it? The point was that I felt guilty as, when faced with the opportunity for similar pleasures, similar and better pleasures, Lizzy had taken the high road. Had fought back against her physical desires and anticipation of the pleasures of a *'round two'* and had taken the high road. The high road which denied her pleasure but which she reckoned presented least risk to us as a couple.

And here I was doing the opposite. Soothing my disappointments about the delay to my trip home by jumping into bed with Anong at the first opportunity, on the first occasion she batted her eyelids at me and gave me the tiniest of encouragements.

The guilt ate away at me, corroding the pleasure and warmth seeping through me until, finally, I felt a need to share what was on my mind.

“Anong, I've loved tonight ... and thanks for being here for me, for cheering me up ... but, as long as Lizzy's back home and putting up with our separation, then I don't feel it's right that you and I do this kind of thing...”

Still laying with her long black hair fanned out on my chest, Anong angled her head up to make eye contact.

I didn't get a full-on fight, just a simple, “I understand,” and a look of sympathy.

I honestly didn't know which would have been more disconcerting – a full-on fight, or this understated, fully in control reaction. From a woman as smart as Anong, that understated and super-controlled reaction could mean absolutely

anything. In a situation like this, trying to decipher a reaction like that from Anong could mean absolutely anything.

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When I spoke to Lizzy on my Tuesday morning, her Monday evening – even the good night’s sleep after Anong and I had made out didn’t assuage my guilt.

As we talked, I kept telling myself she must see some sign of my guilt and shame in my face. But if she did, she didn’t say anything, just happy to chat about Rachel Jr.’s latest cute actions and what had happened at school the previous day with her first graders. Not quite so cutesy as our own beloved little Rachel Jr. – but still plenty sweet to a woman as loving and maternal as Lizzy. To a woman who’d always longed for more children after Caitlin.

Given the twelve-hour time difference and our respective work commitments, we soon settled into a ‘seven-and-seven’ pattern of calls so we could spend quality time at the start and end of our respective days.

Each day my guilt was a little less, although I certainly did wonder if Anong might have let Lizzy know what had happened. But if she had, Lizzy didn’t let on or show any signs at all of knowing about that second time between Anong and me.

More than once I thought about finding some tangential way of dropping the topic of Simon into the conversation. My attempt to be subtle to see if he was still sniffing around. But every time I got close, my nerves and guilt came together to shut me down.

So instead, I had to take Lizzy’s lack of mentioning anything to do with Simon as a sign that nothing more had happened between the two of them. A conclusion that left me feeling a truly weird mix of relief and anti-climax.

In fact, the first mention of anything at all to do Simon came right at the end of the week – my Saturday morning, Lizzy’s Friday evening.

Chapter 20

7 a.m. Saturday 6th February 2021

“Hey, hun,” I greeted my wife, still munching on breakfast hashes and swilling coffee, “you look pretty! Going out somewhere?” Said instinctively, a knee-jerk reaction to more make-up than normal and a dress that she’d not wear just mooching around the house.

Lizzy blushed, her pupils slightly dilated, her expression just a little too evasive before she answered. A mixture that, even after everything, set me on edge.

“No ... just staying in,” she nervously smiled. “I just thought it would be nice to have some company ... to cook for the guys.”

‘The guys, or THE GUY?’ I felt like saying but managed to hold my tongue.

“That’s nice, what time are they arriving? It would be nice to say ‘Hi’.”

“Hey Jimbo!”

That answered that question! I’d rather have been chatting to Ted, but instead I was staring at Simon’s smug, over-confident face. Maybe more my paranoia, but I swear that grin was saying, *‘Big rock star, big dick – and now I fucked your missus!’*

“Hey Simon, great to see you!” I lied through gritted teeth. “How ya doing?”

“Good, good ... always good, thanks for asking. What about you, Jimbo? Total bumner, you being over there, us all being over here! What a pisser! Never mind, Lizzy tells me you got yourself a little ‘extra-curricular’ activity ... a little nighttime R&R ... a little bump and grind...”

All my negative bumpers lit-up at once. What was it with this guy? How could he push my buttons on so many axes all at the same time?

His stupid vocabulary ... his insinuation that Lizzy and he shared the most intimate details of our marriage ... and then the killer ... the oh-so-casual and intimate way he put his arm around Lizzy’s shoulder as we talked.

Never in the field of human friendship had one man pressed so many buttons

with such little encouragement. The guy was a total ass, knew it and really didn't care. The fact that Lizzy did nothing to move his arm just making my gut twist even more.

Just then I heard a knock on my door. Damn it! It had totally slipped my mind that I'd asked Anong to come over so we could get a head start for our upcoming Monday meeting with Mr. Fung.

"Hey, Jim!"

Now I was in information overload. Lizzy, Simon, Anong and now the much more welcome face of Ted. But the welcome face of Ted with a guy stood behind him who I didn't recognize from Adam.

If Ted's intimidating but avuncular features reminded me of Wendell Pierce in various no-nonsense, slightly threatening roles – the guy standing behind him was full-on intimidating. Skin slightly lighter than Ted's, this unknown guy in my kitchen towered a good four inches above Ted. But whereas Ted was squat and wide, this guy was tall and gaunt, eyes devoid of life and empathy. If Ted was a spit for Wendell, this guy's caramel skin and gaunt, humorless features reminded me of the guy who'd served ribs in House of Cards ... Franky, Filly, Freddy or something like that ... Freddy Hayes, that was him ... hell, all he lacked was the apron and serving tongs.

"Hey Ted, good to see you, man ... and hey, thanks for all those YouTubes you sent me when I was bored out of my mind in hospital ... kept me sane ... who's your friend? Good to know who's in my home while I'm away."

"Sorry, man ... Jim, this is Nine-iron ... the guy I told you about from the Corps ... you know, the guy that was always getting me in trouble ... trying to get me busted down..."

"Got it ... how could I forget! Nine-iron, nice to finally meet you! Your reputation precedes you!"

"*Nice to meet you ... your reputation precedes you,*" he drawled, mocking me. "Hey dude, nice to meet you too! When Gunny said he had a real live breathing Limey as a best bud, I thought he was joshing me, but turns out he was downplaying it!"

"Well, there's no answer to that, is there?! Anyway, nice to meet you 'Irons'

... can I call you that? Or do I need to serve thirty-eight tours in God-forsaken corners of the globe to earn the right?”

“No man, you good,” he chuckled. “You cool for a Brit dude ... and thanks for your hospitality tonight...”

“Thanks Irons ... by the way, now we got that clear ... why do they call you ‘*Nine-Iron*’?”

He chuckled again, “Well, a gentleman never discusses things like that! Especially not in front of ladies! But, let’s just say it’s something to do with the caliber of the artillery I’m used to working with...”

He could have been talking genuine military experience, but something in his smirk told he wasn’t referring to artillery of the metallic variety! But before I could probe further, I was distracted by the sight of Simon whispering something in Lizzy’s ear, eliciting a big smile from Lizzy as she burst into laughter.

“Hey, you guys, did no one tell you it’s rude to whisper!” Irons chastised them, fixing Simon rather than Lizzy with a semi-threatening stare.

I’d been happy enough to see Ted’s ugly face on the FaceTime call, but even though I didn’t know this Nine-Iron guy from Adam, I was pleased he was there. Yet another man, another barrier to Lizzy and Simon being alone.

‘*Lizzy and Simon alone.*’ I shivered at the thought, my mind going back to just after they’d slept together, when I suddenly realized the way I thought about Lizzy had changed.

‘*No, it was definitely best there was another guy there.*’ Yes, she’d said she thought it was best that they just be a one-time thing. But from the way he’d looked so intimate with her earlier, and the way she’d done so little to cast a different impression, I’d have had to have been a fool not to worry. A fool not to be simmering with a guilty, stupid excitement. The Yin and the Yang fighting for control – fighting for control of something I had little ability to influence as I was nine thousand miles away.

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As Anong and I worked through the day, I conjured all kinds of pictures in my head of what Simon might be trying to do with Lizzy.

All week, she'd said nothing about him. Sticking to her earlier view that it was best if their physical connection was a onetime only thing.

But as I struggled to focus on the pages of reports, tables and coding, a paranoid part of my brain wondered if this had all been a front ... a camouflage for what was simmering away in Lizzy's heart and loins since that first amazing night of sex she'd so vividly described between her and Simon.

Several times during the morning, Anong looked at me in a way that said she absolutely knew my mind was thousands of miles away. From everything that had happened before, half of me expecting she'd drop to her knees and blow me to provide some much-needed distraction. But – aside from the odd look of sympathy - she remained off her knees and professional.

Then, just before noon she prompted me. “Jim, do you want to ring home? It's Lizzy's bedtime now.”

My heart was more stressed than ever before as I looked at her and struggled with my fears. What if Lizzy didn't pick up? Or even worse ... what if she did pick up and Simon was there with her? Doing what he'd done with her before.

I swear Anong and I locked gazes for a good couple of minutes before I plucked up the courage to ring.

“Hey, babe ... how ya doing?”

*What I really wanted to ask was ‘where's Simon the Snake, Big Dick Simon ... is he still there?’*

“Jim, sweetheart!” The way her voice rose at the end, she almost sounded surprised. And was that a slight breathlessness I detected? Or was I being paranoid, imagining things?

“Just thought I'd ring to say goodnight. How was your evening?”

“Her evening was swell,” a loud voice shouted, audible even over the music I could hear playing, “and it's not finished yet!”

Simon, the fucker! What the hell was he still doing with Lizzy, it was nearly midnight there.

Sensing my anxiety, Lizzy flipped the video on. “We’re just here at home, honey ... Irons had a new Karaoke app on his phone and wanted to give it a go ... we’ve been here all evening. Simon, the pig, keeps beating us, getting the highest score ... but then it’s no surprise is it? He keeps choosing his own songs!”

“Cheating, shit! I keep winning coz of my God-given talent. Is it my fault the good Lord made me handsome, hung and charismatic ... and with a voice that women can’t resist?!” the smug git announced. His face suddenly appearing next to Lizzy’s as he used the lens’s small area as a pretext to cuddle in close and wrap his arm around her waist.

“Hey Simon,” I smiled, wishing social norms would allow me to say what I really felt. “You’re not playing fair are you, giving the others a chance?”

“What can I say, Jimbo? I gave your girl a *‘fair chance’* the other night ... gave her a *‘fair chance’* over and over again ... but now she seems to have gotten cold feet ... even though you’re still over there shackled up with your Thai hottie...”

Fuck! I hated this guy! My face was flushed as red as a baboon’s ass – how the hell had he turned a conversation about Karaoke into a lewd bragging session about how he’d bedded Lizzy and shown her a better time than I ever could?

Just when I thought things couldn’t get any worse, Nine-Iron’s gaunt, dark features appeared on the other side of Lizzy.

“You lucky fucker!” he grinned across at Simon as they sandwiched Lizzy between the two of them. “You got to sleep with this beautiful angel! Shit man, is there no justice in the world? I’d give my right arm for a roll in the hay with this beautiful angel!”

Shit! Where was Ted? Why was there no sign of Ted? Lizzy alone with Simon just before midnight was bad enough, but what I’d heard about Nine-Iron’s reputation, him there as a third wheel, hardly filled me with joy.

I thought Lizzy might be offended, but as she blushed and smiled demurely, I could tell the *‘beautiful angel’* comments had been more important to her than a man she’d never met before hearing about her sexual peccadilloes. Compliments and the empty bottles I saw behind her normally made her

amenable.

“Sorry, dude, hands off! Lovely Lizzy is mine, all mine,” Simon chuckled, his arm around her waist tightening to emphasize the message.

“Boys, boys! I am here you know! Do you mind if I have some privacy to say goodnight to my husband? Besides which, I’m sorry to disappoint two such gallant knights, but however much fun it was, that was a one-time thing!”

“A one-time thing!” he repeated, turning to look at me. “Honestly, Jimbo, you should have seen her ... the way those cute little toes of hers curled up every time I made her cum ... and I have to say, that was many, many times ... she was screaming and shouting, raking my back, drawing so much blood...”

He was enjoying my discomfort as he carried on.

“But don’t worry, Jimbo, I’ll change her mind, wear down her resistance, so you’ll be able to have more fun with that Thai hottie of yours,” he grinned, smiling at my discomfort.

“‘*Privacy with her husband*’, I think those were the lady’s words ... so, I’d love to chat more, Simon ... but, you know ... what the lady wants!”

“‘*What the lady wants!*’” he grinned, grasping the front of his jeans in the most obscene of ways.

“Yeah, that’s a good way of putting it. I’m glad we’re eye-to-eye on that, Jimbo. I’ll certainly make sure to give the lady what she wants,” he winked, kissing Lizzy’s cheek as she moved to break away, his hand squeezing her ass as she headed towards the stairs.

Safely upstairs, door shut firmly behind her, finally we had some privacy.

“Sorry about that, honey ... but you know what an ass Simon can be ... and that’s even when he’s sober!”

Finally having Lizzy all to myself, I felt a wave of relief wash over me. But as we chatted away about family stuff, I was aware of a gnawing, guilty sense of disappointment. My pulse was racing, my palms were sweaty, and my stomach was flipping somersaults as the acids did their worst.

Shit, was this what the next few weeks would be like as I waited for Mr. Fung's agreement to put me out of my misery? Always waiting and wondering ... wondering if having tasted the forbidden fruit once, Lizzy would weaken and give in to Simon's persistent efforts to seduce her again.

# Chapter 21

Anong and I carried on working through the Saturday – closing off at five and treating ourselves to a steak dinner at the most expensive of the three restaurants in the hotel. *(I know, I know ... all the way over in Asia and a steak dinner! Let's just say that with everything going on, I needed a taste of home!)*

Having, at my chivalrous best, opened the door for Anong as the hotel's limo took her home, I headed to the hotel bar. Selecting the most expensive single malt I could find, I took a sip and headed back to my room for my 'good morning honey' call to Lizzy.

My limbs were physically shaking and weak as I pressed call and waited. And waited. No idea what or who I'd find when Lizzy picked up. If she picked up. After last night's fireworks from first Simon, then Irons, I half expected to come face-to-face with one or both of them when I got through. After all, when I'd rung just before midnight, the impromptu Karaoke party had been in full flow, and I had no way of knowing what had happened after Lizzy and I had finished our call.

The WhatsApp buzzer rang and rang – Lizzy only picked up on the tenth go-round, my veins even more buzzed than when I'd weakly managed to get back to my room.

"Sorry, hun ... I was brushing my teeth," her hand holding her toothbrush up as her evidence.

Peering around her, I saw no signs of anyone else. So early in the day, Caitlin would still be cuddled up with Rachel Jr. in the small home we'd built for her at the bottom of our one-acre plot.

Even at seven in the morning, Lizzy was too sharp for me, following my eye movement and the small movement of my neck.

"Looking for something?" she smirked. "Or more to the point, someone? Or someones, plural?"

That's what twenty-one years of marriage does for a couple – makes them totally transparent, near telepathic, the chance for any secrets long ago blown.

She looked at me quizzically, searching my face, thinking. Before thinking gave way to a teasing smile. “Tell me, baby, are you more relieved or more disappointed that I’m here by myself?”

Busted! Lizzy’s directness and perceptiveness brought me to a moment of clarity and shared honesty. “Does it have to be *‘either or’*? Can’t it be a little bit of both?”

She looked at me with a smiling, tender look of love – the teasing temporarily suspended. “I told you, sweetheart ... it was a one-time thing ... it was fun, I’m glad I did it ... at least I won’t die wondering ... but that’s it, I don’t want to risk what you and I have, sweetheart. Is that okay?”

I paused before answering. A long, hard pause as we looked at each other. Not that I doubted what I’d say. However excited I may sometimes have been, I knew where my priorities were. Where they’d always be.

“It’s always okay ... you come first, honey ... always ... always ... I’ll always support your choices, you know that!”

“Thanks babe,” she smiled, our eyes locked together, both of us wishing the miles could shrink away, that we could be together, could touch and hold, touch and hold and kiss.

Frustrated by the distance, Lizzy’s expression slowly started changing as a thought started forming.

“Sweetheart, what Simon said last night, about him and me being together so you could sleep with Anong ... where does that sit with you?”

Fuck! What a question! So vague and open-ended, and the way my wife was looking at me ... did she already know? Did she know that Anong and I had shared another night of passion after she herself had sworn off any further encounters with Simon?

As these questions swirled around my head, I could see Lizzy studying me, her telepathy valve going into overdrive.

“Look, honey ... I support you in whatever you want to do ... so, no, I don’t want you to sleep with Simon just so I can get with Anong...”

My look was sincere and honest, and Lizzy knew I was telling the truth. But

she also knew I'd avoided her unspoken question.

"I believe you, honey ... but, did you get with her again, already?"

I paused, looked at Lizzy. Even though I'd paused, there was never any doubt I needed to come clean. Although, however guilty I felt, strictly speaking I wasn't going against anything Lizzy and I had agreed.

"Yes ... but just once, after I'd found out about how long I'd be here, about Mr. Fung having to approve my return, when I needed cheering up."

*"When you needed cheering up'."*

Said back like that, it sounded so lame, so childish, so weak.

"Sorry," I offered feebly, "I felt terrible after ... told her that it was a one-time thing, that it can't happen again."

Lizzy gave me an indecipherable look.

"Sorry," I tried again, my face like a naughty boy with his fingers caught in the cookie jar.

Lizzy carried on holding my gaze, her cogs turning over behind those beautiful hazel eyes, only very slowly coming to a conclusion.

"Okay, I forgive you ... though, strictly speaking, it's just the spirit not the letter you broke ... we never actually said you HAD TO stop."

I didn't echo the point, I just repeated how bad I'd felt the moment it had happened. Her softened expression telling me she was happy about the conclusion I'd reached, even if she was a little hurt by my seeking comfort from Anong – however close their new friendship was.

"And thanks for coming clean, Jim ... I guess Anong didn't think it was her place to tell me, that it should come from you," she added thoughtfully, before the smallest of smiles.

"I'll have to have words with that young lady of yours ... tell her off for playing with my toys when she knows I'm patiently waiting for my toy to come home!" she chuckled.

After that I let Lizzy get her breakfast and carried on working until bedtime, making one final call to say goodnight.

“Ringing to check up on your wife?” she grinned, “don’t you trust me anymore?” She was teasing me, but I could tell she was glad I’d called, chatting away about her morning before blowing me a goodnight kiss and momentarily looking serious. “Sweetheart, I promise there’s nothing to worry about ... I told you I don’t want Simon again, I don’t want anything that might spoil you and me.”

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A good night’s sleep, a good breakfast and I was calling to get my morning fix of the beautiful, loving woman who was my everything.

“There he is ... freshly rested, my morning knight in shining armor ... fresh to do battle with his wicked local coders and the evil Dr. Fung,” she smiled, making my Taiwanese nemesis sound for all the world like some demonic Bond villain.

Lizzy may have been in a joking mood, but I was immediately on edge. She was wearing her black leather jacket – which could only mean one thing; she was going out. And going out meant Simon, and Simon meant risk and fear. Risk and fear, but also a simmering excitement that I still wasn’t comfortable to own.

“Relax, honey. We’re all going out to Ted and Nine-Iron’s MC club ... and before you, my sweet darling, have a heart attack, I’ll be riding pillion with Ted on his Harley ... happy now?” she grinned.

I was reassured, but to her eagle eye, I must have delayed a little too long as before I could speak, she shot back, “That is, unless you’d rather I ride pillion with Irons? Big, bad Nine-Iron, with his terrible reputation ... a man so bad he was even too much for the Marines!”

There was no reasoning with Lizzy in this mood. She perched the phone down and gave me a twirl to show off the tight faded denim jeans and heeled boots she’d chosen to match with the black leather jacket. The heels and tight jeans working in harmony to show her ass and legs to perfect effect.

The delights higher up obvious through the thin material of a tight, white designer t-shirt. Tighter than she’d usually wear, the shape of her full, comely boobs was highlighted by the outline of a lacy bra snug tight against the t-shirt’s white fabric.

Dressed like this, looking like she did, even with Master Gunnery Sergeant Edward Washington in attendance, I was sure Lizzy would be receiving plenty of attention in the Black Knights clubhouse. A thought which had my groin start swelling as the adrenaline started pumping through my veins all over again.

Fuck, Lizzy ... you're going to send me to an early grave, woman! I was totally and utterly confused ... I did trust my wife, but every time Lizzy led me in one direction, she then seemed to take pleasure in leading me by the nose in the other direction!

And even with Ted there, and knowing that the MC club was limited to ex-Military, the very nature of clubs like that left me with painful fears eating away at me. Painful fears that, in her efforts to push my buttons, Lizzy might be biting off more than she could chew. More than Ted – or Ted backed up by Irons (assuming he would back him up) – could chew.

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Those five hours of my Sunday morning have to go down in history as the least productive work hours I've ever spent.

For the first two hours I was by myself and however hard I tried, there was no way I could concentrate on the various documents on my screen.

And when Anong arrived at nine, my angst went skyrocketing through the roof.

If they'd not talked after my second time with Anong, they'd certainly talked now! The proof was standing right there in front of me as I opened the hotel room door – Anong was dressed in nearly identical clothes to the ones Lizzy had dressed in to go to her evening at the MC clubhouse.

Black leather, tight jeans and boots – hardly likely in the hot Thai climate. No, these two minxes had been talking and planning against me. Any fleeting negative feelings Lizzy might have had towards Anong resolved as they worked together to cause me maximum angst!

At first Anong acted dumb and, as we settled down to work, I let it ride. But when she pretended to accidentally on purpose drop her pen and then proceeded to bend over in the most lascivious of ways, the way she was

shoving her ass at me broke the dam.

“Okay, okay ... when exactly did the pair of you talk ... you can’t have thrown this little number together without some kind of planning!”

“Oh, Jim ... I don’t know what you mean ... I’m deeply hurt that you think that I might conspire against you...”

*‘Bravo, bravo ... bravo for the hammed-up overacting,’* I thought to myself as Anong tried to convince me Lizzy had only rung her a few minutes after she and I had talked. That this was the first time they’d discussed teasing me this way.

That outfit didn’t help me concentrate. Not only did it act as a permanent reminder of where Lizzy was right now, but underneath the jacket Anong was wearing a classic biker bitch tight white t-shirt to show off the full size and shape of her boobs. Her boobs which bounced around every time she moved. As, after a few days of bra-wearing in deference to me telling her we had to cool it, today had her back to her normal braless *modus operandi*.

Just before lunch, Anong reached across to touch my hair – a gentle, almost motherly gesture.

“I’ll get us a table downstairs in the restaurant ... I’m sure you could do with a few minutes’ privacy to call Lizzy,” standing to cover up with her jacket. Her boobs jiggling delightfully beneath the crisp white fabric, the shape of her nipples giving me the beginnings of a boner as I sighed inwardly, frustrated that we were no longer able to play.

Watching her peachy ass head to the door did nothing to lessen the blood flow, leaving me all alone staring at the WhatsApp screen on my laptop.

*‘Now or never, Jim boy,’* I thought to myself. A disobedient little maggot of a thought slithering through my brain, *‘But what exactly is it you want to be happening there, Jim?’*

The point was moot – as I stressfully stared at the screen, willing Lizzy to pick up, nothing happened. That weak, warbly calling tone just went on and on.

*‘Maybe there’s no Wi-Fi? A place like an MC clubhouse is likely to be intentionally remote to ensure privacy for the club’s various nefarious*

*activities. Hardly likely to be within a few meters of a mast!*'

But even when I switched to a regular call, still no answer. I told myself maybe no mobile reception, but I didn't really believe it.

Five minutes of solitude, staring at the screen, before finally I sought the solace of Anong's company. Damn, she looked good – sitting straight-backed, the white of that tight t-shirt looking almost virginal against the lustful red leather of the booth chair.

*'Long-time since anyone thought of Anong as virginal,'* I chuckled to myself, remembering how she'd driven me to the edge of insanity by the way she'd sucked me hollow as she'd massaged my prostrate.

Lizzy had admitted we'd never definitively said 'no' to me playing while she crossed her legs for the sake of our marriage.

But that was the point, wasn't it. What kind of a shitty husband would I be if I gave in and engaged in comfort sex at the first signs of stress – while she was manfully (*womanfully?*) resisting the attentions of Simon? Simon and now Nine-Iron.

A relaxing lunch and a small beer – we were working Sunday, and I smiled across at Anong, my mind split between stress and sex. "Give me a few minutes, I'll text you when I'm done."

I sent the text just five minutes later – still no answer from Lizzy, so best use work to distract me from my overactive imagination which was generating all kinds of lurid images of what might be happening in that MC clubhouse. My mind trawling my memory banks for any and all biker movies I'd ever seen.

The Wild One, Wild Hogs, Beyond the Law ... all of them half-remembered and souped up to stoke my rising fears and excitement.

Work and Anong's t-shirt – or the contents therein – kept me going until finally, just short of two a.m. Charleston time, I got a video call from Lizzy.

"Hey, hun ... sorry, I only just saw your missed calls ... it's so noisy here!"

She wasn't kidding. I could hardly hear her over the raucous din as the whole room seemed to vibrate as the loud, driving beats of various heavy metal classics assailed my eardrums.

Lizzy was sitting on the green baize at the edge of a pool table, holding a cue between her legs in the most suggestive of manners. Irons was on one side and a big-bellied, bearded guy I'd never seen before was squashing her from the other side. The leather jacket was gone, but she was still wearing the same white t-shirt. Only now the camera clearly showed the bra that had been holding her big boobs in place was gone, leaving the outline of her large nipples clear for all the horny bikers to see and lust after.

"You look like you're having a good time!" I shouted over the music, trying to sound more relaxed than I felt.

"The best," she shouted back, a huge smile painted on her face, hardly seeming to notice as Irons snaked his long arm around her shoulder in the most possessive of gestures.

"Yeah, man ... we showin' your lady a great time," he winked, making my chest instantly tighten. "Just wish we could say the same for your Limey buddy Simon ... not sure he's enjoying himself quite so much.

## Chapter 22

“Hey ... pretty boy! You’re effing shite! Truly shite!” a loud Irish accented voice called out.

Two moments of searching my little screen allowed me to identify the culprit. The voice belonged to a large, red-bearded fellow I’d certainly not want to tangle with any time soon. Only the leathers, the patches and the oil-stained denims persuading me he was marginally more human than a grizzly bear.

“And, come to think of it ... you’re not even pretty anymore, you graying, overweight, jowly-jawed bastard! Bring back Ozzy ... bring back Lemmy ... they were proper British rock exports ... now sing, dammit, sing!!”

The growling twenty-stone monster hurling abuse at Ted’s brother-in-law had a point - Simon’s looks had definitely faded.

But that, and the verbal abuse he was receiving, wasn’t the worst of it for a man as vain as Simon. Not only was he not arguing back with the large Irish American biker who could have snapped him like a twig, but he’d also been frog-marched to stand atop the clubhouse pool table.

Lizzy was sandwiched between Irons and an unnamed admirer on one table, while Simon was standing all alone on top of the other table. Standing there, brush in hand, forced to sing various eighties classics into his scrubbing brush mic.

There he stood, paunchy tummy bulging over the elastic of his boxers – at least the bikers had allowed him to keep those – as he belted out numbers by REO Speedwagon, Michael Jackson, Bon Jovi and, most humiliating of all ... Wham!

Someone suggested he do some proper, heavy eighties music, but they were shouted down. “He doesn’t have the chops for it! If he’s as bad as I think he’d be, he’d murder them so bad, we’d have to murder him!” And, from the terrified look on Simon’s face, I’m not even sure if the ginger giant and his pals were joking!

As he continued to humiliate himself, the increasingly drunk club members

were content to just pelt Simon with nuts and wings, with only the odd beer bottle thrown in for good measure, whenever his output fell especially short of the required standard.

After a few minutes of what was, for me, the sweetest of sadistic pleasures, Lizzy must have persuaded either Irons or Black Beard to turn the camera away from Simon's ordeal-by-song and back to her.

"Well, I guess that's the perfect punishment for his cheating at Karaoke," I chuckled, Lizzy smiling in agreement and surprising me by not arguing Simon's corner.

She gazed at me – slightly spaced out and only half able to focus, she looked more than a little buzzed – which likely explained why she wasn't being more protective of Simon.

What did I expect after an evening and half a night in an MC clubhouse? Even with Ted's influence, it was bound to be a wild night.

"I guess he got his," my drunk wife grinned, before waving me a drunken goodnight and blowing me a kiss - mistakenly under the impression the call had been ended.

Nothing could have been further from the truth, as one or other of her pool partners - either Irons or Black Beard - had maneuvered the phone away from her whilst leaving the line open. Whoever it was, they'd then propped the live phone up next to the wall, so I was guaranteed to get a full-fat view of the pool game they were just about to start.

I still caught the occasional glimpse of Simon on the opposite table, now singing songs by Soft Cell, Spandau Ballet and various other bands. The sole criteria for the drunken bikers howling out a choice to him seemingly being that the song in question was far more famous than any of the mediocre numbers he'd penned.

But aside from the odd glimpse of his continued suffering, for the most part my eyeballs were on the spectacle of drunken Lizzy trying to play pool. Paired up with gaunt and brooding Irons as her partner, matched against Black Beard and some unknown biker chick who seemed to have had enhancement surgery that had blessed her almost infeasibly large breasts. (I later learned these were linked to her making a living stripping and doing

low-end porn. Several times her weapons of war swinging down to accidentally strike one or more of the pool balls, giving Lizzy and Irons a natural advantage.)

My arousal and jealousy glands sizzled in equal measure at the reality that Lizzy had absolutely no idea I was watching.

I'd only been able to hear second hand from Lizzy about the session between her and Simon. But now I had a first-hand chance to watch as, unbeknownst to her, my wife's drunken meanderings were relayed nine thousand miles from the dank, crude realities of that Charleston clubhouse to my five-star Asian suite as the four of them '*played pool*' – the flimsiest of covers for the flirting games that, unknown to Lizzy, I'd been invited to e-watch.

I'm sure Irons had rigged it to make sure that he and Lizzy were on the same team. Meaning Black Beard was already pissed – paired up with some nubile young sweetbutt who he'd no doubt already fucked several times over. Despite a pretty enough face and her youngish age, she already looked 'well-used' - her most notable feature being a chest the size of the Rocky Mountains. Most definitely not something nature had endowed her with!

His eye was on the main prize – my Lizzy. A newbie, new to the game and escorted into the ex-Military club by Master Gunnery Sergeant Edward Washington. Ted's status meaning stealing the woman he was escorting would have been an especially prestigious prize.

But Black Beard had already been cock-blocked by Nine-Irons. The gaunt looking, light-skinned black man who'd leveraged his relationship with Ted to connect with Lizzy the previous night. And now to claim her attention for himself as Simon was otherwise preoccupied and Ted was no doubt somewhere else in the clubhouse reminiscing and exchanging old war stories.

As the game began, Nine-Irons took every opportunity to '*coach*' Lizzy when it was her turn for a shot. '*Coach*' being short-hand to describe Irons getting as close to Lizzy as he could as she prepared to make a shot – and then rubbing his shoulder, arm, hip and groin against her in a fraudulent attempt to guide her cue-action in the right way.

"Yey! I sank a ball!" Lizzy chuckled, turning to her partner and kissing him on the cheek. An accomplished pool player since her college days, she was

really hamming it up to play the role of ‘helpless innocent little woman.’

Any thoughts of telling Irons to tone it down seemingly a million miles from her mind right now. She was enjoying the game, her role and the flirty attentions of Irons too much. And after her repeated statements that the thing with Simon was a one-time thing, I couldn’t help but wonder if my confession of sleeping with Anong a second time had started to weaken Lizzy’s reluctance to have a second session while I was still unable to provide for her physical needs.

The flirting continued all through the first frame. Never mind how successful Lizzy was in sinking ball after ball, her pretended lack of experience gave Irons the perfect excuse to rub himself up against Lizzy each time she came to the table.

The fact she wasn’t showing any kind of reluctance, just encouraging him to be more and more brazen – the rubs of his groin against Lizzy’s ass getting longer and more obvious each time. Lizzy soon playing along, pushing her ass and gyrating her hips on the pretext of trying to get herself into the most comfortable and stable position for each attempt she had to make.

Towards the end of the second frame – Black Beard had suggested a partner swap, but Irons had turned him down flat – Irons got even more adventurous.

Lizzy was considering a difficult shot for her penultimate ball.

“Liz, hun ... this one’s really tricky ... the secret will all be in controlling your breathing for this one, breathing real slow, staying calm...”

Lizzy looked intrigued as to where Irons was going with this, looking back over her shoulder as Irons moved in behind her. The front of his pants connecting with her grinding ass like one of those in-flight refueling probes connecting with the motherlode.

“Okay, let me help you here, Lizzy. Shoulders first,” he instructed, placing his large, bony fingers on top of her shoulder blades as she bent over for the shot.

“That’s it ... good girl ... let the tension go, loosen your shoulders,” he encouraged, his fingers rubbing the stress out of her shoulders.

“Now your breathing ... get your breathing nice and slow, Lizzy ... nice and

calm ... Here, let me help you..."

With that, just as he'd stilled her shoulders, now he reached under her bent-over torso and cupped Lizzy's braless boobs as if it was the most natural thing in the world.

Groin against ass, hands cupping her tits, he carried on as if it was the most natural thing in the world – as if he were a physio or doc.

"See what I mean? Just stand still like that, keep your chest still," fuck, he was even rolling her nipples as he kept up his commentary, "isn't that better, don't you feel much more in control of your cueing arm now?"

"Mmm ... I see what you mean," Lizzy chirped, playing along as she allowed the lugubrious ex-Marine to carry on holding and squeezing her boobs. The effects of his fingers and thumbs on her now very obvious and swollen nipples even visible on my small screen.

It was only when Lizzy finally made the shot that their coupling came to an end. Lizzy potting that shot and the next, rewarding her partner with a tight squeeze and kiss on the cheek. Teasing him further by escaping his grasp before he could hug her back or try and give her a different type of kiss.

There was a short break while Irons and Black Beard fetched drinks for Lizzy and Bit Tits Biker Chick. Then Irons grinned lewdly as he made his next move,

"Change of teams ... guys versus chicks ... whichever team loses has to do a forfeit, no questions asked."

"Why? You think you're up to it, big man? You really think you guys can kick ass against me and Roxy?" *Roxy? (The young woman who was now Lizzy's new partner even had a stripper / pornstar name to go along with the physical equipment that adorned her chest. Various crude comments I'd heard from club members made me realize Roxy was both her stage and her real name.)*

If Lizzy hadn't been drunk, I was pretty sure she'd have been too wary to accept Irons' challenge.

But then again, what did I know? The Lizzy I'd seen these last few days seemed prone to wild swings in behavior. One minute saying she was going

to take it slow and gradual with Simon – the next minute engaging in a torrid all night sex session with the aging rock star, before swinging back to a prim and proper ‘*honey, it was just a one-night stand.*’ Yet here she was drunk and braless in an MC clubhouse in the early hours of the morning!

So maybe it wasn’t just the booze! A thought that left me physically trembling as I watched in secret as the girls paired up in this most odd of pairings – the elementary school teacher and the pornstar stripper up against two ex-Jarheads!

As the game began, a couple of odd things crept into Lizzy’s game. Shots she’d normally have made in her sleep, even allowing for the alcohol, started mysteriously being missed – and missed by a suspiciously large margin! It was almost as if she was intentionally missing, trying to throw the game to see just which forfeits Irons might decree. The patches he sported showing he held the rank of Sergeant at Arms in the club – so I was sure he’d pull rank to choose just what forfeits Lizzy and Roxy would have to pay.

The other strange thing was how, now that Irons was no longer snuggling up close to her denim-clad ass to coach her, every time she bent to take a shot, she’d wiggle her ass at him in the most provocative of fashions. Hell, it was so obvious, it was almost like some mating signal for one of those vividly colored birds that shakes its tail feathers to attract a mate!

It didn’t take Irons long to take the hint – he was soon back ‘coaching’ Lizzy, including hand-support, squeezing her boobs to keep them still as she took her shots. Shots which she still miraculously managed to miss despite all the help from Irons.

Roxy wasn’t much of a pool player – how could she be, when her cue arm had to deal with the equivalent of the mountainous orbs hanging down from her upper chest?! Terrible would be a fair description – so as soon as their advantage was big enough, Nine-Iron was able to prolong the game by missing his own shots. Giving him even more chances to enjoy Lizzy’s tail wagging and offer her extended bouts of up-close-and-personal coaching.

But even with all of these deliberates, Black Beard finally let out a whoop as he potted the black.

“Ha, forfeit time!” The look across from him to Irons suggesting they’d

already agreed between them what punishment they planned to mete out. A big, broad grin breaking out in the middle of his unkempt face as he made his announcement.

“One more game ... double or quits ... only this time, as you lost round one, you girls play topless!”

This drew hoots of approval from the large crowd that had gathered around the table – I think it was only Ted and a very miserable looking Simon who’d not joined in. The two of them sat over at a corner table, deep in conversation.

When the bikers’ laughter had died down, it was Nine-Iron’s turn to grin – a grin far more threatening than Black Beard’s as he added the final piece. “And, if you girls lose again, double or quits means blowjobs ... blowjobs for Beard and me!”

Maybe I was imagining it, but from the look on her face, until Nine-Iron’s over-the-top add-on, I think Lizzy had actually been seriously contemplating going along with the topless part. After all, she’d already let Irons grind himself on her ass and spend much of the last half hour squeezing her boobs. So, at least in terms of Irons, how much more would a topless display really have signified?

But as soon as he added the blowjob add-on, Lizzy’s expression started to change. Initially showing shock, then bursting into a wide smile of laughter as she jiggled her shoulders.

“No way, Jose ... too much, too fast,” she jiggled again, showing him what his greed meant he’d now be missing.

“It wasn’t a request, sweetbutt,” Irons growled, suddenly looking hyper serious and non-plussed at Lizzy saying ‘no’ and questioning his authority in front of the other gang members.

“‘No’ means ‘no’ Irons ... don’t you get that?” she replied, her own anger building, her tone just the right side of mad.

“I won’t ask again, sweetbutt ... club game, club rules ... you’re my guest in my club, so you’ll do as you’re told...”

Lizzy’s face was bright red by now, and nine-thousand-miles away, I was

becoming scared. Lizzy knew very little about biker ways and had no idea how quickly things could get nasty for an outsider who flouted club rules.

Her anger beginning to boil over, she was just about to speak when I heard a different, deeper voice.

## Chapter 23

“That’ll be enough, Irons...”

Irons looked daggers at Ted, as his old colleague placed himself between Lizzy and the club’s Sergeant at Arms.

“Ted, don’t stick your nose in where it doesn’t belong. She came here of her own freewill tonight ... she knew the club rules...”

“Irons ... I’ve told you once...”

“Ted, you’re not even a member here ... you have no standing here. You’re my friend, Ted ... but I’m telling you, stand down...”

Taking one step forward until they were face-to-face, Ted gave Irons a look that would have frozen molten lava.

“Point one, Irons, Lizzy’s not your or anyone else’s sweetbutt. You may be able to order Roxy around, coz she signed up for it, but Lizzy ain’t and never will be your sweetbutt.”

“And, point two, Irons, Lizzy’s not your guest here tonight. I’m the one you invited here tonight, I’m your guest ... and then I invited her as my guest.”

“Which means, Irons, if you want to get to Lizzy ... you got to go through me. And I really, really don’t think you want to do that...”

The two of them were now squared up virtually nose-to-nose and I could see some of Irons’ friends starting to move to encircle Ted and Lizzy – and now I was really, really scared. Wishing I could magic myself nine-thousand miles in an instant – not that I’d have been much more than the most minor of aids to Ted.

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“ENOUGH!! ENOUGH!!” A voice even louder and more threatening than Ted’s erupted from an unknown corner. A second later the owner of the voice appearing right next to Ted and Irons.

“I won’t have this in my club! I founded this club so we could keep the ethos of the Corps going ... and this ain’t doing that. You two guys should be

ashamed of yourselves. You were brothers-in-arms for how many years? An' now you're arguing over some tail? Some prick-teasing tail!"

The guy speaking wasn't especially tall or especially broad. He had a shiny, bald head and slightly olive skin – but he had a glassy-eyed, slightly psychotic demeanor that brooked no argument. On another day, in another time, he could have been a double for the deranged and demented Colonel Kurtz made famous by Marlon Brando in *Apocalypse Now*.

I could see Ted start to bridle at the club Founder's description of Lizzy as 'some prick-teasing tail.' But the guy obviously had a fearsome reputation, as even someone as scary and uncompromising as Ted held himself in check.

Turning away from Ted, he addressed Lizzy – his anger now muted, his accent a distinct Southern drawl. "Okay Missy, you don't know me, and I don't know you ... but this is my club and you can call me KK, for Kurly Kurtz, and as it's my club, it ain't Irons and it ain't your boyfriend Ted who makes the rules, it's me."

He let the words sink in before he continued. "Now, Missy, would you deny that you've been a prick-tease to my Sergeant at Arms tonight? Led him on, gave him *'certain expectations?'*"

From the way the red anger had drained from her scared, colorless face, Lizzy was now realizing how serious the situation was. A realization that made it difficult for her to speak.

"Well, Missy ... cat got your tongue?" he asked again, staring at her with ice cold, unblinking eyes. "Did you prick tease my man?"

I could see Lizzy's throat muscles move up and down as she tried, and I hated myself for not being there for her as eventually the tiniest of sounds came out.

"I guess..."

"Well, that's good ... that's a start ... I can work with that," he replied, still giving Lizzy the scariest of looks.

"So, Lizzy ... I understand from Ted that you teach little kids, is that right?"

"Yes," she squeaked, wondering what else Ted had told him about her.

“Okay, and with those little kids, do you teach them about consequences? About how, if they do something wrong, there are consequences ... they have to suffer some kind of penalty, so they learn to do better next time?”

Lizzy could see where this was headed, and a panicked look appeared in her eyes as she desperately searched for some way out.

“Good, good,” the menacing bald-headed man replied. “So, bearing in mind you led Irons on – that you took off your bra to send him and his brothers a signal – then let him feel you up as you ground your ass on his dick ... my question to you, Teach, is what do you think an appropriate forfeit and punishment might be, one that maintains the honor of the club and is fair to Irons and his friends, and one that keeps my old friend Ted happy? Coz I’m telling you now, Teach, that if it wasn’t for all the years Ted and me served together, this thing could go a whole lot worse for you.”

It had finally sunk in for Lizzy. How serious the situation was. How foolish she’d been – behaving like that in a place like this. And that her well-being hung by a thin thread, and only then because of the history between KK and Ted.

The other thing she was realizing was that there was no escape from this situation without her giving something up – the only question being how small a punishment could she get away with?

Then as she looked across at Ted for succor, I could see the cogs starting to whirl in her brain, making me grateful for all those years in hospitals and schools which had taught her to think on her feet. Years that had taught her that freezing-up and inaction wasn’t an option.

Gently nudging Ted to one side, she moved in front of Irons.

“Irons, I’m truly sorry if I led you on ... but I did have fun ... I enjoyed it ... it’s just I’m married and never meant for this to go further than a little fun...”

Smart girl! That’s my girl. Think your way out of this, you can do it! This is nine-tenths ego and pride. A little humility and humble pie will go a long way.

“You’re married!” he spat at her. “Well, if that’s such a dealbreaker for you, how come you slept with that Limey prick over there?” The gesture of his

head towards Simon making clear exactly who he meant – as if there was ever any doubt!

“What’s he got that Old Irons doesn’t have? Why him and not me? After you been prick-teasin’ me all evening!”

“I’m sorry, Irons ... it’s nothing to do with you, I promise ... it’s just that after doing it once with Simon, well ... I realized, I wanted to stay faithful to my husband ... that I don’t want to risk what we have...”

They stared at each other. Nine-Iron’s stare one of anger and unfulfilled desire. Her stare one of meekness, begging for mercy – a calculated move.

“Can you understand that, Irons? I’m sure you can, I’m sure you’ve felt like that about someone...?”

He growled, a growl that seemed half a ‘yes’ and half pure frustration. But a growl that seemed to encourage Lizzy that finally she’d won some kind of concession. Made some kind of connection.

“What’s wrong with a blowjob?” he growled. “A blowjob’s not having sex! And you’ve already done far worse with that English prick!”

“I see your point,” she answered in her most reasonable, conciliatory tone, “but, to me, Irons, a blowjob is sort of sex ... and like I said, I decided to stay faithful to my husband while he’s away working so hard for us and for one of our big local employers...”

Good girl, play the patriot, play the family cards, make him look selfish if he doesn’t agree with you.

“But, a little topless fun, like before, only topless ... that wouldn’t be sex, would it?”

What are you doing, Lizzy? What the hell are you doing? If you’re not careful, you’re just gonna end up right back where you were before – only this time there’ll be no-one willing to step in and help you. To give you the benefit of the doubt.

“I’m sorry if I teased you and sent out wrong signals ... but would you do me the honor of being my pool partner again ... in a topless game of pool?”

Oh fuck Lizzy! Surely there had been some other way out? You’ve just done

the equivalent of handing a cigarette lighter to a pyromaniac after dousing yourself in gasoline. Fuck, how are things going to go from here?

She was now alternating between looking down at the floor, down at her heeled boots, and throwing coy little ‘come to daddy’ smiles at Irons. As if she wasn’t already in deep enough!

“Guess that could be okay. But not one game. Best of three.” Irons grudgingly accepted, greeted with a big slap on the shoulder from KK, Kurly Kurtz.

“You see, didn’t I tell you we could work this out, with a little cooperation and honesty from Liz here?”

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As Black Beard racked the balls and Roxy stripped down with the easy casualness you’d have expected from a stripper and low-end pornstar, Lizzy looked across at KK with a questioning gaze.

“And, just to be clear, as the boss, if I do this, then it’s ‘*no blowjob*’?”

“Yes, that’s the deal,” he reassured her, in an unemotional, businesslike tone.

“Okay,” she replied, before turning to Ted – her human comfort blanket – and giving him an enigmatic smile. A smile that started as nervous as she grasped the hem of the blouse - but which had transformed into a confident, almost happy smile by the time her head reappeared through the collar. As Lizzy held her white designer t-shirt up high like some victory symbol.

In fact, scratch that ‘*almost happy smile.*’ There was nothing ‘*almost*’ about it. She was absolutely smiling as Irons and all the other male club members gawped at my wife’s delectable boobs.

They may not have been anywhere near as large or as pendulous as Roxy’s silicone fun bags. But Roxy showed off her body for a living – the guys all knew this. The fight Lizzy had put up, the fact all the guys now knew she was that most innocent of stereotypes - an elementary school teacher – meant they all lusted after Lizzy’s boobs much more than Roxy’s. A meal freely offered doesn’t taste anywhere near as delicious as one you know the chef never meant to share.

Lizzy's confidence was growing by the minute. Relieved of the worry things would go further than she wanted – or at least believing taking KK at his word, that he wouldn't let them go further – her big boobs bouncing proudly, she strode over to where the cues were and winked at Irons.

“You still okay to help me like before?” she pouted. “Your help was SO NICE, SO HELPFUL before, Irons!”

“I'd think I can manage that,” he grinned, “but I might want one of those nice home-cooked meals of yours after tonight ... you know, like the other night!”

Lizzy just grinned, holding her cue in a most suggestive of ways. “One thing at a time partner ... let's win this game first ... with your help, of course!”

Irons won the toss and ordered my smiling wife to break. What a difference five minutes makes! A few minutes ago Lizzy - as her predicament had sunk in - had looked like her whole world was about to collapse.

But now, reassured by KK's iron law and promise that things wouldn't go too far, she was back to the same kid-in-the-candy store who'd been winding up Irons and the other guys all night.

As she bent over the table, her big boobs hanging down to graze the green baize, I asked myself, *'Is this really my wife? I know she's drunk, but is she really enjoying behaving so outrageously?'*

“Partner, where's that help?” she asked with a coquettish throw of her hair and glance over her shoulder towards Irons. Summoning the man who'd so recently made her shake with fear. Their relationship remapped as she wiggled back into his tented groin and moaned softly as he squeezed and milked her boobs – paying special attention to her nipples which now looked infeasibly large.

The game continued like this for the next few minutes – none of the four protagonists caring much about potting balls or winning.

Black Beard was now taking a leaf out of the Lizzy and Irons playbook. ‘Helping’ Roxy with her shots at every opportunity, squeezing Roxy's giant hooters and pulling at her teats as if it were milking time at the local dairy.

Damn! Those babies had to be at least Forty or Forty-Two H or J! Without Black Beard's altruistic cupping and stroking, every time she cued, they'd

have been reaching all the way down to the table. With a fifty-fifty chance of knocking one or more balls for an automatic foul.

So very kind of Black Beard to help out such a demure damsel. Hell, he was so selfless he was even laying the tent pole in his pants along the crease of Roxy's curvaceous ass to show her the correct line to the pocket!

As the game progressed, having drunk way too much beer, Irons was away in the restroom when Lizzy nearly jumped a mile in the air. Moaning happily from someone playing with her boobs – before shrieking in shock when she looked down and saw the color and length of the nails kneading her boobs.

“Roxy!”

“Yes, lover,” the young stripper giggled. Her tired face suddenly coming to life as she continued to squeeze at my wife's teats, so they wouldn't feel lonely while Irons was away.

Roxy was probably twenty years younger than Lizzy, but she wasn't lacking in confidence – rolling Lizzy's nipples between finger and thumb as she cupped her boobs to weigh them.

“I love your boobs, Lizzy,” she beamed as if her comment was the most natural thing in the world. All the time grinning and making full eye contact with my wife. “Yours are real ... natural, they feel so much nicer than my own plastic tits. I really wish I'd been born with nice big natural boobs like you, Lizzy!”

In all the years we'd been together, I'd never known Lizzy to be interested in anything 'girl-on-girl'. The closest we'd ever gotten to this kind of thing had been at one or two parties. When a couple of women in our social circle who were known to 'swing both ways' had hit on Lizzy. My wife had just laughed it off, often teasing me later in bed. *'You'd have loved it, wouldn't you, Jim ... making some of those adolescent fantasies of yours come true.'*

She had me on that one. Early on in our dating I'd opened up and confessed that in my teenage years I'd been fascinated by some of the raunchier 'girl-on-girl' videos I'd managed to procure. As a young man with very limited sexual opportunities, I'd been wide-eyed and intrigued by those pictures of sapphic loving!

Lizzy had never been anti it, but nor had she ever shown any interest. But tonight, she was drunk and climbing the walls with lust from all the physical touching and mind games going down between her and Irons.

So, whatever her normal attitude might have been, with no male hands available right now to keep her fires burning, now that she'd recovered from her initial shock she just stared back at Roxy. Moaning softly as the young stripper-cum-pornstar manipulated her swollen boobs with a skill totally in keeping with her day job.

“Like it, Teach?” the young woman grinned mischievously, picking up on KK’s favorite nickname for Lizzy.

“Oh babe ... if you’d been my teacher, I’d have concentrated so much more in class,” she purred, “maybe even asked to stay behind for some extra tuition!”

I don’t know what was taking Irons so long, but neither of the ladies was complaining. Roxy not only continued to play with Lizzy’s boobs, but she was also now starting to rub at her tummy in a most lewd way. This may have been a first for Lizzy, but there was some serious passion heating up the air between them as their eyes stayed locked together.

“You know, Liz, I could show you a really, really good time,” the younger woman sighed, staring hard at Lizzy, trying her best to bend her to her will. “I know your hubby’s away ... Lizzy, after tonight, if ever you get tired of these crude, self-centered guys, give me a call ... you won’t regret it. I’ll show you what real lovin’ is!”

I swear, if Irons hadn’t finally returned from the can when he did, Roxy’s next move would have been to move down south from Lizzy’s tummy and see where things headed!

But instead, Irons finally returned. For a few moments he just chuckled and smiled at the goings on, before becoming more proprietorial. Sneaking up just an inch or so behind Roxy head. Then roaring like a lion into her ear, he made Roxy jump even more than Lizzy earlier when she’d seen the color of the nails playing with her boobs.

When Roxy recovered from her shock, she gave Irons a token punch on the chest (*‘you scared me half to death’*) and declared, ‘Fuck this,’ to the whole

club. Then she dragged Black Beard off towards the back of the clubhouse. No doubt in my mind that after her stymied moves on Lizzy, Black Beard was going to be pushed flat on the first available horizontal surface and ridden within an inch of his life.

Not exactly the most masculine of evenings – but what a way to go! I just hoped for his sake he was a boob man! From the look on her face as she'd left the crowd, she'd be riding him harder than a three-year-old at the Kentucky Derby. Riding as he gazed up at a ginormous pair of Forty-Two J's that likely had more saline in them than the average downtown emergency ward!

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By now Lizzy's cheeks were flushed with desire from the combination of male and female hands which had been stimulating her. With Roxy and Black Beard no longer around to even provide the semblance of a non-sexual activity, Lizzy and Irons were now looking at each other in a very different way.

Their desire for each other had been obvious before Irons had headed to the can – but now it seemed like some molten volcano right on the edge of boiling over.

Lizzy was chewing her lip, staring directly at Irons – still totally unaware that one of her pool partners had enabled a live link for me.

“Well?” Irons asked, the single word pregnant with meaning and obvious in his intent.

Still nervously chewing her lip, Lizzy looked from Irons to KK. The Black Knights club founder just giving a non-committal shrug.

“Your call, Teach,” his face as neutral as his tone. He stood by his earlier ruling, but nor could he or anyone else deny the new reality that had developed as the prick-teasing mating dance had continued.

Lizzy smiled at him – an indecipherable smile – before looking back to Irons, her decision seemingly made.

“If you'd have asked nicely in the first place, maybe we could have avoided all that earlier unpleasantness!” she lectured him as she knelt before him and

reached for his belt buckle.

If my chest hadn't been about to explode with tension, I'd have laughed for the ages. Never mind the inherent danger of the guy, my Lizzy was treating him like he was one of her school kids! Hell, any minute now she might send him to go and stand in the corner!

But all those years of experience ... Lizzy knew her human psychology ... as she unbuckled the belt and wriggled the heavy, stained denim until it started falling, there wasn't a peep of protest from Irons about being spoken to like this.

As I held my breath, my temples throbbed painfully. *'Just what the hell is it you want to happen here, Jim?'* A damned good question, and not one to which I had any kind of answer!

Earlier I'd been scared for her, and before that I'd been painfully hard as I'd watched her play the cockteaser to Nine-Iron's lust-filled brooding presence. And before that, I'd been utterly confused about what I'd wanted to happen between Lizzy and Simon. And now, on top of all that, this!

In the end, I gave up thinking. I was nine-thousand-miles away and totally unable to intervene. Hell, the only reason I had any idea at all that this was even happening was because the bikers had thought it funny to let me watch their seduction of Lizzy!

'I may as well try my best to relax and take whatever pleasure I can from these surreal developments,' I thought to myself, comforted that at least Lizzy didn't seem to be in any kind of physical danger.

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"Oh my! What a large penis you have, Mister Nine-Irons," Lizzy cooed as finally she worked his jeans and boxers down past his knees. Her hand reaching out slowly, almost reverential as she wrapped her fingers tight around Nine-Iron's fat, long cock. Or wrapped them around him as far as she could – his girth too much for her fingers to touch as the gold and diamonds of her rings glinted at me and made my gut twist with angst.

Shit! My whole body seemed to be going into shutdown mode. If hearing Lizzy's secondhand description of having sex with Simon had been intense,

then this was like something from another solar system.

Even just on my small phone screen, the sight of my bare-breasted wife gazing in awe at another man's cock as her hand slowly, adoringly worked up and down, making his huge cockhead appear and disappear ... damn, it was something I'd never dreamed I'd see in real life. Sure, Lizzy and I had shared fantasies, but I'd thought I'd ever see these fantasies come true. Not at least until I'd been sent sentenced to what seemed an indefinite stay on the other side of the world.

Damn! The muscles at the top of my windpipe tightened. I clutched at my throat, loosening my collar, gulping down huge lungfuls of air. Unable to tear my eyes away from the sight of Lizzy down on her knees, her beautiful tits wobbling as she gazed adoringly at this biker's enormous penis.

Just when I thought I had it under control, Lizzy looked up at Nine-Iron, gave him a mischievous little smile then pulled his foreskin back so she could lower her head and kiss his over-sized cockhead.

Hell! The thing was as fat and bulbous as an avocado or a mandarin. To me it looked ugly and obscene, but Lizzy was totally entranced as she showered little kisses on it ... only stopping when she looked to tease Irons with another mischievous smile.

Irons looked impatient and made to wind his fist through her hair. But Lizzy just smacked his hand away, blew him a kiss and then lowered her head so she could start to suckle on his overripe fruit – suckling away with a sparkle in her eyes like a baby savors a pacifier.

Irons hand went back to her hair – this time brushing her hair away from her face so he could see the sight better. No slap this time, this was okay to Lizzy as she smiled up at Irons and started playing with his balls like they were some kind of fidget toy.

This continued for a while, each passing minute Lizzy able to take more of his cockhead and shaft into her mouth, her jaw opened to the maximum and looking quite painful.

But Lizzy wasn't complaining as Irons put one hand under her jaw and slowly started moving himself in and out with a face-fucking motion. His other hand making Lizzy moan as he squeezed her boobs and tweaked her

nipples.

Somehow Lizzy had managed to defy physics and get three or four inches of Nine-Iron's giant cock into her mouth – but that was the limit. I could see her trying, but no more was possible. Still an amazing achievement and experience for her compared to blowing my much humbler offering which had been her staple up until now.

Lizzy sighed in frustration, and I saw a look pass between the two of them, followed by Irons removing his cock from her mouth and offering her a hand to stand.

With drool running down her face, dripping onto her swollen boobs, Lizzy accepted Nine-Iron's hand as, like a wobbly-legged fawn, she regained her footing.

Staring into her eyes and, still grasping her hand, Irons placed his other hand on her hip and slowly started spinning her around to face the pool table.

His hands then moved to her shoulders and with surprising gentleness he pushed both her shoulders down, until my wife's big boobs were squashed flat against the green baize.

Just as Irons – his enormous cock wagging in front of him – started to work at Lizzy's jeans, Ted stepped forward out of the shadows. A serious, solemn look on his face.

“Look, Lizzy ... Jim told me about the little ‘arrangement’ the two of you have while he's away ... but even so, I just want to make sure you're really totally okay with this ... coz, just a few minutes ago, you were saying the opposite ... saying you didn't want to risk what you and Jim have, just for a little fun!”

Irons didn't look remotely happy at Ted's intervention, but Lizzy had turned to look at him as she weighed up his words.

The two of them had been close for years – in so many ways Ted had been more of a father to her than the man who'd left her mom for a younger woman. So she considered his question long and hard, their eyes locked together, searching each other until finally she spoke.

“Thanks for looking out for me, Ted ... thanks for always being there for me

... but the answer's 'yes' ... yes, I am sure ... Jim said it's stopped now, but that he and Anong had another fling ... and this will only be tonight with Irons ... which makes us even ... and I have been leading him on all evening, haven't I?"

"Well, if you're sure, Lizzy ... you're a grown woman and what happens between you and Jim is none of my business, however much I care about you both..."

"Thanks Ted," her words simple but heartfelt, not just about now, but about all the things the two of them had shared over the years.

Satisfied that he'd discharged his duty of care, Ted withdrew back into the shadows as things moved from the emotional back to the lewd. Irons taking advantage of Lizzy's head turned to the side to thrust his tongue deep into her mouth.

At first she was startled, but she was soon kissing him back, accepting his long, probing tongue and dueling with her own as he roughly squeezed her boobs.

Lizzy's jeans were soon pulled clear as he ripped her thong panties off as if they were made of tissue paper. Using his feet to push Lizzy's legs further apart, she was now only wearing her heeled boots as Irons used the edge of his right hand to rub up and down at Lizzy's swollen love lips.

"Mmm ... you're as hot for this as I am," he chuckled, making Lizzy shriek in surprise as he forced two and then three thick digits up into Lizzy's pussy.

"Got to get you ready, Teach ... you're not with your husband in Kindergarten Corner now ... you're with me now, in the big leagues!"

Fuck! Why did this excite me so much? This was insane! What husband in his right mind would want to watch his wife getting fucked by a big-dicked Neanderthal like Nine-Iron? A man who'd been seen as trouble even by the standards of the Marine Corps!

But excite me it did – my cock was throbbing harder than when I'd been a teenager as I watched Irons remove his glistening digits from Lizzy's pussy. Remove them, push down on Lizzy's neck and thrust the head of his club-like cock into my wife's vulva.

Lizzy's eyes snapped wide open as she started hyper-ventilating, her hand pushing back at Nine-Iron's tummy in the universal 'not-so-deep' signal.

To his credit, despite his generally *'fuck the rest of the world'* demeanor, Irons squeezed Lizzy's fingers to acknowledge her request and was slow and considerate as he gradually worked all of his fat length up into Lizzy's body.

I'm no great judge of dimensions, especially not on such a small screen, but he must have been packing a good nine or ten inches. And as he slid in and out, I judged his cock must have been at least twice as girthy as my slender six inches.

"You like that, Lizzy?" he asked, now fully balls deep on each slow, gentle upward thrust.

"Mmm ... yeah ... it's wonderful, Irons ... you stretch me so good ... I can feel you right up next to my womb," she smiled back at him, pulling him down for another open-mouthed kiss.

"Your pussy feels amazing as well," Irons responded with surprising tenderness. "It's so tight."

"That's because I'm not used to a dick like this inside me," she cooed back, "Jim's not as big as you."

Truth. Tough, but so obviously true. I gulped and blushed as Lizzy's honest words hammered into my head. Her words made more exciting and painful as an unseen club member moved the camera much closer. Giving me a perfect, close-up, mesmerizing image as I watched Lizzy's pussy lips strain around his cock.

Each time Irons thrust back in, it was like his huge dick was dragging Lizzy's love lips behind. He wasn't just stretching her out, he was stretching my dear wife's pussy out in places I couldn't even hope to reach.

On each of his slow strokes, he'd pull almost all the way out, until just his fat cockhead was left inside her. Then, every time he pushed all the way back in – Lizzy's position face down on the pool table meant I could only see the movement of his ass and shaft.

But even if I couldn't see, I could hear the effects of his girth and length from the extra strain in Lizzy's moans. As that bulbous head sank all the way in

and pushed right up against her cervix – knocking for entry into her womb.

If Lizzy had been hyperventilating, I wasn't much better. I'd not been expecting to see such gentleness, such consideration from a man like Irons.

But I needn't have worried – the next words out of his mouth restored normal service.

“Good girl ... so, now I stretched you out a little, you won't mind if I fuck you properly? Fuck you really hard.”

It wasn't meant as a question, a fact backed up by Irons not waiting for any kind of answer before he gripped Lizzy's hips tight and started sawing in and out of her pussy at a rapid rate of knots.

“Shit ... shit ... shit ... arhh ... so deep, so full,” Lizzy shrieked as Irons slammed in and out of her as if his very life depended on it.

Lizzy was soon sobbing and wailing, her whole body responding to the non-stop deep thrusts of Irons and his huge cock. Her body vibrating through a series of intense climaxes as he pushed her hard down into the table. He was light-skinned, but this was Lizzy's first time with a black guy, and he was pummeling her into submission, her lungs bursting with noise as she screwed her eyes tight shut as orgasm after orgasm ripped through her body.

“Gonna pump you full of my jizz now, Teach,” he cackled – again, not a question, a statement of the inevitable as he roared like a bull and made one final, savage thrust. His face screwed up as his big balls pumped Lizzy full of his muck. My sweet wife unable to move as Nine-Iron's full weight pinned her down flat on the pool table. His big paws pulling at her teats, mauling her boobs as jet after jet was injected deep into Lizzy's body.

# Chapter 24

The whole world seemed to stand still. The whole world seemed full of silence and brooding fear as the tension left my body and I stared at that little phone screen.

While they'd been fucking – while Irons and his big dick had been screwing Lizzy like there was no tomorrow – I'd been totally subsumed into the erotic world they'd created between them.

But now that it was all over, now that Lizzy was slowly showing signs of recovery, turning to stare blank-faced at Irons like a wounded little animal who had no idea what had just happened to them ... now I felt an excruciating sense of anxiety.

And not just anxiety about where she was and what might happen next - bikers not exactly renowned for keeping their word or a 'one-and-done' mentality when it comes to treating their women.

But also anxiety and stress as the reality of what I'd just observed finally sank in. Before I'd known she'd had sex with another man, but I'd not actually seen it, so in many ways it had still seemed unreal, just like all those bedroom fantasies we'd shared.

But this was different – very different. I'd just watched in secret as Lizzy had received the soundest of fuckings from a big black biker who'd stretched her out and then railed her through an endless stream of climaxes.

After watching that – even on the small screen – the fact that Lizzy was no longer just mine was the most real and heart-stopping of truths. A painful, excruciating, exciting truth that lanced by heart like a molten blade. The woman who'd been mine all these years – my lover, best friend and partner – no longer belonged wholly to me. Irons now owned a part of her – a truth I couldn't deny as I'd seen it with my very own eyes.

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As Lizzy slowly turned from her vulnerable, spread-eagled position bent forward over the table, for the first time I saw her face in full profile.

She was still only wearing her high heeled boots, and her boobs were reddened from the way Irons had squeezed and manhandled them – not to mention the way he'd forced them hard down into the table.

The other physical evidence I couldn't stop staring at was the small trail of sticky white semen that had already started to ooze out from between her legs. I know he had big balls, but the man must have shot bucket loads up into Lizzy's womb for so much to already be seeping out so soon after they'd finished.

With me there might be some small droplets-five or ten minutes later – but after this big-balled bull had just had his way with Lizzy, just one or two minutes later her thighs were already marked by multiple little white trails. Not to mention the white bubbles oozing out from her gaping hole.

Shit! How could I be out-scored so thoroughly by a guy so much older than me? I had no idea his exact age - but this gaunt, threatening-looking ex-Marine had to be about the same age as Ted and Simon. The bastard hadn't just fucked my woman to more and better orgasms than I ever had – but he'd also dumped a load in her far more voluminous than anything I'd gifted her recently!

What a thought – outperformed by two guys over sixty who'd somehow managed to mate by wife better than her own much younger husband! First by '*Sir Man-Slut*', and now by '*Sir Sicko*', as Ted had memorably referred to his old troublemaking friend all the way back on New Years.

Damn. It obviously didn't pay to be at the more gallant, knightly end of the spectrum! Since I'd been absent earning much needed bucks for my growing family, the lady in my life had been must unladylike two times already, and I'd only been gone a month! Given the scale of the problems I was trying to fix, I couldn't help but wonder what else would happen to the lady in my life during my absence.

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As I looked at Lizzy, I saw no signs of remorse or shyness. Naked save her boots, she stood her ground, large breasts and rib cage slowly heaving up and down, staring into Nine-Iron's surly features with a minx-like confidence.

“Happy now, Mister Irons?” she asked with a playful smirk. “Happy that I

didn't dis you in front of your friends ... happy that I made up for any earlier prick-teasing offences I might have inadvertently committed?"

"Happy?" he chuckled. "Hell no, that was just a downpayment, Teach..."

"You heard the lady," Ted's unmistakably rolling bass interjected as once more he appeared from a dark area of the clubhouse.

And then, the most infuriating thing in the whole world happened – the line went dead.

Intentionally ended or dead battery, I have no idea. All I know is that I was left high-and-dry, climbing the wall, my whole soul eaten up by images of what might be happening in that Black Knights clubhouse.

Looking at my watch, I saw it was only three-thirty a.m. in Charleston. Which was barely warming up time from what I knew about the hours normally kept by groups like KK's MC club. A thought that sent another shiver of fear through me.

The night was still young in that Charleston clubhouse and the last thing I'd seen was Irons making his intentions clear. I just had to hope that Ted had enough juice with 'his old friend' KK to keep Irons at bay. Lizzy had signaled she felt she'd paid her dues – but then again, she'd hardly been a model of consistency these past few hours and days.

'Fuck! What if she changed her mind again? By her own admission, her night with Simon had gone on and on ... what was to say that face-to-face with Nine-Iron's huge cock, she didn't get a second wind? Happy to disappear into one of the various backrooms the clubhouse no doubt possessed so she and Irons could have some more 'one-on-one' time.

Or maybe that wouldn't be enough for Irons. Maybe he'd take it into his mind to break Lizzy in properly – sharing her with a few of his pals to give her a night she'd never forget. Giving her so much cock, so many cums that she was guaranteed to want to come back for more.

Looking at myself in the hotel room mirror, I had one of those special Damascus moments of realization. The guy looking back at me was shaking with a terrible mix of fear, shame and excitement. A big part of him hoping all kinds of crazy shit was happening to his wife right now ... a thought that

made him ashamed ... but one he couldn't deny as untrue.

Damn! When had our lives become so complicated? If this is what an open marriage was like even after just two nights each, I had serious doubts my sanity could withstand much more.

But even as I stared at my own pale face as this realization struck home, I knew the wicked voices in my mind couldn't wait to see and speak to Lizzy so I'd be able to enjoy my next high.

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Icy cold water splashed all over my face somehow brought me back within touching distance of my Bangkok reality.

I thought of ringing Lizzy again – there was a fair chance that if Irons had let her dress, she'd also have grabbed her mobile phone from where the bikers had left it up against the wall. I even reached for my phone and started dialing, but a strange masochistic thrill stopped me.

I was sweating bricks, the pit of my stomach felt like it was home to a bowl of eels and my lungs and chest felt like they'd abandoned me. But I couldn't deny I was buzzing from the masochistic high of my brain being totally preoccupied with thoughts of Lizzy and what might or might not be happening to her right now.

They say that the best part of a fine wine or a Michelin-starred meal is the anticipation. And that's exactly how I felt. If I rang Lizzy now and got through, I'd know rather than be able to speculate. And the other truth was that if I did get through to her, it was more than likely that would spark a huge wave of guilt in her, bringing an instant end to any naughty games she might have been contemplating.

'Fuck, Jim! Just when the hell did you become this guy? Have harmless fantasies really transformed so quickly into life-controlling reality ... sunk their claws so deep in you that you're powerless to reach out to Lizzy ... Lizzy who might need your help...?'

More icy water, a second attempt to call ... but it was no good, I was too hooked on this strange new pleasure Lizzy and I had so carelessly imported into our lives.

Instead of ringing Lizzy, I rang down to Anong and between the two of us we tried to distract me with report-reading, calls to colleagues and getting ready for tomorrow's Monday meeting with Mr. Fung.

My face was so pale and shocked that I'm sure Anong knew something was up – but just for once she decided not to poke the bear. Her very untypical discretion planting a paranoid seed in my mind. Did she know something I didn't? She'd been in touch with Lizzy earlier to co-ordinate their choice of outfit ... so what was to say Lizzy hadn't been in touch with Anong already? After all, wouldn't that be logical? Wasn't Anong her new bestie who'd persuaded her that sex and love could easily be separated!

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That preparation session must count as the weirdest afternoon and evening of work I'd ever experienced.

Reports, calls, strategizing on how to get Mr. Fung to see things our way ... those were the focuses of the frontal cortex of my brain. But all the time simmering, evil, wicked thoughts were bubbling away at the back of my brain. Thoughts about what may or may not be happening to Lizzy right now. And, just as tantalizing and corrosive, just how complicit was she in what might still be going on at that clubhouse. All of these thoughts laced through with intense images of what I'd just seen. Images of Nine-Iron's long, thick monster cock ... images of how Lizzy had loved kissing and worshipping that spear of a cock ... and the images and sounds she'd made as Irons had fucked her to oblivion. Pounding her into the top of that pool table.

I placed the first call to Lizzy at eight p.m. our time – thinking at eight in the morning for her, there was a reasonable chance she might be home and awake. Or, if not actually awake, at least conscious enough to be woken by the phone so we could talk.

But my optimism was ill-placed, so we did another hour-and-a-half of work before I called again.

Still no answer. A late dinner at the local street market and a goodnight hug from Anong just before eleven. But even then, back in the privacy of my hotel room, there was no answer when I rang.

It was going to be a long night of tossing and turning as I resigned myself to

trying again tomorrow.

# Chapter 25

*7 a.m. Monday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2021*

“Lizzy, honey!”

It felt sooo good to finally get through – to finally be able to talk to her. Talk properly.

“Hey, babe,” she answered sleepily. Sleepy even in the middle of her evening. What the hell did that say about what had happened after the bikers had killed the call?

“Wow, someone must have had a late night!” I commented playfully. No point in beating about the bush. What else were we going to talk about? The weather? The latest words with which Rachel Jnr. had entertained her sexy grandma? (Lizzy loved being a grandma but hated the word itself.)

No, there was only one topic this husband on tenterhooks wanted to discuss – and that was what happened last night after the guys had killed the call.

And therein lay the problem – as far as Lizzy was concerned, the last I’d seen of her night at the Black Knights clubhouse was when we’d watched Simon’s humiliation as, stripped down to his boxers, he’d been pelted with stuff as he’d sung to make good for his earlier Karaoke cheating.

Lizzy looked too spaced out to make much of a fist at conversation – so this would be on me, to drag last night’s events out of her.

“So, how did it go for Simon after we spoke? Did the guys cut him some slack?”

“Oh, Simon?” Lizzy replied, almost as if she’d forgotten he’d been there last night. An understandable mistake given how she’d been rather preoccupied with other events after we’d finished speaking. When she’d mistakenly believed the bikers had killed the call.

“Yeah, how was it for him?”

“Mmm,” she hesitated as she dredged her memory banks, “not so good I guess ... in fact I feel kind of bad for him ... I’m gonna pop round tomorrow

and check if he's okay ... for such a supposedly confident guy, he's got a surprisingly brittle ego..."

*'Yeah, right! Arrogant Simon really needs a care package for his bruised ego!'* I thought to myself, but I had bigger fish to fry.

"Okay, well, say hi from me," I added disingenuously, not meaning a word of it. "But what about you, hun ... from your sleepy yawn, do I detect you had a late-night partying with those hairy bikers? Was Cinders not back by midnight? I hope they treated my princess with due respect. Otherwise, I'll have to have words with your escort, Mr. Washington."

Lizzy's cheeks were now flushed red. My question and barrage of quips had put her right on the spot. Normally not one to be lost for words, she was like a deer in the headlights, totally lost for what to say.

After what seemed an eternity of silence, I stammered an attempt to help her.

"Honey, everything okay?"

More protracted silence ... only a few seconds, but it seemed like forever.

"Yeeesss, yes, sweetheart ... everything was fine ... I had a nice night, thanks ... the guys were really sweet ... you know, underneath that gruff exterior ..."

As I listened to her stilted reply, a sudden realization hit me ... maybe more of a series of questions than a realization. *'Was Lizzy even going to tell me what happened? Or was she going to keep it secret? And, if she was going to keep it secret, why? What was her motive or motives?'*

Oh fuck ... that warped, gnawing masochistic adrenaline rush was back coursing through my veins. That blushing, wide-eyed stare of deceitfulness was like nectar to the demons in my soul. Nectar that pressed my buttons and encouraged me to press a few buttons of my own.

"Great ... so pleased to hear it ... because, you know, you hear so many stories, stories about some of the bad stuff these MC clubs get up to ... so aside from more beers, what was there to do? Singing, like Simon? Dancing?"

Now I felt bad. I could see how she was struggling, but even so, I was still

twisting the handle, enjoying the poker game playing out with my suddenly less than honest wife.

“Oh, no ... nothing like that ... pool, mostly pool...”

‘*Mostly*’ pool ... so help me God, wasn’t that the perfect opening to ask Lizzy what else had happened beside ‘*mostly*’ pool. But somehow, I resisted that particular temptation to ask about what else she’d done – instead taking a different tack.

“Pool ... that sounds fun! Must have taken you right back to your college days ... you were quite the diva ... could the guys keep up with you?”

“They’re pretty good as well ... I guess they spend so many hours playing in the Knights’ clubhouse...”

“So, who did you play? Anyone I know?”

“What’s with the third-degree, honey? Don’t you trust me?”

“Sorry, babe ... sorry if it came across like that ... of course I trust you.” *At least I did, but that’s kind of changing now.* “I was just trying to share your fun ... you know how I miss you, love to hear about what you’ve been up to...”

And as if by magic, Lizzy’s cheeks colored up all over again as she looked down at the ground, tears appearing in her eyes as she looked back up at the camera.

“I’m so, so sorry, honey ... I cheated on you last night ... I let Nine-Iron fuck me ... and not just once, he fucked me most of the night...”

As twisted as it might seem, a part of me felt disappointed Lizzy had confessed about her and Irons. I know couples shouldn’t have secrets – especially about this kind of stuff. But dammit, if the whole core of these exciting new games we were playing was doing things we shouldn’t – then wasn’t Lizzy not admitting to her sex with Irons just extra gasoline on the fire we were both loving so much?

“I know.”

Staccato – that was enough. I let the words sink in, staring at Lizzy, enjoying her blushing cheeks and look of confused embarrassment.

“After we’d spoken, the guys left the line open ... I saw everything!”

“Everything?” she choked. Confessing had been bad enough. But I could see the thought that I’d watched while she’d prick-teased, blown Irons’ huge cock before letting him fuck her nine ways to Sunday was too much for her to take in. My earlier knife-twisting, poker face melting away as I sought to comfort her, as I could tell she was right on the edge of meltdown.

“Sweetheart, it’s okay ... it’s okay ... I loved it, loved watching you enjoying Nine-Iron’s huge cock ... loved watching him pound into your sweet pussy and make you cum so good...”

Lizzy was still blushing, but it was a different kind of blush. She was no longer on the verge of meltdown; this blush was a mix of embarrassment at the thought of how she must have looked to me and memory of how much she’d enjoyed the pounding Nine-Iron had given her.

All my years getting to know this wonderful woman told me I needed to stay quiet – to give her time to process, to adjust to what she’d just found out. No matter how hard an ask it was.

“You really didn’t mind?” she asked, her voice nervous and tiny, almost incredulous at what I was saying. The female mind – I’d given her a Hall Pass and we’d fantasized about this kind of scene for many a year - but still my wonderful Lizzy couldn’t grasp that I was okay with all of this.

“Honey ... let me spell it out for you ... I LOVED WATCHING ... LOVED IT!!” My unequivocal words causing the start of the smallest of smiles.

“Loved watching you cumming all over that huge cock that Nine-Iron rammed you with! Loved seeing the way you worshipped that big meaty monster of his! Loved it ... loved it ... loved it!”

Lizzy’s smile was now on full power – no longer sleepy, now she was grinning like a Cheshire cat.

“OMG! I’ve got a pervert for a husband!”

“Who knew?” I teased back.

At that moment I wanted more than anything else to be able to reach into the phone and take her in my arms. Modern tech can be such a cruel mistress – so pin sharp and crystal clear, but ultimately so constraining. I physically

ached to touch and hold her, to smell her scent and feel the softness of her skin and hair. But all we could do was just gaze at each other, our shared smile stretching on and on. Until finally Lizzy broke the silence.

“So, you wouldn’t have any objections if I saw Nine-Irons again? Or if I found a creative way to cheer Simon up when I pop over tomorrow?”

“As long as you tell me ... and, if possible, let me watch ... then no, I have no objections.”

Lizzy just giggled – the giggle of a girl given the key to the world’s largest candy store at the same time as her dentist says, ‘*eat as much as you can.*’

I loved that she was happy ... loved the excitement these games promised. But under my breath, I breathed my own ‘OMG’, wondering what kind of a monster we might be creating here?

I loved Lizzy, loved that she was having fun ... but a small corner of my mind wondered where all this might lead.

I’d only been gone a month and from the way things were going, I wasn’t going to be shipped back stateside anytime soon.

If all this happened in the space of just one month, just what the hell games would my lady get up to during the rest of my absence? If, despite her best intentions, Lizzy’s healthy appetite for sex had driven her to be most unladylike with two different men in just one-month, what developments were likely by the end of my trip?

I could hardly complain – I’d agreed her hall pass and had hardly been a monk myself. But nonetheless, her being so unladylike with not one but with two men in such a short space of time was a thought that chilled and excited me in equal measure. Especially now there were two very different knights competing and jousting with their large dicks for her favor.

*To be continued ...*

# Thanks and Author's Note

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Also, in remembrance of Chris – a dear friend, great encourager and helper.

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**PETER G JOHNSON** is a family man and writer living and working in the UK. He loves both the sexuality and exploration of angst and human emotions that these types of stories allow. Some stories ending with 'Happily Ever After' finales. Others ending with the inevitable consequences when couples take risks with their love and love lives.

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