

## The Object of His Obsession

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It is the sight of her that triggers his fixation and obsession. So he sighs.

He has been waiting impatiently, like a child for this moment, when she will emerge from her office and take to the stairs.

She is descending the metal steps slowly now; hand on the railing, taking her time as she observes the scene before her. It is her legs that he focuses on first; placing his steaming mug carefully on his desk, as if giving her his full attention is his top priority. His eyes zoom in on the russet-colored skin and toned calve muscles, sculpted flesh that curves upward to the hemline of her short yet fashionable skirt. A tight mid-section he can see even from across the deep expanse of office space. The crisp white button-down top is fitting, following her curves the way a sports car does a winding road, eyes drifting upward to her full breasts that press against cotton—no, that is not right, they are straining against the fabric—yes, straining.

Waiting, he thinks, to be set free.

So he sighs.

He shifts uneasily in his chair. Swallows hard. Views her crossing the huge, warehouse-like space, littered with cubicles and conference tables made of steel, mesh, and chrome; some already occupied with staff hunkered down, staring into computer screens with headsets already donned. Four elevated offices located in the four corners of the building, the domain of management—her's—Nola's diagonally across from his. The staff, he recalls with a smirk, calls them birdcages, and that is exactly the way he sees his office, as a cage—because everyone, all the staff, can watch the intimate actions of their superiors just by glancing up, the elevated space and four sheets of glass all-telling. Except at this moment, he's not thinking about birds or cages or anything of the sort. No, at this moment, he is watching her, imagining her footfalls as sharp cracks of thunder as they fall on dark-gray carpet, because she commands that kind of respect, and he adds, with a smile, envy.

Well yeah. Look at her.

Out in the open and exposed she is beautiful, her thin locks bouncing against her neck, the angular lines to her chin, sharp rise of her cheeks, a splash of darkness that is her full sensuous lips.

He feels an ache deep within as he gapes.

Nola greets this one and that as she maneuvers around cube-space, patting the shoulder of each subordinate that she meets as she breezes on by, flashing her signature grin, displaying perfectly straight white teeth. Her smile is captivating, her eyes, dark, black, and alluring. When she stares at you, you can't help but becoming aroused. Her stride is purposeful and strong, and he marvels at the way she moves, the way her hips swish and shake, the rhythm that propels her along is filled with syncopation and funk. The melody is neo-soul. And he knows that she is not acting, not putting on a show. And that single thought fills him with desire.

Now she is glancing up his way. For a split second they make eye contact, and he feels his sudden fullness press against his suit pants. He smooths out his tie as he sucks in a breath. Slurps sloppily at his coffee. She is rising now, taking the stairs to his cage one at a time, hand on the rail as the tightness in his chest constricts and threatens. He wills himself to breathe. But it is becoming increasingly difficult to remain calm.

And then she is in his space, flashing her smile at him, his heart racing so fast he swears he will succumb to the pain and pass out, breathing harried, so he just sucks in a breath silently and holds it in as he smiles back.

"Hey you!" she says.

He exhales slowly and grins.

"Nola," he says.

She cocks her head from left to right. Her locks spring from one side to another.

"Damn, my neck is tight. Come hook a sistah up!"

She moves to the low sofa, a black leather thing that was purchased, along with the rest of the building's furnishings, when dot-com times were good.

He smiles as he fingers the button under the lip of his desk. All four glass-walls instantly turn opaque.

They are now alone.

He watches her sit, crossing those long legs of hers. He steals another harried breath as a hint of thigh reveals itself like a prize.

Nola launches into biz-speak—a rapid-fire diatribe concerning the latest problem with manufacturing—his domain, yet he is not listening. Instead, he is rising from his desk, attempting to hide his growing erection that strains against his leg as he moves toward her. Instinctively he moves behind her, reaching out to the leather for support, finding the cool dead hide remarkably comforting.

Slowly he makes contact with her shoulders, fingers resting against the softness of her neck. Then he begins to massage the ropy muscles as she lets out a sigh.

For a moment she is silent, letting him work his magic. She glances up a moment later—their eyes meet and lock—she smiles lovingly, at least that's the way he interprets the gesture, as a warmth so powerful spreads through his extremities like molten lava.

"Ooooooh, baby," she purrs, "you are too good. Can a sistah bottle you up?"

He grins. And fights the urge to bend forward and kiss her hard on those dark luscious lips. Like fruit they are plump, juicy, moist. And as if she is thinking the same as he, her tongue emerges slowly, wiping the lower lip from right to left before disappearing. The act is automatic, not thought out. Yet he is frozen where he stands. Watching, not breathing, mesmerized.

Her head tilts back down a moment later, she returns to her biz-talk, and he finds he can breathe again.

Eyes center on the front of her blouse. It is open at the neck, and he can't fight staring at the rise of her dark breasts. Tips of black lace contain her fleshy soft mounds. They lay there, seemingly asleep, until his fingers curl around her neck and arc ever so slightly downward. Her torso responds, so does her breathing; her chest expands and rises; her breasts are moving now, and he is intoxicated.

It is the scent of perfume that strikes him next. Wafting up, like a drug it takes hold of him and enralls; light, exotic, and sensuous, causing him to think of Egyptian kings and queens. He leans in to savor the sensation, remembering that evening six months or so ago, as they rode the elevator down in silence.

*He watched as he leaned against the cold steel wall, the hum of the elevator motor therapeutic. Hand in the pocket of a well-tailored three-button dark suit, powder blue tie, matching starched shirt, shoes buffed to perfection. Nola across from him, clad in a simple black dress that fit her like a glove, giving new meaning to the phrase "hour-glass body", gleaming pumps, makeup and hair absolutely flawless. Yet it was her perfume that drew him near, causing his palm to sweat as he inhaled her sweet scent. For a moment they were silent, watching one another, wondering what the other was thinking.*

*"Something wrong?" she asked cautiously.*

*"You are simply dazzling tonight," he responded, eyes sparkling. "Our client will no doubt be impressed, Nola."*

*"You ain't half bad yourself, mister."*

*"Your scent..."*

*"I took a shower earlier—"*

*"Not what I meant, silly—you smell...divine..."*

*A hint of rose touched her cheekbones.*

*"I thank you."*

*He moved in until mere inches separated them. For a moment neither breathed. Eyes unblinking. Her lips parted. His too.*

*"No," he said, "It is I who should be thanking you."*

*He leaned in further and she blinked..*

His hands tighten around clavicles feeling the smoothness of bone through fabric and skin. Her head swivels on its axis. She has begun a light moan, barely perceptible, but it is there, almost a whimper, but laced with heightened sensuality.

At that moment her cell rings, a loud annoying noise that tears through the moment, causing him to jump back abruptly. His hands, however, remain on her shoulders, patting her there gently.

"Hey you!" she answers.

Nola glances up swiftly and mouths the word, "Bobby."

The hardness below deflates as he struggles to keep the image of the elevator scene in mind. But it is fading, like morning mist, dissipating into the ether.

Words are exchanged between Nola and Bobby, but the details are lost to him. Something about tonight, who got the tickets, she guesses it's okay, but wishes she had more time to decide. And then she is handing the tiny flip phone to him, and he just stands there, gawking at the thing before she thrusts it into his palm as she says, "he wants to talk to you."

Her husband.

"Bobby." He clears his throat.

"Hey, Kevin. What's cracking?"

He smiles while eyeing Bobby's wife.

"Same old same old. You know the deal."

"Yeah, listen, it's been a minute since I've seen you. And I'm gonna be down your way on Friday. So if you don't have plans let's meet for lunch. I need to holla at you about something anyway."

She has reached up to massage her neck. Her fingers slip over his, fingers connecting for a brief moment flesh-to-flesh, the sensation electrifying.

"Kevin, you there?" Bobby asks.

"Uh, yeah, Bobby. You say Friday?"

"Focus, man! Yeah, Friday."

He clears his throat. "Yeah, Friday will do."

"Cool. Tell my baby I said peace out!" The line goes dead. He closes the phone, stares at it for a moment as he concentrates on her, willing those fingers to touch his again.

Instead Nola glances at her watch, exclaims, "Oh shit! I'm late for a meeting. Catch you later?"

And then she is gone, just like that, leaving him standing there in his cage, opaque walls closing in, no sounds to soothe, the scent of her perfume wafting upwards, leaving him alone, even as he struggles to contain it for just a moment more, images fading from view, fingers still tingling, yet not for long....

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The ringing of his phone breaks through the cacophony of silence. It rouses him over to the desk.

"Yes?" he says, picking up the sleek desk phone.

"Carly is holding on the line for you."

"Put her through, thanks." He adjusts himself as he sits down, pressing the button causing the windows to go clear. It's as if he were watching a movie where the scene has paused—people remain frozen where they were, mouths agape, cars unmoving, branches not swaying, bird suspended in mid-air—until the play button is pushed again and the scene returns to normal. Glancing down, he watches Nola as she races between a row of cubes and hangs a right into a conference room that is filled to capacity. She takes her seat at the head of the table and commences the meeting. He turns away as he hears her voice.

"Kevin?"

"I'm here. What's up?"

"Not much. In between meetings, wanted to catch you before I go into another."

Kevin is a million miles away.

"Kevin!"

"Yeah, I'm here."

"You said that already. What's the matter?"

"Nothing, Carly. Just busy." He has turned so that he can glance down and watch her and her staff as he fingers some papers upon his desk. He pushes them around as a child does vegetables on a plate. He is thinking about the party. His mind keeps returning to the party. Lately he has thought of little else. God, it was only two weeks ago, but so many things have changed in that short period of time he feels as if a lifetime has passed.

"Well, shoot—I guess I'll call Nola and see what's up. I mean, she's sure to carry a conversation better than you."

At the mention of her name he feels the spike of an electric current shoot down his spine. He swivels in his chair away from Nola, staring instead at the opposite wall of glass. Outside, the sun shines brightly, illuminating a stand of ancient oak trees.

"She's in a meeting at the moment— I can see her from here," he responds.

"He speaks! Well, I gotta go. Still love you, Kevin, shortcomings and all."

"Me too, Carly," he says before placing the phone in its cradle.

Fingers to temples. Eyes close. Head throbs. So do his lower extremities.

Nola. Her husband, Bobby. Carly, his wife.

He sighs.

He is thinking: how on earth did things get to this point?

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He enters her slowly, feeling the walls of her pussy expand as his cock fills her up. He groans in response to her grabbing his ass and pulling him toward her. He glances down; Carly's caramel skin is aglow with the sheen that accompanies lovemaking. Her body writhes underneath his frenzied thrusts, her narrow waist, and small breasts, with dark waxy nipples stand defiantly erect as if beckoning him near. Her pubic hair is trimmed neat, and he loves to watch himself thrust in and out of the sweet spot between her legs. He increases his tempo, going deep, to the hilt before pulling almost all the way out, the head of his cock breaching her darkened lips that glisten with juices, pausing for a moment to admire his handiwork, before she grabs his ass again and pulls him down on top of her, stuffing him neatly inside.

At this moment he is thinking of her.

He is savoring the moment of being inside his wife. Yet he ponders her...

Nola's legs, thighs, navel, breasts, neck, ass, and beautiful face.

He longs to drink her in, consume her in one bite, so that he can carry her around inside of him wherever he goes. Since this is not possible, he dreams of her instead. Constantly. At work, the commute home, during supper, afterwards as he and his wife sit on the couch watching television, even while they are making love.

Now as he thrusts deep inside of his wife he imagines he is fucking her. He thrusts harder, giving it to her the way he supposes Nola would want it, deep, hard, long. Carly's eyes are glazed as he pummels her, mouth open, tongue poised at her lips, but no words emerged. She is not one to talk during sex—not even a whimper or a moan—she makes faces, ushers him onwards with a gesture here and there. She's not shy—not afraid to take his dick in her hand and put it where she desires, in her mouth, her pussy, and even once in a while, her tight plump ass.

But she doesn't moan.

And this is okay with him. It never even crosses his mind. Until that one evening when Bobby and Nola stayed over...

*He recalls the rain as it pounded the roof with a vigor that frightened even him. He was huddled on the couch with Carly; Bobby and Nola sitting cozily across from them in a love seat, electricity out, half the city blacked out from the storm, their faces bathed only by candlelight. It had been pouring for hours—started just as they had arrived—supposed to be going out for dinner and a movie—had no choice but to change plans but quick, deciding to dine-in instead. Then the power went out—they listened to a portable radio, hearing about the roads becoming flooded.*

*Kevin told them to stay over in the guest bedroom. No way they were going to attempt to drive anywhere in this deluge.*

*Later on that night, after exhausting the supply of chardonnays, merlots, and even margarita mix, they retired to their separate rooms. Carly, as usual, drank a bit too much and had to be put to bed. So, Kevin lay besides her, stroking her smooth belly with one hand, tugging on himself with the other. While in the next room Bobby made love to his wife. It was clear that they tried to keep the noise down, but Kevin had no trouble discerning her moans through the thin wall.*

*Ooooooooh.*

*Ahhhhhhh.*

*He imagined Bobby taking her from behind, her round, heart-shaped ass flattening against his harried thrusts as she moaned and groaned.*

*He heard it all—Nola begging for more, commanding her husband to give it to her deeper, whispers that became increasingly frantic, until she cried out, a single muffled scream that caused Kevin to spurt onto his own belly, her orgasm mixing with his as Carly snored peacefully besides him.*

*He never forgot that night. Never forgot those sounds of love that haunt him even to this day. He longs to hear those words, soft melodies that alighted from her lips.*

*Ooooooooh.*

*Ahhhhhhh.*

*Mmmmmmmn.*

*Yeahhhhhhhhhhhhh.*

*Sounds of love...*

*From this woman—the object of his obsession.*

*Another man's wife.*

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*Nola—I've tried for days to express to you what, for me is an absolute new feeling. I've been asking myself if what I dare to express is even true and worth fighting for, given our circumstances, and the fact that we've been friends for so long. But I've come to the point where I can no longer NOT let you know how I'm feeling. I know a letter is not the best way to communicate affairs of the heart, but in the interest of so many things, I feel that this is the only way to start.*

*So, here it goes...*

*Something changed within me that night at the party. Two weeks ago, almost to this day, my life indelibly changed. I can't tell you when or why exactly it happened, but all I know is that I don't look at things the way I did before. I find myself dreaming about new things—whole new realms of possibilities, and each one includes you...*

*Nola, what happened between you and I that night cannot be ignored. It was profound. It was deep. And I pray that it*

*happens again and again and again. Yes, Nola, for me it was so much more than just physical...it affected me that much...*

He doesn't hear the door open until the footfalls are inside his cage. He glances up only to find his boss, the president of the company, standing before him. He swivels away from his laptop and quickly closes the clamshell, ensuring no one will witness this spilling of emotions. Like seed, it flows freely.

"Kevin."

"Rodney. Have a seat."

"Thanks, no, this won't take but a second." He glances back toward the door as if expecting company. Kevin witnesses the dark locks rise into view. Before he can breathe she is moving through the door.

"Ahhh, perfect timing, Nola," Rodney says.

She grins at Rodney before flashing her alluring smile his way.

Rodney begins without preamble. "I need the two of you in New York, tonight. Sorry for the late notice, but Nola your guy is having second thoughts—something about a manufacturing defect with the optics that he's hearing on the street—pure bullshit, of course, but we need to squelch this thing before it gets out of hand."

Nola is nodding, as if she's expected this. Kevin's is turning a sour face as if he has no idea what they are talking about. He opens his mouth to speak but Nola beats him to the punch.

"Rod, Kevin and I met earlier today regarding this issue, and I've already had my staff prepare a briefing just in case. So, Kevin and I can finalize it on the shuttle going up. We'll be ready, no problem. Just tell us when and where."

Kevin remains silent. He is observing her, cool under fire, her locks springing from one side of her neck to the other as she addresses each man in turn, her stare unwavering, her smile always captivating. He feels himself stirring, longing to push Rodney out of his office with the brush of his hand, palming the switch that turns the windows opaque so fast it would make her head spin, as he rushes to her the way a cheetah attacks its prey.

"Outstanding. Jackie has all the details." He turns to leave, swatting Kevin on the shoulder. He winks at Nola as he says, "As usual, the two of you make quite a pair." Then he is gone, leaving Nola and Kevin alone, a smirk painted on her sensuously full lips.

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Six hours later he sits across from her, forty-seven floors up from Broadway, enjoying the tastiest broiled salmon of his life. She is dressed casual: tight jeans, dark boots, off-white sweater that shows off her curves. As she excuses herself to go to the rest room he stares silently at her perfectly shaped ass, thanking God for answering his prayers.

When she returns, looking more refreshed than before, he focuses on the gap between her thighs, that sweet spot, attempting to make out the cleft that is her cunt. He knows what it looks like. He has committed its form to memory. Has touched it. Even slipped a finger inside.

God, what a night that was.

He hopes that tonight he will finish what they began.

The biz trip to New York was a godsend.

He is drinking rum and coke. The buzz that he is feeling helps his thinking along. He stares at her, pondering just how alluring she can be. They talk, casually about stuff, already exhausting the technical problems that sent them here. Once again he is barely listening. Instead, he remembers a scene very similar to this one. *Months ago, the two of them out on a client call, another late night, one of many. For some reason he was feeling depressed that night. Can't recall why—but it was one of those times when self-esteem was at an all time low. Perhaps he was just going through a mid-life*

*crisis—or reexamining his life from a different angle. Sometimes we all need to do that from time to time. Right?*

*Regardless, he was feeling down, and needed to believe in something else for a change.*

*Warmth.*

*"Do you find me attractive?"*

*He recalls blurting out the question over dinner. She had glanced up, incomprehension showing on her normally smooth, dark face. He could see the lines etched in her usually smooth brow.*

*She was thinking.*

*"What do you mean?" she asked cautiously. She put down her wine stem, giving him her full attention.*

*"Just what I said. Do you find me attractive?"*

*He was thinking about Bobby. How could he not have? They had been talking about him earlier. And Kevin found that he was comparing himself to the man. Kevin was thin and lankly, like a ball player, wherein Bobby was muscled, stocky. Kevin was light-skinned, Bobby, on the other hand, richly brown. Kevin wore his hair thin, tapered, professional, almost boring to a fault, whereas Bobby wore his to fit his personality—wild, free, unencumbered. His locks were thick, dark, and long. Women loved his hair. He received the stares and comments from women everywhere he went. Sometimes it made Kevin sick.*

*Nola had stared at him for a moment, pondering the question, and in the ensuing silence, he wondered, could I have gotten her?*

*Could I have been her man?*

*Her brow furrowed. She smiled and then said something simple that blew him away.*

*"I think you're beautiful."*

*Kevin considered her words for a moment. Head tilted down, he pondered their meaning.*

*He didn't see her get up, didn't notice her move to his side of the table until she was bending down. He glanced up, meeting her stare as her mouth opened. Before he had time to consider further action, her mouth was upon his, kissing him, loving him with her mouth, those luscious lips pressing against his with a passion that ignited something so deep and primal he hadn't felt in decades.*

*When she was done—he wasn't sure if it took mere seconds or minutes—Nola finally pulled back, wiped the locks from her eyes and sat down. She picked up her wine and took a sip. No words were needed. He knew now how she felt...*

*"Penny for your thoughts?" she asks, bringing him back to reality. He smiles in remembrance.*

*"Just thinking."*

*"About?"*

*"You. Me. The party few weeks ago."*

*Nola grins.*

*"Fucked me up."*

*His breath catches in his throat. Then he smiles.*

*"Yeah. Almost."*

*Nola stares at him unknowingly.*

*"What do you mean?" she asks.*

*He ignores the question. Instead drains his drink. Places the glass down, stares into the kaleidoscope of ice-patterns for a split-second before sucking in a breath, exhaling loudly.*

*"Let me ask you a question?"*

*"Shoot..."*

*"That night, did you want things to go all the way?"*

*That look, again. Furrowing brow.*

*"Pardon?"*

*"You, me, the party. Hello?"*

She laughs. For a moment the tension had risen to the point where one could cut it with an axe. But seconds later, it has dissipated thanks to her mirth. So, he laughs with her before turning serious.

"Something funny?"

Nola responds. "Yeah. As I recall we were all pretty fired up. You, me, Carly—oh my god—"

"This isn't about Carly," interrupting her—willing her to stay on track.

She pauses. Stares at him hard.

"Okay."

"Known you a long time, Nola—we go way back, right?"

"Right."

"So no sense if pussy-footing around." He chuckles at his own joke. "I mean, it's something we need to discuss."

She opens her mouth to speak then thinks better of it. Nods instead.

"That night at the party, something happened between us. Something that can't be denied. Two weeks later we've yet to fully acknowledge it. Don't know about you, but I can't just waltz around here like nothing happened. Cause that's not the case."

"Kevin—look, I know—"

The annoying clamor from her cell phone cuts the conversation short. Nola reaches for her hip, mouths her regrets as she answers it. Her face changes—a glow emerges in place of frowns.

Bobby...

He stands, slaps some bills on the table and is walking away before she stops him with a brush to his elbow.

"Bobby wants me to remind you about Friday—he's made reservations at *bluespace* for noon," she says, gesturing to her phone. "Don't be late, he says." Nola smiles, attempting to cut through the apprehension that has risen again between them. He smiles in return, but their conversation is done. Dejected, he heads for his room.

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*He was standing by the refrigerator, door open, shielding his lower body from view. To someone standing across the room, one might assume he was naked—because they would only see bare chest and ankles. Fact was he was wearing boxers—the Scooby Doo ones Carly gave him for his birthday as a goof.*

*He was in fact just standing there, head pounding from a night of crabs, Coronas, apple martinis and cigar smoking. Just the last two were more than enough to make his head spin.*

*1:30 a.m. in the morning, standing in the kitchen of his best-friend's home, Nola and Bobby asleep upstairs, Carly crashed on the futon in the basement below—and Kevin, his cotton mouth and tongue begging for moisture as he rummaged through the frig searching for something to drink. He found a liter of Sprite and not having the strength to search for a cup tipped the bottle to his lips, and hungrily drank.*

*As he dropped it into the slot he stepped back to close the door.*

*That's when he saw her.*

*She was standing motionless, observing him silently. He was caught off guard—almost dropping the soda on his toes. The door shut silently, leaving him on the linoleum in his boxers.*

*What he saw took his breath away.*

*Nola was clad in a button down shirt—little else. The shirt hung open. He could see the dark patch of pubic hair that spread over her mound—and a large purplish nipple that peeked out from the side of the shirt. Her hair hung free, locks surrounding her beautiful darkened face. Between her lips hung a burnt-out cigar. She moved forward on her toes, like a dancer; she seemed to glide toward him effortlessly. He glanced quickly toward the closed doorway that led to the basement stairs.*

*Behind her, the back of the family room couch was sprinkled in shadows; the rest of the room was indigo.*

*He couldn't wrestle his gaze from her body. It seemed to writhe as she moved near—the illusion of a serpent—and the fullness of her spoke to him. Not like Carly, certainly not overweight, just curvy hips, meat on the bones like his mama, legs and thighs that spoke of substance, and full breasts that hung invitingly. When she was within touching distance, her eyes never leaving his, the cigar now inches from his face, his cock swelling in his boxers with the certainty of a raging flood, he reached for her. Her legs parted, eyes unblinking, his fingers tracing a line down the cotton fabric of the man's shirt, past buttons, parting the halves, resting a hand lightly on her breast, circling the hard nipple before dipping down further still, past her navel, which he traced with a lighten fingernail before meandering through her dark patch of hair. Finally, after a splendid minute, he felt the rise of moistened flesh that met his touch.*

*She reached out and expertly slipped inside his shorts. His cock came alive as she palmed the bulbous head, stroking the shaft, raking her fingers lightly over his balls. He found her opening effortlessly, slipping a finger inside. Her pussy seemed to gulp and swallow, squishing against his knuckle as he curled his digit within, causing her to moan. It triggered a remembrance—except this time, it wasn't Bobby doing the driving. The thought alone made him smile.*

*His thumb found her clit and began a rhythmic massage. Her legs parted further. He pulled out abruptly, her eyes going wide, breath arrested as he brought a glazed finger to his mouth. Tasting her, sucking in her juice, eyes never leaving hers, eyelids fluttering when he stuffed two fingers back inside.*

*His cock stretched out in front of him, gently bobbing besides her waist. She stroked it with her palm, his toes attempting to curl into the cool linoleum. And then, just as she found her groove stroking him, she ceased and instead moved to the back of the couch that was dappled in darkness. Her hands spread lengthwise along the edge of the furniture, bending forward and down, lifting up the shirt in the process—Bobby's shirt, the same one he had been wearing earlier that evening—and spread her legs wide, exhibiting in all of its splendor her heart-shaped chocolate-colored ass.*

*He groaned contentedly, marveling at the exquisiteness on display before him. He could clearly see her cunt lips, which glistened even in the half-darkness. He thought of the kiss they had shared months before, her intoxicating scent that night in the elevator, the way her skin felt when he massaged her shoulders in his cage—the electricity that coursed between them, the guttural sounds emitted while making love. He gripped himself decisively, readying to impale his hardness into the wetness of her sweet cavern. Suddenly unable to contain his hunger, he lunged forward with a purpose that surprised even him. In that moment they clearly heard the rustling coming from upstairs, the weighty uncoordinated footfalls, and Bobby's unmistakable deep voice calling out: "Nola, baby is that you I hear?"*

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The hallway is silent. He stands in front of her room, glancing down at his feet, listening for sounds, willing his breathing to slow to a crawl. It is after one a.m., the hotel and most of its occupants are fast asleep.

He has been standing here for the good part of five minutes. Not moving, fingering the letter he carries in his hand. He has readied to slip it under her door, but each time he musters up the strength to bend down and release it, an ache appears out of nowhere, righting him.

He sucks in a breath, thinking about what awaits him on the other side of the door, feeling the familiar tide that begins deeps in his core and radiates outward, like some supernova, an explosion of energy, passion and raw emotion. Except in this case the blast that readies to fills his loins is laden with seed, sap he longs to spill again—tonight—if she will let him....

He knocks on the door. Rustling. Knocks again. More noise, then footfalls. Locks and bolts undone. The door opens, he finds himself facing her.

"Know what time it is?" she inquires, wiping at the corner of one eye. She is clad in a wrinkly man's button-down white shirt, way too big for her frame. He looks her over, musing about what, if anything, she wears underneath. Immediately his thoughts return to the party two weeks ago, and the night that made him a man obsessed. Even at the lateness of this hour, her sensuality reaches out and tickles his skin, caressing him in this lonely hallway. He smells her, takes in the smoothness of her skin, the roundness to her cheekbones, the surety of her stare.

Graceful curves that cannot be concealed by another man's shirt.

All of this conspires to confuse him, tear him down, make him weak, a slave to the physical. And yet, it is his stare that is unyielding now—he can hear the pulse in his ears. He is growing hard, can feel it tighten his jeans, is certain she can sense his awakening too.

"Anything wrong?" she asks, gaze washing over him hastily, hand on her hip, making no move to let him pass.

"Need to talk—didn't get to finish what we started earlier."

"This can't wait?" she inquires, somewhat exasperated. The hour is late.

"Obviously not." They stare each other down for a moment before he hears her sigh. She retreats, and he enters the room.

The bed is unmade, oversized pillows and thick comforter haphazardly situated. She climbs onto the bed, exposing thighs. A hint of white emerges—and he conjures up images of silk panties, erotic g-strings, and other sexual things. She witnesses his stare. Asks him what it is exactly that he wants?

Silently he hands her the letter, which has occupied his time for several evenings.

"What is this?"

"How I feel."

Nothing more to say. So he sits on the edge of the bed, facing away from her. She repositions the comforter over her legs, ensuring she is buttoned up top. Unfolds the letter and glances over at him. Then she begins to read.

It takes her a minute to complete. He is silent watching her. Her expression doesn't change, as if she has been expecting this. When she is done, she refolds the letter quietly and glances up.

"Kevin."

"Yes." He is waiting breathless.

She is cautious with her words.

"This is my fault," she says. "I've led you on. Things happened at that party that cannot be undone. I would be lying if I said I regretted them all, but the truth is," and here she pauses for a moment to search the ceiling, as if she can find comfort there, "they shouldn't have happened."

He is silent. She takes his silence as an approval to continue.

"For several reasons, Kevin. One, I am married. We both are. We love our spouses. And are not about to jeopardize what we have."

Statement, not question.

"Two, you and I friends—been that way for as long as I can recall. Don't want to mess that up—right? I mean, what good can come of this? Lose a friendship for twenty minutes of pleasure?" She stares at him yet he looks away. "Kevin, is it really worth it?"

She barrels forward, finding the strength—the energy to go on, regardless of the effect it has on him.

"Three—we work together. We're on the same team—you and I built this company together—I love what I do, know you do too. Don't want to do anything else, don't want to work anywhere else—I know you feel the same."

Spreads her hands wide, palms upturned, "So you see, Kevin, what happened that night was a mistake. All of it serious error—I realize that now. I was being selfish—enjoying the attention, the stares, the energy you threw my way."

Nola smiles weakly.

He has been sitting patiently, rubbing his palms together. He stands now, goes to the windows, parts the curtain to glance down at the street life below. He turns to her to speak, his voice a whisper.

"You said I was beautiful."

Then mustering up the strength to continue, he barrels forward. "I know things aren't simple. I wish to God they were. I wish there weren't these obstacles in our way—I wish we could just finish what we started. I'm not disagreeing with what you've said, nor am I implying that your reaction doesn't make any sense—cause it does. But affairs of the heart never make sense. They defy logic. Affairs of the heart are illogical, Nola.

"I know what I feel—what I felt that night, when you took me in your sweet mouth—I know what you felt too—know it as sure as I'm standing here—"

Her expression has changed. It has suddenly soured and forces him to pause. She is staring at him as if he is not of this world. Instinctively he waits.

"What are you talking about?"

"Kind of late in the game for coyness. You know what we shared..."

He moves forward, a wave of elation surging through him as he remembers the sweet details of their last encounter.

Reaching the foot of the bed he climbs on. Nola retreats to the headboard, back pressed into the veneer wood, hearing it groan.

"I think you should leave," she says with sudden finality.

He strokes the lump where her thigh is positioned under cover. She recoils like a caged animal.

"Stop it. This isn't going to happen. Not tonight. Not again."

He pauses, hand in mid-stretch. His gaze is galvanized with hers, her locks that seem to tremble along with everything else. In that moment he feels extreme pity. And intense pain.

"Do you deny how you felt? How good it felt when we were together?"

Silence.

He reaches for her again. She lets his hand rest on the comforter. His lips are upturned.

"You said I was beautiful..."

Her head thrashes but in slow motion. She opens her mouth to speak, and is interrupted by the high-pitched scream of the smoke alarm.

Hands immediately rise to their ears, both are shaken by the intensity.

It is close to 1:30 a.m., and the fucking fire alarm is wailing.

Unbelievable!

The next thirty minutes pass in rapid-fire succession—into the hallway, down countless flights of stairs, out into the pouring rain, away from the hotel complex that has been maddeningly roped off by NYFD. Sirens, fire engines, police vehicles, hoses, hotel staff and guests are everywhere. The guests scatter; already clogged streets become choked to near bursting with equipment and crazed, half-dressed out-of-towners. By the time he leads Nola hesitantly to an all-night diner four blocks away, Bobby's shirt is soaked to the bone. Her nipples shine like beacons. Either she hasn't noticed or no longer cares. She is freezing, dead tired, and drained of all emotion. At 2:18 a.m., they have only each other for comfort.

The thought alone is sobering.

They sit across from each other now, Nola and Kevin, in a cramped, dingy booth, sipping lukewarm coffee, the silence and wobbly table the only thing separating them, as she tries unsuccessfully to forget this night, this man, this situation.

She is thinking: how on earth did things get to this point?

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Sitting in his cage, re-reading an email thread from a throng of engineers when his cell rings. He absently glances down and notices that he has three missed calls. Answers on the fourth ring, noting the time. Well past 3 p.m.

Bobby. No preamble.

"I waited for close to 90 minutes..."

Kevin clenches his teeth and swears.

"Oh shit, man, totally forgot. Got tied up with this defect shit."

"Whatever. We need to talk. It's about Nola."

That stops him dead in his tracks. He is silent.

"Hear me?" Bobby demands.

"Yeah." A million scenarios run through his head at light speed. Of course she told him—naïve to think otherwise.

What to do?

Deny it?

No, she has the letter.

His words on a page.

Wonders if Carly knows. Yet?

Only a matter of time.

Oh Christ.

"I have to take care of a few things," he hears Bobby utter, "but will be free later on. We need to talk. Tonight—can't put this off any longer."

"Okay."

Bobby provides the when and the where. Then signs off. He stares at his cell in his palm. Glances up, apprehension covering his face like stubble. Peers toward her office—it sits vacant.

He punches the switch angrily, bathing his cage in privacy.

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Men always focus on the physical to a fault.

He does that now.

Reliving in excruciating detail how she took him—inch by delicious inch—into her waiting mouth.

*He recalls with razor-sharp clarity the feeling of absolute pleasure he took in breaching those plump, luscious lips, slipping his swollen cock inside her mouth, his ass lifting up from the couch, trying with all of his strength not to impale her with his thick stick, the feeling so exquisite and overpowering, knowing with a surety that he would not last, couldn't hold back the passion that was surging forward like a wailing, out-of-control sandstorm. No longer caring, his mind ceasing to perform analysis, to evaluate what he was doing here or now, nor the dire consequences of his actions.*

*When exactly was it that he compromised his marriage? He should have paused to consider this simple question.*

*But he could not.*

*Was it the moment he slipped his dick between her teeth? Or was it months back when he began, seeming unconsciously, to notice her in a different light—looking forward to the times when she sashayed into his cage, flashing her signature smile, those white teeth that was like a fresh slap to the cheek, her touch, alighting from his shoulder in passing, but the feeling remaining for several hours.*

*When was it?*

*She had kissed him that night—and that single act had changed him—fire turned up high—no longer smoldering, but a full all-out blaze. Four alarms. No longer able to contain his emotions—was it minutes or hours earlier, when Bobby's gruff voice interrupted their pleasure?*

*He did not know. Nor did he care.*

*They had scattered like rats, retreating to their separate lairs to wait—he knew—counting the seconds until her husband's snoring returned to normal. Then creeping back up the carpeted steps slowly, hands and cock fully extended in front of him as he moved stealthily, feeling his seed leak onto his fingertips, his mind a daze, no longer thinking of her—his wife, Carly, who lay unconscious and unaware below.*

*When he reached the first floor he found it bathed in darkness. No matter—he would feel his way, however long it took, inch by inch, foot by foot. He did so, fingers outstretched, remembering where the couch and other furniture lay. Found it quickly and sat down slowly, aware of every movement, every sound his body and the fabric made, willing his breathing to return to normal. But it would not comply. He was that fired up.*

*Then he heard her.*

*Every sense was tuned to an ultra-high frequency.*

*Progressing down the stairs—he was sure.*

*Returning to him.*

*He squeezed himself and stifled a moan. His heart raced. Soon now—if the pounding in his ears didn't give him away. Soon now—nothing else mattered. It was messed up—this situation—if one could call it that—if he allowed himself one split second of reasoned thought to consider—but he did not.*

*He was too far gone for that.*

*She approached. He silently inhaled, could smell her scent. It was overpowering—the musk that accompanies passion—raw, primal sex smells. Fist rushed to his mouth—he barely contained a scream—she was ready for him, meandering around furniture silently, footfalls light on the thick carpeting.*

*A woman's touch. He felt it on his face and chest, moving downward, experiencing the fingernail as it grazed skin and navel, before ending at the top edge of his boxers. He held his breath, held his cock in his palm, as in offering. Take it, he willed her, before I go insane.*

*Then he alighted from the couch as she silently complied, taking him gently inside.*

*The feeling was indescribable. Her mouth was an oven—hot, sloppy sucking and thrusting toward the back of her throat as he reached for her locks, the ferocity within causing him to tremble. Toes curling on the cool carpet, legs outstretched, holding her head in his hands, bucking his hips slowly, rotating his pelvis, ass off the couch as he worked her mouth in time to his rhythm, a groove she recognized and matched, slowly increasing her pace, hearing his soft moans, eyes scrunched tightly shut, wouldn't matter if they were wide fucking open, darkness settling around them like a blanket, occasional house creaks and groans, spiking the hush of the night, otherwise silent.*

*He could smell his cum mixed with the odor of saliva and fresh fuck. It hung in the air. He bucked harder, increased his thrusts, and she met him with an expert touch, wrapping her fingers along his shaft, squeezing, gripping, pumping, tickling his balls with her tongue, tugging at the slippery shaft and glistening engorged head until he could no longer stand it, forcing himself back inside.*

*To a place that was warm, wet, and cozy.*

*She was increasing the tempo now, upping the pace, cupping his balls with one hand, squeezing his meat with the other, letting him know in that unspoken language that lovers use, it was okay to unleash: I know what you want, I know what you need, use me, baby, don't be afraid to let go, spray me, shower me, I can take it, I'm willing to take anything you send my way.*

*How long, he could not say.*

*Wasn't very long. The time they had spent all came down to this—a single physical act—an instant in time when things would forever be changed.*

*A tidal wave rolling.*

*Avalanche barreling down an ice-covered mountainside.*

*It all came down to this—a delicious blowjob, end of the line, fantasy-turned-reality.*

*He couldn't have stopped it if he tried.*

*He rose up, toes digging into the carpet, grasping the sides of her head, locks trapped between fingers as he came, giving up his sap, releasing his cum to her willingly, unleashing an outpouring of emotion and everything else he had to offer.*

*Until there was nothing left to give.*

*It took everything he had, and every ounce of strength he possessed not to scream.*

*Save for a single solitary moan, Nola was silent. She lapped him up, swallowing his juice down, gulping in amazement at the volume to his little river.*

*Then it was done, as quickly as it had begun.*

*Cock deflating, like a balloon that has lost its precious air, sweet mouth containing his manhood for an instant more before slipping out, rising off her haunches, sequestering him safely inside of his underwear before leaving him alone. She gave him back to his spouse quietly before returning faithfully and silently to her own.*

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The interior of the sedan is warm. He scans the dash, noting the time. Over an hour late to this preordained meeting, then panning over to Bobby's smooth shadowy face. Even dappled in darkness, he is ruggedly handsome—strong angular lines, piercing eyes, inviting smile—he knows why she chose him.

Bobby is chewing on an unlit cigar—and the image propels him back to the party—and to her. Clad only in a man's button down shirt—her wares spilling out enticingly.

Stop it.

That precious moment, captured eternally in mid-flight, emblazoned in his mind like a high-resolution photograph, is gone forever.

Never to return.

He understands that now—yet he ponders how everything went wrong so quick.

Back to the present. He's late.

Bobby's clenched jaw line tells him so, and that the man in the driver's seat is not amused.

Patience running thin.

Gas tank on reserves.

He's been driving around the city, attempting without success to find a solution to this problem.

His situation.

But situations like this don't have easily defined solutions or answers.

He's been avoiding Bobby as if he were the plague, knowing that he has to face his demons, his nemesis, sooner rather than later.

He never counted on it all crashing down this soon, however.

"Hey," he mutters, breaking the silence.

Bobby turns the radio down, glancing his way.

"Expected to see you about an hour ago."

He grins nervously. Raises his shoulders as if to imply that shit happens.

Bobby clears his throat. Lowers the window and chucks out his now-cold cigar. Turns to Kevin and says, "Time we talked, you and I, don't you think?"

He merely grunts.

Bobby launches. "I'm aware of this...this thing with my wife, Nola. Have known for some time actually." He pauses, glances over at the passenger side, at the figure whose stare is riveted to his clenched hands, heart racing, afraid to breath. Afraid not too—unsure of which is worse.

They are in a quiet park at the point, a hundred yards from a lazy river, airport lights twinkling in the background. A huge sculpture is buried in the sand and dirt to their left, outstretched hand, veined and grotesque, at least it appears that way from his vantage point, reaching for the sky.

"Can't blame you, actually. I mean, look at her—what an incredible woman she is."  
He listens. Wonders for a brief instant how this will end.  
Knife in the heart?  
Fingers gripping his neck until life ebbs away?  
His candle blown out—way too soon?  
"Even though you've got someone beautiful at home, a man's gotta roam, right? In the genes—  
innate to all males, handed down, species to species, since long before dinosaurs roamed the earth."  
He continues.  
"You're obsessing. Can't help yourself. Over your head. In too deep." Bobby turns his body  
to stare at him—giving him his full profile. "Understand what I'm saying?"  
He nods silently.  
"Problem is, you're obsessing over the wrong one."  
Sharp glance his way.  
"Don't understand," he says, finding his breath, fighting the demons that live within.  
"Obsession—it's a terrible thing. Makes one lose sight of what they're searching for."  
Slow sharp exhale. Resolve—resolve to settle this thing, this situation, no matter what, no  
matter how fucked up it is, regardless of the outcome, like men—man-to-man.  
"Listen, Bobby, I didn't come here—"  
"You need to know she wasn't the one who tasted your sap," Bobby says. "She never swallowed  
your seed."  
He is rising out of his seat now, anger bubbling to the surface, unfettered. Facing Bobby he  
swallows hard.  
"Just what are you talking about?" he yells incredulously. "What the fuck are you saying?"  
"I think you know—search deep within your soul, and I trust you'll uncover the truth. I have—  
and I'm in a better place because of it. The truth, as someone once said, will set you free..." Bobby  
grins, emits a sharp laugh.  
"You're crazy, you know that, Bobby? What shit have you smoked?"  
"Am I? I think you know it wasn't Nola who took you deep into her mouth that night at the  
party..."  
Split-second pause.  
A smile—not wicked, but filled with something else he's yet to comprehend.  
"It was I that night, Kevin. Yours truly. Me."  
And then he is scrambling out of the car and running full force, arms flailing, branches and  
vines stinging his face and cheek as he sprints blindly, eyes wide yet shut, mouth yawning in a silent  
scream. And Bobby sits patiently, fingers tapping to some unnamed, noiseless beat, waiting for him to  
return, as he knows he will sooner rather than later, to face his passions and his demons—two opposite  
ends of the same, god damned spectrum—the same way he has—like a man....

**The End**

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