

Secrets



By
John D

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Codes: MF, Mf, mf, nc, inc, rp, light, humour, rom, bdsm

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Authors Note

This story was written for the National Novel Writing Month 2011 in November of that year and was completed on November 29th 2011, although the editing took a little longer, hence the slight delay from finishing to publishing the book.

The setting for this story is a small town in the Midlands and is expressly designed to be around seventy short scenes aggregated into chapters. This should make it easy to read where the reading is stop-start (such as public transport or a busy office) but did make it harder to write so that the story flowed of sorts! Although there are some seriously heavy codes associated with the book, it is quite a light read and shouldn't offend too many people.

I would like to thank my wife for her understanding while writing all of my stories. Alas, as I choose to remain semi-anonymous I cannot name her but without her support I would not have got it finished. To her, I dedicate this work.

While I don't think this is my best ever work I had fun writing it and am happy with the final result, despite its clichés; I hope you have as much fun reading it.

This eBook, has been released to be freely downloaded and I would ask my readers to drop me a line and let me know what you think of the story; I cannot hope to improve as an author if the readers don't tell me where I succeeded and where I failed! I can happily accept criticism, but I do need feedback.

Kind regards,
John D

15th December 2011

Feedback: johndstories@gmail.com

Chapter I

Joseph frowned when he came into his kitchen, “I wish you'd have breakfast in your own home,” he grumbled causing his employee to look up from the borrowed newspaper.

“Yeah, and that means I would have to buy my own bananas,” he replied with a smirk, peeling the yellow fruit and taking a big bite. “And anyway, no-one else eats them except me.”

“I should bloody charge you. A pound a banana, every day for a year, it'll be close to two hundred and fifty.” There was a teasing grin as the tall, well-built man picked up a box of cereal and looked for a clean bowl.

“Honestly, one banana,” came the response. “Look at this article, people in the world starving to death and you are concerned about a single tiny banana.” Joseph glanced at the article with a sneer and poured himself some cereal.

“Yes, but you are not starving to death, you are pilfering my bloody fruit.”

“Ahhh, but I would be starving to death if I didn't pilfer your bloody fruit,” he replied with a cheeky grin. “Think of it as charity.” Joseph snorted, but before he could reply his daughter, and eldest child, Katherine appeared in the doorway, dressed only in a flimsy nightie.

Katherine was a few years younger than Matthew, his star employee who lived nearby and who he gave a lift to work every day, and he nodded towards the young lady with a cursory nod. “Shouldn't you be dressed?” he asked and Katherine shook her head, her bosom-length dark brown hair becoming ruffled until she swept it back.

“No classes 'til ten,” she replied and sat down at the table, grabbing the orange juice carton and squeezing the last few thimbles of juice into an empty cup, sighing dramatically and looking accusingly at her father.

Joseph scowled at his daughter, he did not believe that her erratic timetable encouraged her to work hard at her studies as she never appeared to be actually at school and she downed the orange juice oblivious to the frown. In his day, he would have to be at college every day all day!

Katherine leant across and put a couple of slices of bread in the toaster and yawned loudly. “Tired?” Matthew asked, a smirk on his face and Katherine smiled and nodded.

“Was up until 1am playing on the ruddy PlayStation,” Joseph thundered and Katherine scowled at him.

“I am nearly eighteen, I can stay up past your bedtime,” she replied and caught the toast as it flicked her lightly browned bread into mid-air, buttering it and sitting down opposite Matthew. “I am not as old as you, I don't get tired as easily.”

“Yes, nearly eighteen. You can do that when you are eighteen,” came the response but Katherine wasn't listening.

“What's that?” Katherine asked and took the centre of the newspaper. “Oh my God, look at that dress,” she shrieked and Matthew looked over see a pretty musician wearing a short, garish dress. “She is such a slut. I wouldn't be seen dead in that.”

Matthew's glance fell off the bottom of the page to see the schoolgirl's cleavage down her nightie and he felt a twinge of guilty pleasure but couldn't tear his eyes away from the pert teenage bosom. “You can have that back,” Katherine told him passing him the newspaper as she finished reading the article and set about furnishing her toast with jam, oblivious to where Matthew was looking. “Oh and Dad, tell Mum that I am going to Sam's afterwards so don't do dinner for me.”

Joseph grunted and his eyes narrowed, he did not like his daughter's boyfriend any more than the young man in question liked his girlfriend's father. Joseph regarded Katherine's relationship with Sam as an unexplained mystery, failing to appreciate exactly what his smart and beautiful daughter saw in the downtrodden boy. Few people expected Sam to go to University, and it was touch and go whether he would finish his A-Levels, such was his lacklustre work ethic. As far as Joseph was concerned, he was destined to struggle through life just like his mother and elder brother, but there was something about him that his daughter just adored. Katherine was smart, beautiful and warm, and as far as the biased father was concerned, the mirror opposite of her partner, but nothing Joseph could say would make her change her mind.

“What time will you be home?” he asked coldly and Katherine got a sinking feeling in her stomach.

“I'm an adult,” she whined. “I will be home before midnight.”

Joseph spluttered. “You are not eighteen for another week. 10pm at the latest,” he warned her and got an annoyed grunt in return. Katherine knew her father did not approve of Sam, he had made that perfectly clear, but she loved him, he was her first love and the man she had allowed to steal her innocence. “It is a school night,” he used as an excuse.

“Dad, please,” Katherine pleaded. Sam would be home alone until 11pm at the earliest and they had every intention of using the empty property for immoral purposes. “He only lives ten minutes away.”

“Ten thirty,” came the response. “And not a second later.” Katherine barely accepted this as a compromise, and glared at her father.

They were still bickering across Matthew when Charlotte, Joseph's wife and Katherine's mother appeared in the doorway, dressed in a brand new exercise tracksuit with her arms folded. She didn't work: Joseph expressly forbade it, and instead she occupied herself with some volunteering work, housework and gym membership, something her husband moaned about paying for, but nevertheless very much enjoyed the toned body she had worked for. Charlotte was very good for her age, a mere 42 years old, but looked younger with her pert bosom and slim body.

“What's going on here?”

“Dad!” Katherine moaned. “He is being unreasonable.” Joseph groaned at the accusation and then summarised the argument, with Katherine dismayed to find her mother agreeing with the aforementioned dictated curfew. Joseph cuddled her as Katherine stormed off and she kissed him, his hands slipping up her tracksuit top.

“I can give you ten minutes,” Matthew offered when Charlotte glanced over but she patted her husband's arms out of her clothing when she glanced over at the clock.

“You'll be late,” she warned and detaching herself from her husband walked over to get herself a bowl of cereal, disappointing the amorous Joseph. Charlotte watched as Joseph left the room to get ready and sat down to talk to her husband's employee. She rarely knew or understood what happened at the company and the odd time she got to speak to Matthew without her husband listening, got to find out titbits of information that Joseph should really have told her – like the fact that there were some business meetings in London the following week and Joseph was planning on going with his co-director.

“It's up to Paul really,” Matthew nervously said, repeating a conversation in the car the previous day. “It depends on whether he thinks they both need to go. I don't think they will want them both out of the office, I swear they think us workers are just work shy and lazy.” Charlotte smiled at this, and they waited for the businessman to finish getting ready for work.

Charlotte waited for the door to close and the car to leave the drive and ran into the front room, loading up her laptop. She had been told of a great new site from her friend at the gym and unzipping her tracksuit jacket, typed in her login name and password.

“Clever Jackpot” loaded in a few seconds, a garish front page enticing visitors to open accounts and gamble and as Joseph's car drove away to earn money, Charlotte began to spend it.

* * * * *

“Fuck yeah,” screamed the short rotund gentleman as he hooked the note in the scarlet stocking. The girl shook her curvaceous rear in his face and he took a swig of the Champagne bottle in his right hand, nodding towards her as she looked at him coyly. “Lookin' mighty fine, babe.”

She smiled at him and spun around, shaking her body at his eye-line and wiggling her bosom at the appreciative man. He snorted and pulled out another note, that he tucked into her other stocking top and she unclipped her flimsy bra so her breasts dangled in front of him.

He whistled in enjoyment and sighed as she ground her hips into his lap with a guilty smile. Paul Mason was the co-owner and director of the mobile software company he ran with Joseph Wilson and spluttered when the girl thrust her unfettered bosom in his face.

“If you want some more fun,” she whispered as she leant over. “I finish in twenty minutes. Two hundred for a fuck.” The girl had earmarked Paul the moment she had clapped eyes on him: alone, well-dressed and drinking expensive drinks. She knew, from experience at working at the strip joint, that men like Paul often wanted something a little extra to finish the evening, and where there was a need, there was money. Paul whistled and watched the eighteen year-old run her hands down his chest and stop at his groin.

“One fifty,” he told her in return and she raised her eyebrows blowing him a kiss.

“Two hundred and I'll let you stick it anywhere,” she replied, her eyes not leaving his gaze. She slid her finger seductively into her mouth and watched for a reaction.

Paul's grin turned to a smirk. She was certainly older than his preferred choice of partner, but he would not find girls younger than the beautiful Cherry at such establishments and she nodded. “Deal,” he told her and straightened his shirt, looking at her in the eyes.

Cherry was a first-year University student, who had turned to stripping, dancing and prostitution as a way of funding her studies. Her new flatmates had strongly discouraged her from doing so, and she knew her parents would be disgusted if they found out, but she was doing a medical degree and it cost money, lots of money and this was a quick, simple way to build up some cash reserves.

Cherry had always had a voracious sexual appetite, and although she didn't enjoy the sex or the work, she felt working one night in the club was preferable to working all weekend at a supermarket.

Cherry, or Alicia Reeves, was waiting for Paul at the end of the night, dressed in skirt and T-Shirt. She nodded towards the two bouncers and subtly slipped the

tallest gentleman a ten pound note as she left, her arm looped around Paul's. For this, he would take the registration number of Paul's car and ring her in fifteen minutes if she hadn't contacted him. If she didn't answer, he would wait ten minutes and then call the Police with the said registration number should he fail to get the "safe word." It was lucrative money for the bouncers – a couple of girls a night could increase their wages by a few hundred pounds a month.

Paul pulled out of the private car park in his pristine Jaguar and drove the mile from the club to the luxury hotel he had booked into. Alicia allowed him to feel her up in the lift, but gasped as he opened the door to the penthouse suite and she ran to the window, her short skirt riding up as she ran.

Paul smirked, she was wearing very skimpy underwear and clinked the wine glasses as she looked out of the London skyline. "Wine?"

Alicia watched as he opened the bottle and poured two glasses, passing one to his companion. "So what do you do?"

"I'm a director," Paul boasted. "I run my own company doing mobile phone apps and games. We are based in the Midlands but trade meetings and stuff happens in the City so I am down regularly."

Alicia smiled and pulled out her phone that was vibrating, answering the bouncer and giving him her safe word. "I don't suppose you could fix my phone," she begged and held it out. "It keeps moving some widgets around and ..."

"I don't fix them," Paul admitted. "I just supervise people who make me money." There was an awkward silence as this killed their conversation and Alicia put her phone in her bag, taking a big gulp of the golden nectar. Paul counted out a dozen notes and put them down on the table, eyeing the girl. "For you. When we have finished."

"I don't suppose I could use your toilet?" Alicia asked and left Paul to drink. Alicia took her handbag into the bathroom and the beautiful brunette disrobed, pulling out a flimsy garment from her bag: she always came prepared.

Alicia was stunning, the straight brown hair framing her innocent looking face, often decorated with a smile and highlighted with a cute button nose and radiant brown eyes. Her 34C breasts were ample and pert, while her skin glowed healthily and sat on top of a shapely body with elegant curves and toned legs. Alicia had the pick of all the guys at University and she was choosing to spend it with an overweight, obnoxious, charmless and balding middle-aged man.

She emerged from the bathroom dressed in a beautiful black teddy, transparently revealing her smooth body underneath and Paul gulped, she was radiant. Alicia strode over, giving him a sultry expression but full of nervous dread, she had only prostituted a few times before and the other times were as the second girl in a

bisexual threesome. Each time she had Theresa, but now she was alone – Theresa was ill and Alicia had picked up Paul alone. She had already texted the bouncer with the hotel and room number when we was in the bathroom so she didn't feel unsafe, just unsure of herself.

“You're lovely,” Paul gushed and watched as the splendid girl sat astride his lap and kissed him on the lips and then on the cheek.

“Relax Paul,” she soothed, her own hands shaking as much as Paul's. Alicia gradually undid every button of the businessman's shirt and pulled it down before pushing the hairy chest backwards onto the bed and leaning down to unhook his trousers. Paul began to breathe heavily, his eyes fixed upon the bosom of the student, as she removed the trousers and underpants from the man.

He liked her nervousness, it made him fantasise that she shouldn't be there, as though she was being a naughty schoolgirl and Paul liked this thought, Alicia looked young enough that she might still be at school.

Paul was already stiffening, his loins itching with a impassioned lust and waited for Alicia to drop his clothes off his ankles. Alicia ran her hands through his pubic hair, and then his chest hair, putting her legs back over his stomach and sitting on his gut. “So,” she asked coyly. “What exactly do you want?”

She rocked back so his cock touched her ass crack and then slid forward again, running her hands over his body and smiling at him. “A blow job? A piece of my ass? Or a proper, dirty fuck?” Alicia felt very self-conscious talking dirty and lewd but Paul groaned at the lustful look in Alicia's eyes and she licked her lips. “I give good head.”

“I want everything,” Paul moaned, “but I love to fuck little girl's butts. Alicia bit her lip, it was the one sexual practice she hated the most but hid her apprehension behind a smile and reached for her bag, taking out a small tube of lubricant – something she took everywhere with her. She reached and pulled out a couple of condoms and took one of the rubber sheaths out of it's packet and slid it down Paul's member: she had not perfected the “whore's way” of doing it and used the tips of her fingers to slide it down his shaft.

Paul groaned with the touch, it sent shock waves through his loins, but was spared the cool rush of the cold lubricant as Alicia applied it to her rosebud first and then her hands, sliding it over Paul's sheathed member.

Paul knelt up, showing Alicia that he wanted her “doggy-style.” This was the other thing Alicia hated doing, but a look over the table to the small pile of cash reminded her why she was doing it. That money would pay for her books for the term, and she gently guided the Paul's prick into her glistening hole.

Alicia gasped as Paul slid in, he wasn't big but he didn't inch his way along her

canal and she closed her eyes, bringing her hips forward to ease the thrust of her partner. “Gently,” she whispered and Paul held onto her hips and gradually withdrew before slowing impaling her again. Alicia cooed in appreciation, Paul was much better when he wasn't ramming his cock into her, and she began to rock back in time with Paul's rhythm.

She could feel her own body excite at the sensations. She moved her body and Paul leant over to caress her nipples, before settling his stray hand over her clitoris. It was nice, but Paul was ready to explode, the tight, snug fit around his cock and the youthful look of Alicia was enough for him and he shivered and grunted, filling the condom with his seed.

They remained in the compromising position for a few moments, Paul savouring the joyous moment before gently withdrawing, the dirty condom hanging limply from his deflated cock. Alicia came back from the bathroom with a the toilet tissue and took a few pieces before passing the rest to Paul, cleaning up her glistening rear while Paul removed the rubber sheath.

“I'll put you through as entertaining,” Paul boasted with a smile as Alicia sat upright on the bed. “I do the books so it's fine.” Alicia forced a nervous grin and he looked at her back, stroking his hand down it. “You know I am free tomorrow, if you fancy going out for a meal and then a drink or two.”

Alicia hummed, it wasn't the first time she had been propositioned after being a “punt” but she felt anxious again, what would he do when she said no? “I am due to be working,” she lied, and while she did have coursework to do, she was not actually planning to do anything.

Paul bit his lip. “Well how much you make at the strip club? I might make you an offer you can't refuse.”

Alicia hid her smile, she liked the sound of money. “A couple of hundred, three maybe on a good night.”

“I'll give you two grand,” Paul told her. “In cash. To meet me at six in a beautiful dress, go for a meal, go for a drink, and all the fucking I can handle until 8am the following morning.”

“Two grand?” Alicia asked, her face barely disguising her expression. “Really?”

“Oh yes. And I pay for everything.” Alicia took a deep breath and thought: two thousand pounds would easily allow her to put a lot of money aside but she felt unsure around this man. “If you have a school girl outfit with the pigtails for when we get back here, I'll make it two two.”

Alicia smiled and kissed him on the lips. “And where exactly do I meet you tomorrow?”

* * * * *

Lewis was an unremarkable schoolboy – the eldest in his year and already sixteen before the start of Year 11, he neither excelled or lagged behind in his studies, in sports or in any extra-curricular activities. He had a small group of friends, and was confident around new people but he was destined to do nothing spectacular in education. His school reports had generally indicated this – he was a good student but not awesome, but if he could learn to apply himself he would achieve much more.

Regardless of this, his parents had far higher aspirations for him, Joseph wanted him to take over his share of the business when he retired and Charlotte still harboured a long-held desire that he might work hard at school and be eligible for medical school to be a Doctor.

Lewis wanted neither, he was happy playing his games, smoking weed, drinking beer and doing just enough work to keep his teachers happy, or failing that, quiet, a tactic that had not failed him since he had started secondary school four years previous.

The walk home from his school took him through a small park and on cue, nodded towards the au-pair from the “big house at the top of the hill” - or Number 22, their near neighbours. Anna looked up from the park bench – Joshua was running around the small playground going up to the slide and Lewis idled over, leaning over the three-foot high railings.

“Hiya,” he called, taking a big drag of his freshly-lit spliff and Anna smiled at him, reaching up to remove it from his mouth.

“This, this is umm ... this park, is for kiddies. You no smoke,” she told him in her Russian accent.

Lewis took the lit spliff from Anna and stubbed it out, holding it in his fingers and looking at the toddler running around in front of him. “Sorry,” he muttered. “Hey, he's grown a bit.”

Anna nodded and watched the child shoot passed her and sighed. “You have good holiday?”

Lewis slid his school bag off his shoulders on the floor and pursed his lips. “Yeah good. We went off to Mediterranean for a fortnight. And then onto a small village in Tuscany for another week. It was good. You?”

Anna smiled and her eyes flicked back to Joshua. “I umm. I went to Rome. I go with Joshua. And then Russia to see family.”

Lewis smiled at the Russian teenager who recounted the stories about her brother leaving to join the army and her mother being fifty while she was in her home

country. Lewis had relocated himself into the playground and chatted amicably to the au-pair sat on the bench, who watched the young child hawkishly as he played with a couple of the kids on the climbing frame.

Lewis even got up to help Joshua down a small ramp and then push him and Anna on the swings before Anna glanced at her watch and telling Joshua (and Lewis) that it was “nearly home time” and guided the tired child into the designer buggy.

“Fancy getting some chips from the chippy?” Lewis asked as Anna went to leave the playground. He fished in his pocket and withdrew a shiny pound coin and held it up. “Share a pack? With me. It's on the way home.”

Anna replied in her deep accent. “You, you very kind, Lewis.”

Lewis blushed and shrugged. “It's only chips. But they're better if we share them,” he found himself saying, and left with the au-pair.

Chapter II

Matthew stretched on the sofa in the Wilsons's house. He had been invited to watch the football with Joseph as his television wasn't working, the communal aerial on the apartment block had fallen over in strong winds and it wasn't due to be repaired until the following Monday.

“Well that's the problem with flats,” Joseph told him as he passed his guest a bottle of beer with a grin. “Not enough maintenance.”

Matthew nodded, gratefully receiving the amber drink. “Yeah, tell me about it. The lights were out in the stairwell the other day, it took all four of us to ring the landlord half-a-dozen times before someone came out to sort it. And the amount of money we are paying. Well, it's scandalous.”

Joseph gave a snort and threw a small pack of peanuts over to his employee who thanked him. Their eyes were drawn towards the television as the home team surged forwards on the counter attack only to miss a near open goal. Both men groaned and Joseph gestured towards the television. “Five million they paid for him. It's ridiculous,” he ranted and took a swig of his beer. “I could have scored that.”

Katherine poked her head around the door and smiled at her father, coughing to get his attention. “Dad,” she asked in her sweetest voice. “Can I borrow some money please?”

Joseph beckoned his reluctant daughter into the middle of room and glared at her, his attention removed from the television in the corner of the room. “You are not going out like that,” he thundered. Katherine looked at herself, her short, skin-tight miniskirt and “boob-tube”, she looked just as her boyfriend wanted to look.

Katherine screwed up her face. “Why?”

“Because you look like ...” Joseph stopped and considered his next word.

There was a gasp and she folded her arms, glaring at her father. “Like a what? Say it,” she barked at him and Joseph sighed.

“OK, you look like a tart,” Joseph told her and she scowled and threw her arms down theatrically. “You are not going out like that.”

“Well Sam likes me like this,” she told him firmly and then added that she was old enough to go dressed as she wanted. This was met by a swift rebuke from her father who stated that while she lived under his roof there would be a parental veto when she went out. In the end, Katherine stormed back upstairs slamming her door with the immortal teenage line, “it's not fair.”

Joseph glanced at his friend on the sofa. “Sorry,” he muttered. “It’s the hormones.”

Matthew smiled and Katherine reappeared a few minutes later dressed in a skirt only marginally longer and a top just as tight, but had timed her arrival as Joseph’s team were awarded a penalty. Matthew wondered if she was wearing a bra (it didn’t look like it to him) but Joseph was sufficiently distracted and allowed his daughter to leave, “lending” her twenty pounds in the process.

“She will be eighteen next week,” Joseph muttered to Matthew as the striker picked up the ball. “And she will be the death of me.”

Matthew smiled. “Well you think she is bad now what is she going to be like next week?”

“I know. I just hope she gets rid of that Sam before too long, I just don’t know what she sees in him.” Matthew bit his lip, the subject of his daughter’s boyfriend always made him rant and this was no exception. To Joseph it was Sam’s fault that his daughter felt pressurised into wearing overly sexualised clothes, and it was him that was the cause of all the problems. Of course, Katherine always dismissed this theory whenever Joseph mentioned it, but Joseph was still firmly of the opinion that Sam was no good for his daughter.

“My parents were the same, they hated my sister going out with a guy down the street.”

“Did they split up?”

Matthew gave a smirk. “Oh yes. But the guy she is with now is ten times worse,” he said with a reminiscent voice. “We don’t get on,” he summarised and Joseph smiled before erupting into a loud cheer.

His team had gone one nil up.

* * * * *

Lewis lit his spliff and sat on the park bench, stretching out and looking up at the Sun. It was a warm day for November and he took advantage of the clement weather to be able to smoke in the nearly empty park. Lewis liked his weed, his mate got it for him cheaply and it just helped him relax and unwind.

Of course, he knew his parents would flip if they knew, and even some of his non-smoking friends expressed reservations but for Lewis it was a victimless escape that he indulged in a couple of times a week to make him feel better: where was the harm in that?

Nick passed him a small see-through bag and Lewis pocketed it, it may only be the size of a ten pence piece but it was worth twelve quid to him and he stashed it away in the false lining of his jacket pocket.

“Good batch this month,” Lewis told him and took a drag on his spliff as Nick lit his joint with Lewis's matches and took a deep breath.

“Yeah, fucking good batch. We owe the man.”

Lewis grinned at his friend and inhaled deeply. He steadied himself and looked at the park. “Hey she's fit,” Lewis leered at a fifteen year old walking through the park with immaculate hair chatting onto her mobile phone.

Nick snorted. “No chance mate. Not a chance in hell. That's Beau's sister.”

Lewis smiled coyly and watched as the girl bounced through the park; he was bored and what he wanted was to do something apart from sitting in the park and rating unattainable girls out of ten.

“Hey she's a six definitely,” Nick said as Anna appeared at the top of the park. “Lose the baby and all would be sweet.” Lewis scowled and thumped him on the arm.

“That's Anna,” he told her and focused on her radiant glow and shapely body. “She is a ten. Definitely.”

Nick swore and rubbed his arm. “Ow,” he moaned. “Ten? She looks cute but she is with baby. Who wants to be lumbered with a baby on a date?”

“Yeah,” Lewis muttered. “She's an au-pair. A Russian au-pair.” Nick scowled and Lewis shrugged. “She's my neighbour. She's well cool.”

* * * * *

The long-haired Gareth spluttered. “Chuffing two seventy five a pint.”

“Yeah, it's inflation, love,” the barmaid replied without emotion. “And the tax. Now do you want a pint or not.”

Gareth burped loudly and sneered at the disgust from behind the bar. “Yeah, at last week's prices.” The barmaid glared at him, motionless and he snorted, his face dropping. “OK two pints please of the pale ale on tap and a packet of Honey Roasted.” She poured the drinks, the second one with an excessive head and threw the peanuts onto the bar. “Six fifty please.” Gareth scowled and carried his order over to the table in the corner of the pub.

“You fighting with Sophie again?” Matthew asked, and Gareth buried himself behind a beer, turning around as Kylie Minogue came through the jukebox.

“Fuckin' twats,” he gestured towards a couple of students in front of the neon machine and turned back to his friend. “They only look about ten. What the fuck are they doing in my pub?” Matthew glanced over at Sophie staring at them, and warned his angry friend to calm down. “How did the date go?”

“Ahh shit,” Matthew summarised, recalling a night with a secretary from a few nights previous. “She wasn't interested in me really. We had a meal but that was it.”

“Wanted a free lunch, right. I tell ya, bitches shouldn't lead us on to get freebies. There should be a law about it or somethink. Dating without intent 'cos it's a chuffin' disgrace.”

Matthew gave a wry grin. “I quite agree. So how's the job hunting?”

“There's nothing mate. Unless I wanna work in a beauty salon. Job centre taking the fuckin' piss, I mean, can you see me in a beauty salon?”

Matthew chuckled. Gareth had dirty brown long hair, uneven facial stubble, a dirty T-Shirt and faded, ripped jeans. He was an advert for slothfulness and scruffiness. “Doing what?”

Gareth shrugged. “I dunno. Got an interview tomorrow or else the benefits twats cut ya payments.”

“What's Katie said?” Matthew asked, the long-suffering ferocious wife of his best friend was rarely without something to say. “Surely there must be something going at her place?”

“Nothing,” Gareth said, the head of his beer giving him a moustache. “And get this,” Gareth said, his arms gesturing to the air in front of him. “No sex 'til I find a job. D'ya hear that, no sex until I find a job. With this economy I'm gonna be like a fuckin' monk.”

Matthew pursed his lips together and leant back in the chair with a grin. “Or like me.”

“Yeah, or like you,” Gareth replied with a snort. Matthew bought the next four rounds, beat his friend at pool before they idled back to the small house Gareth rented with his wife. Katie swore as Gareth stumbled into their front room, nearly landing on his wife returning from the kitchen.

“You bloody pissed again? For fucks sake.” She sighed and watched him stumble past her. “You can fucking sleep downstairs, you useless prick.”

“Hiya Katie,” Matthew greeted her as she turned, watching her husband stumble towards their downstairs toilet. “He's had the odd couple.”

She looked at their school friend with a scowl. “Why do you let him get so pissed? Don't you know he has an interview tomorrow.” Matthew's lips curled upwards.

“He'll be fine,” Matthew said dismissively. “He always is. How are you?”

Katie's eyes narrowed and then groaned as Gareth appeared in the doorway to

their small toilet. "I've got a new DVD off the 'net, it's well cool. It's of four girls going at it. Who wants to see it? There's strap-ons and everything."

Matthew looked at Katie and gestured subtly. "I'll be off," he said and nodded towards Gareth trying to focus on the room. "I'll see ya mate."

"Oh. OK. See ya," came the response and Matthew sighed as Katie closed the door, awaiting for the sound of Katie's voice.

* * * * *

Katherine gasped when she opened her card and a bundle of notes slid out. "It's for driving lessons," her father announced and she bounced gleefully on the chair.

"Happy eighteenth," Matthew said sliding over a small present and card to the teenager who thanked him and then tore open the poorly-wrapped gift.

"It better not be inappropriate," Joseph warned his employee with a smirk. "I know you. I heard about that gift you got your friend."

Matthew squinted and then looked at Joseph. "Oh Gareth. Well he wanted a Fleshlight. If you knew Gareth you'll know it's a good present."

"What's a Fleshlight?" Charlotte and Katherine asked in unison and Matthew blushed.

"I promise I have not bought Katherine one of those," Matthew added and watched as Katherine removed the packaging and held up a small silver necklace with a letter "K" as a pendant.

"It's beautiful," Charlotte cooed, holding the delicate chain in her hands. "Oh, it's lovely."

Katherine smiled at Matthew sitting opposite. "Thank you," she said with a smirk and pursed her lips. "It's nice." Katherine scooted round the table and kissed Matthew on the cheek.

"Your welcome," Matthew murmured as the beautiful girl returned to her seat. Joseph looked at the blushing Matthew out of the corner of his eye, what was Matthew playing at buying his daughter jewellery? Matthew may be a "nice guy" but he was also a guy and he knew he was single and liked his daughter, an accusation he denied the moment they got in the car.

"I mean, I do like her, but not in that way. I mean she is nice, but I don't think I am her type."

Joseph pursed his lips. "No, she isn't. Because her type isn't employed by her father," he said firmly and Matthew pursed his lips. "Or be ten years older."

"I don't think she would look at me twice," Matthew replied coldly and turned his

head to look out of the window. “And it is seven years not ten. I am not that old.”

Joseph grinned. “OK, but the point still stands, you are too old for her.”

Chapter III

“What is wrong with you?” Katherine shrieked at her retreating boyfriend, her veins bursting out of her face and her hands curled into fists. “That slut flashes her knickers and you decide to fuck her?”

Sam opened his mouth and closed it. “It wasn't like that,” he responded and ran his hand through his greasy black hair. “It wasn't like that at all. She just came on to me.”

“Ahh, such a hard life,” Katherine cried. “For you to say no. You get sex with me. Or you used to.” Katherine's eyes sparkled dangerously as she fought anger and distress inside her.

“Well, I'm sorry,” Sam said in a quiet voice and looked at his furious girlfriend. “It meant nothing.” She picked up the nearest item to hand, a cup and threw it at him. The contents, half a mug of stale tea sprayed out of the vessel as it left her hand and Sam ducked, watching as it smashed against his wall.

“Oi,” he yelled but Katherine was already picking up her items from his desk. “Katherine, please, it doesn't have to be like this.”

She scowled at him. “Yes, Sam, it does,” she screamed and Sam put his hand on her arm.

“I'm sorry, really I am, I had a bit to drink, and I did something stupid. I won't do it again.”

Katherine clenched her fists and pushed the hand of her boyfriend away, her normal smiling face gripped by fury. “Get off me.”

“But Kat. Come on, talk to me.”

Katherine smirked. “OK. You are a self-obsessed, cheating, lying, nasty piece of scum with a small cock and an unhealthy obsession with my underwear. You don't wash properly so you smell. You don't think. You run like a girl and throw like a spastic. You fuck middle-aged sluts like Emma Roberts and I hope she's given you something nasty.” She hummed for dramatic effect and looked at him. “Yeah I think that covers it.” Sam went to speak and she glared at him. “Oh no, sorry, and you're single so you will probably be a bit of a wanker as well.”

“Kat,” Sam squealed but Katherine picked up her bag and walked out of Sam's bedroom. He called her, chasing her down the street, but she ignored him and walked across the park, breaking into tears the moment she got home.

“You OK?” Her mother called from the laptop and Katherine grunted, before following it with, “yeah, fine” and storming upstairs and slamming the door.

Sam “texted” her repeatedly over the following day and as much as he tried to apologise to her, Katherine ignored his impassioned pleas, an attitude that her best friend Rachel, wholeheartedly agreed with. Sam was a “dirty cheating bastard” she said with a snort and having just split up with her own boyfriend for similar reasons a few weeks earlier, the girls were able to comfort each other.

Katherine was still upset, she felt down and joyless and instead of celebrating her eighteenth birthday at the weekend with her boyfriend, she would have to resort to doing something with her friends, which as she thought about, wasn't such a bad trade-off. Rachel and her could go clothes shopping!

Sam may have been apologetic but she failed to detect much remorse and a swift slap in the face the following day as he tried to follow her home as she left College showed him that she wanted little more to do with him. There was a crowd of people watching as Katherine dispensed her justice and slamming her hand across her ex-boyfriend's cheek and they listened intently as she ranted loudly and publicly about his failings: it was a public display of humiliation that showed Sam once and for all, Katherine was no longer his.

* * * * *

Matthew sat down in the bank and stretched on the uncomfortable chairs, looking up at the bright strip light in the ceiling. “Mr Styles,” a voice called and he turned and nodded. “Can I get you a drink?”

Matthew declined the kind offer and followed the suited gentleman into a small interview room before explaining the nature of his visit. Matthew had been saving up for a deposit on a property for four years and with his savings now reaching over twelve thousand pounds wanted to put them somewhere that could give him instant access if the right property came onto the market, but still give a good tax-free rate of return.

The adviser suggested a few products that tied his money up for months or years but in the end Matthew opted to leave his money where it was and after buying himself his lunch and meat for his dinner idled back to the office, glancing and seeing his manager with talking to his secretary in their private office.

Joseph put his hand across her shoulder, gliding over her bosom and then pointing a sentence on the document. “There,” he said softly and pushed his body alongside hers. Sarah, his PA and admin assistant looked up from her seated position out of the corner of her eye.

“OK Joey.”

He snorted. “I wish you wouldn't call me that in the office,” he said in a low whispering voice and stood up, moving away from her. “And is the room in London booked?”

Sarah hesitated. "Your favourite little hotel? They are full, only have a twin room left."

Joseph shrugged. "Well that'll do," he replied brashly and looked at his PA.

"Err, and where I am staying then," she asked.

"Well it is a twin room. I don't mind sharing."

Sarah's lips curled. "Well I might do. You might snore, or wander around naked. Or your wife might object."

Joseph snorted. "I wasn't going to tell her. Look, it's up to you. I don't mind sharing with you but book somewhere else if you want."

Sarah giggled and waited until he was at the door. "It's OK. I've already booked it." Joseph smiled and she looked up. "But no peeking at me in the shower."

Paul pushed past Matthew and opened the door loudly and then closed it throwing his arms up in the air. "Can you effin' believe it. The Bank want all sorts of ID for a measly little bank transfer," he ranted as he crossed the small private office to his desk and threw it open.

"Do you need my signature," Joseph asked and Paul looked up.

"No, just every form of fuckin' ID I have. Just so I can send some money to the Caribbean."

"Caribbean?" Joseph asked and Paul stammered.

"Fuckin' game companies. Everything's offshore for tax dodging ain't it." He slammed his drawer shut holding a handful of papers and strode out of the office. Sarah looked at Joseph and smiled.

"If we are sharing a room together then surely there is enough money in the budget for you to take me to a nice restaurant."

Joseph chortled. "OK."

Sarah returned his grin. "Good, I've booked the table for eight thirty."

* * * * *

"So eez this a date?" Anna asked as she walked through the park with Lewis.

Lewis spluttered. "Well," he started. "It's just spending time with you." Anna giggled and put her arm through Lewis's.

"I think you are ... perfect gentleman." Lewis smiled at the long-haired beauty walking along side him, and she pulled out a small photograph from her pocket. "This. This is my brother, I told you about. He in Russian Army now."

Lewis looked at the topless man, his muscles clearly defined and his eyes piercing

through the photograph at him. “Oh he's ummm ...”

“Nutter, yes,” Anna finished for him. “He loves boxing. Ma thinks he get killed but he always wanted to join army.”

Lewis and Anna stopped outside the bus stop and he held his hand out to let her take the only seat that wasn't smashed or defiled. “Your English is better,” he told the au-pair and she nodded.

“Yes, but I be here for year now.”

“Really?” Lewis gasped and Anna looked down the road.

“Yes, my visa expire in August.”

“Oh,” Lewis uttered, his heart dropping. He liked spending time with Anna, and over the year she had consoled him when his girlfriend had dumped him, taught him chess and even allowed him to join her once in “the big house” when she was child-minding.

This was, however, just a friendship and as they rode towards the cinema to watch the latest animated film, Lewis wondered what life would be like without her. He wondered if he would be able to visit her in Russia and Anna poked him in the ribs as the bus drew into the town centre bus station. “What you thinking?”

“Nothing,” Lewis replied evading the question and Anna cocked her angelic face at him. “OK. I was wondering if I could come and see you when you go back to Russia. For a holiday, maybe?”

Anna squealed. “Of course, but it a long time away.”

Although Lewis (and Anna) insisted that it was not a date, they were just friends after all, Lewis paid for everything from his monthly allowance and happily bought Anna the biggest box of popcorn the cinema sold. Anna groaned under the weight of it, and felt a little bit sick by the end of the film as she had felt compelled to eat it all, after all if Matthew had bought it with his money then it would be rude not to.

Lewis and Anna idled down the street and stopped at a small fast-food restaurant, with Lewis buying them both a burger. Anna gushed at his generosity and tried to pay him some money, she did get an allowance from her host family, but Lewis refused and just watched as Anna took a slurp of her strawberry milkshake grinning at him.

“Can we have a look?” Anna begged as they idled towards the bus station. They had passed a clothes shop, and Anna interrupted a previous conversation to plead with her friend to be able to look inside. Lewis bit his lip and watched as she wandered in, and started admiring the clothes. “I bet I get cold in those,” she joked as she passed a skimpy bikini and Lewis blushed.

In all, Anna bought two tops, but spent almost 45 minutes trying on various items with her coming out each time to ask Lewis what he thought. He wanted to ask her to try on the bikini, it would have suited her lovely body but he never dared to suggest it, after all, it wasn't a date.

Lewis never grumbled either as she spent twenty minutes in the shoe shop and another ten minutes in the jewellery shop, but with the threat of them missing the last bus back to their suburb (and having to walk two miles), Anna ceased window shopping and followed Lewis back to the bus stop.

Anna kissed him on the cheek as they arrived at his house. "Thank you. It's been a ... a beautiful day," she uttered. "I like it, very much."

Lewis smiled. "Yeah, me too. It's been fun."

"I take you out next time, da?"

Lewis grinned and nodded, he very much wanted there to a next time and barely stopped smiling and quietly reminiscing of his time with Anna all evening.

* * * * *

Gareth looked up the stairs; it was quiet and Katie was asleep. He tiptoed back to the computer and selected the "invisible" mode so his browsing history would not be preserved. A acquaintance of his had given him the sign in details to a particularly extreme porn site and with the sound turned down low in anticipation his hands shook as he typed in the address.

Gareth, a consumer of all types of pornography gasped at the screen as it loaded and he felt his tool through his jogging bottoms. The site, Degraded Shits was devoted to lovers of women dominating and humiliating their (usually male) partners and his heart skipped a beat as he entered his username and password.

With a flicker of the router, his browser signed in and Gareth selected the first video, of a women in leathers and a slightly overweight guy strapped up and unable to move. Gareth sighed and slid his hand into his trousers as the woman began to humiliate the gentleman, kicking him in the backs of the thighs and telling him that he was worthless

"You useless cunt," screamed the speakers and Gareth hurriedly span the volume control around in his fingers. He watched as the leather dominatrix turned into a flagellatrix, taking a leather whip and bringing it down sharply on the exposed rump of her victim.

Gareth pulled on his cock faster and harder, it was a long held fantasy of his to be dominated but Katie was not interested, and no amount of pleading would make her change her mind. He reckoned that she thought he would want to whip or mistreat her afterwards and this was why she reticent but Gareth had no desire to

be a “top” at all and just wanted to experience submission before his beautiful and long-suffering wife.

He groaned and watched the leather mistress bring her whip down hard against the undefended flesh, wincing with every stroke of the instrument. It made a satisfying swish through the air before cracking hard against the skin. He felt as though that was him, savouring every last slash of the whip.

Gareth watched intently as the skin began to welt and mark before the first streak of blood dribbled down the victim's thigh. The mistress was mercilessly whipping him harder, reddening and cutting his rump with a series of powerful lashes to his butt.

Gareth was nearly ready to climax, the scene unfolding before him was too powerful a fantasy to ignore and he watched as the little dribble of blood turned into a red river, his rear streaming with his blood down to his knees. He heard the pitiful, pathetic pleadings of the victim in the video and saw the guy's burgeoning erection. The woman picked up her whip and brought it up so it made contact with his perineum and then curled upwards to slash against his testicles and rigid cock.

Gareth gasped, what he wouldn't give to be in that guy's place, he was so lucky. The video panned out with the mistress walking away, leaving the sobbing gentleman still restrained, his body a mess.

Gareth was so close to coming, he played with himself on a daily basis, but this pornography was exceptional and he clicked on a “random video,” his cock still in his hand. He watched as a woman strode into a small garden, dragging a pathetic-looking guy behind her and throwing him onto the grass.

She too took a whip and slashed his chest and legs before turning him over and lashing it against his posterior. Gareth could feel his tension building and watched intently as the mistress kicked the guy over and over until he came to rest in a small mud puddle. She pulled her skirt up, and squatted over the humiliated guy and let a yellow stream spring from her loins.

Gareth sighed, he had implored Katie to try “water sports” with him, but she steadfastly refused to urinate over her husband, calling it degrading, humiliating and unnatural, but the scene was almost too much.

The victim was well marked with the whip, his body criss-crossed with an array of welts, a gift from the whip and the liquid bounced off his face and down his body. Gareth easily imagined it was he experiencing the degrading treatment and closed his eyes for a split-second, he wanted to be that guy, staring up at a peeing girl as her waste bounced off of his face, he desperately wanted to be that guy.

Gareth's hands darted over his cock, he could feel it and his eyes glued on the

screen as a brown mass left the girl and landed on top of the face of the guy.

He grunted, his body shuddering and expelling three waves of semen over his hands and the keyboard of their computer. She had actually defecated on her victim – was there a greater humiliation? Gareth hadn't even considered asking Katie to do something like that but as he watched a second lump of the sadist's waste fall on top of the guy he wondered what it would take to convince his wife.

She thought the pornography he watched had made his sex drive too demanding, and his tastes too kinky, but there was nothing seriously wrong in engaging in a bit of dirty sex, was there?

Chapter IV

Katherine stretched out her work on the dining room table and looked up at her father's employee, batting her eyelids. "Please Matthew."

Matthew smiled and hummed. "OK," he said with a resigned look on his face, he always had trouble saying no to the charming teenager and sat down, pulling out his phone and putting it on the table.

"Thanks, I've been trying all week to get me head around it," Katherine moaned and pulled out a folder from her school bag.

"You staying for tea?" Charlotte asked as she potted into the kitchen. Matthew hummed and deliberated as he took off his coat and she grinned at him. "So that's a yes then."

"You don't have to, I do have a ready meal in the freezer." Charlotte scowled at him and took out a tray of minced beef from the fridge and looked over.

"Spaghetti Bolognese OK?"

"Umm ... yeah, that will be great," Matthew replied and Katherine thrust a piece of A4 in his hand. He scanned the first few and then looked up at her.

"They are just simultaneous equations. That is all."

Katherine sighed. "Yes I know that. I have spent all week knowing what they are. How the hell do you solve them?"

Matthew picked up a pencil and wrote the first two equations out on a blank paper and then worked through it. It had been many years since he had tried to do such a Maths puzzle and was almost glad he had to work through it slowly to explain it to the eighteen-year-old sat next to him.

She hummed at the end, not really understanding the process Matthew had been through so he repeated it, and then the second and third question.

Charlotte poured him a glass of red wine and passed it over and although he didn't really want to drink decided it would be rude to refuse the lady of the house as she walked out of the dining room to give her daughter some peace while the dinner simmered.

Charlotte scrambled back to her laptop, just in time to join the "Mega Jackpot Game," it was worth a thousand pounds to her if she won and was only five pounds to play. It had to be her turn to win, she thought as the first number was called. It just had to be.

Katherine and Matthew worked through question after question and eventually

Katherine began to understand how Matthew was solving them. She squealed as the cooker hissed, the pasta had boiled over and she leapt up to take it off the heat. "Mum," she yelled and stirred the pale yellow contents of the pan. "Mum!"

Charlotte reappeared a few seconds later flushed, she was only one number away when the game ended and she stirred the sauce that was sticking to the bottom of her non-stick pans. "Sorry love, got caught up on the laptop. Can you clear that away?"

Katherine folded her work into the folder and filed it away in her bag while Matthew was sent out to retrieve Joseph in the garage, busy sorting out his tools that he had used on his "classic car" at the weekend.

"You staying for tea as well as breakfast," he asked when he saw Matthew sat down at the dining table. "Might as well get you to move into our spare room as well."

"Oh leave him alone," Charlotte snapped at her husband as he sat down. "He has been helping Katherine with her homework."

Matthew hardly said a word as he ate his dinner, the faint taste of the charred tomato sauce permeated the meal and while it wasn't bad, it did leave an unwanted aroma to the food.

Charlotte poured out a glass of wine for him as well as her two children and had to open a second bottle of the Burgundy. Matthew thanked her for the meal and Katherine took him to the conservatory as her mother cleared up so they could continue with her homework.

"Do you like it?" Katherine asked, seeing his eyes drawn towards a blue dress hung up at the window. "Mum says she is going to repair a diamanté that fell off."

Matthew shrugged. "Looks nice," he said non-committally.

"You'll see me in it next week." She waited for a look of confusion to come over his face and then grinned. "Christmas Party." She settled down on the small table and she grunted.

"Oh that. I'm sure you'll look nice."

Katherine cocked her head to one side and squinted. "You are going aren't you?"

"Victoria left me so no."

"So you sulk and don't go?" Katherine asked her eyes following the tortured expression on Matthew's face.

"Hardly much point, is there? I mean, I ain't wanting to spend all evening on me own."

Katherine bit her lip as his sour tone of voice and turned back to the paper in front of her. "I don't have a partner either. I split up with Sam. But I am going." Matthew sniffed and she looked back up at him. "You could go with me." Matthew bit his lip and Katherine took a deep breath. "Otherwise I'll be on my own as well, and I don't know anyone else."

"I am not sure your Dad would like that," Matthew told her and Katherine grunted.

"He'll be fine. I'd rather not be lonely." Matthew smiled, he wasn't quite sure how he was going to get out of it, but then, why would he want to? An evening with the beautiful eighteen-year-old on his arm would be most men's idea of sheer heaven.

* * * * *

Paul laid back on the yacht and looked out over the setting sun, the sky ablaze with the bright yellows, oranges, pinks and purples that reflected on the pure blue water. A naked girl passed him a drink and he demanded a kiss before taking the vivid drink and taking a sip through the straw.

"Paul," came a voice and the rotund gentleman raised his hand so he could be seen on the deck of the boat. "Paul, I've just had a call from the office. Your bid has been accepted."

Paul smiled at the black gentleman standing astride him at the bottom of the vessel and held his cocktail up. "I'll drink to that," he said cockily.

"It's a lovely house," came the response, a local guide and agent. "It's my Uncle's old home."

Paul laughed and his eyes flicked up. "Bet he didn't do in it what I plan to do in it." His eyes left the guide and settled on the two naked teenagers that had been cavorting with him all day on the private cruise his guide had arranged.

Kadema laughed. "He was a character. Most of the island have seen the inside of at least one of the bedrooms."

Paul smirked. "Can I have the girls for a house warming party?"

Kadema shifted awkwardly on the spot and glanced over at the naked taller girl and then at Paul. "She's my niece, she is only fifteen."

Paul burst into a smile. "Fifteen. I'll pay four times as much. I love fifteen year old pussy." Kadema sniffed and Paul shrugged. "If you have 'em any younger I'll definitely take 'em. And pay good money."

Kadema played with his hands and then looked over at his niece, the naked barmaid, and the 19-year-old bronzed prostitute she was sitting next to. "I'm not

sure I can.”

Paul bit his lip. “Ahh you've come through on everything so far. I'll be back in a few weeks to open up me 'ouse and I want some underage pussy. You can provide it, right?”

The guide stammered and Paul just ignored his unease. “That's me man. The younger they are, the more I pay.” Paul looked up at Kadema with a grin. “There is plenty of cash in it for ya, and you can even come along. Get your knob polished.”

Kadema tried to force a smile but Paul had turned his back and beckoned the naked girl over, running his hands up and down the back of the guide's niece. She was only there as she was staying with her uncle and had overheard him talking about the “English pervert” the previous evening. She had begged to be allowed to come to earn some money, “if someone wants to pay to watch me sunbathe then that's OK,” she reasoned, but it was only when one of the two prostitutes lined up for the trip dropped out, was the young Hope be allowed to join in.

Kadema had ordered her to just serve the drinks but Paul beckoned her to sit between his legs and poured a generous amount of suntan oil on his hands, rubbing her back with gentle, smooth circular strokes. Kadema watched anxiously, what was the Brit doing with his niece, he wanted to hit him but knew he could not afford to do so: him arranging things was earning him more in a week than he would normally earn in a month.

Hope was quite in control of Paul and allowed him to rub suntan oil into her bronzed skin and rocked back against his erect cock, running her hands down his thighs. She had seen the local whore get screwed unceremoniously by Paul on deck earlier in the day and had no intention of letting him do that to her, but watched in awe at the generous tip Paul had given. She knew she could seduce something out of him, and with their island in sight on the horizon knew she only had ten minutes before she was too close to the land to be naked and her Uncle would force her to get dressed.

Hope poured a generous amount of oil on her hands, rubbing in the glistening liquid so that he hands was slippery and radiant. Paul grunted and slid his hand over her shoulders and rested them on her teenage breasts, she pushed back against him and slid her hand behind herself, running her hands up and down his shaft, before running them underneath his drained balls. She felt the warm breath on the back of her neck and bowed her head as his hands darted over her nipples.

Kadema froze, was the brute about to take liberties with his young niece. He rose up, about to shout through the window when Hope's eyes met his, and she grinned at him. What was she playing at?

Hope was expertly running her hands up and down his erect member, while deftly

exploring his balls with every down stroke. She heard him shudder and whisper obscenities in her ear. “I want to fuck that sweet cunt of yours,” she was told and Hope slid off and spun around, lying face down on the lounge and looked up at him with mischievous eyes.

“Every guy I know, loves this,” she cooed, and taking her slippery hands sliding over his stiff cock and running her other hand underneath to cup his testicles and then along his perineum. Paul cried out as her hands deftly massaged the older gentleman.

“I wanna fuck you,” Paul muttered breathlessly, his words desperately trying to convince himself and Hope smiled as his legs shook, the businessman crying out loudly into the sea air.

Paul screwed up his eyes, shuddered and semen shot out of the end of his member splattering the young girl with pearlescent semen. She gently stroked his cock and slowed down as he savoured the aftershocks. Paul smiled at her with a bemused look. “That was some fucking handjob girl.”

Hope smiled and ran her hands through her black hair, feeling the sticky deposits of the businessman; she would definitely need a shower when she got home. Paul leant over and pulled out a small bundle of cash and threw it at Hope. “A tip,” he said proudly and smiled inwardly as Hope looked delighted with the small amount of money he had given her – it was no more than seventy five pounds and a hand job like that would have cost him triple that in London.

Paul stretched out. He could definitely get used to life in the Caribbean.

* * * * *

Charlotte waited until Matthew had left, he had gone through some more equations with Katherine, and Charlotte had giggled as her daughter clearly flirted with the young man. She liked Matthew, partly because he was reserved but had a quiet confidence about him but also because he was always willing to help. When Joseph was away for the week and a car skidded outside and came through their garden wall, it was Matthew who cleared the rubble away, making the garden safe until it was assessed by the insurance.

Katherine waved the man goodbye and skipped up to her room, she counted to ten and then heard the familiar sounds of a pop artist blaring out from the stereo, or music TV channel, and with her son out and her husband in the garage loaded up her laptop.

To begin with, her bet on the virtual horse race was good, “Digital Diamond” romping home at 8/1 and her £10 bet had transformed into £90, but a few games of the bingo, a few further games of Blackjack and another couple of virtual horse races and she had lost it all again.

Charlotte scowled at the laptop and shut down her gaming site, she had lost almost £50 during the day and watched as her husband came into the room.

“You OK?” Joseph asked and she nodded.

“Fine. Just getting a cup of tea, you want one?”

Joseph smiled. “Please.”

* * * * *

Sarah cooed at Joseph as she left the expensive restaurant. “Not bad,” Joseph summarised as he crossed the road to their boutique hotel. “Your lobster looked good.”

Sarah grinned and smiled at him. “Yeah, it was, thank you.”

“Ahh well. It was the least I could do. You are sharing a room with me,” he joked and Sarah smiled as they climbed up the stairs to their first floor. Sarah smiled as they opened the door and gazed into the room, she had planned it perfectly as the room she had booked was not a twin room, but a double room and they were faced with the prospect of finding another hotel at short notice or sharing.

Sarah had played her part perfectly, being shocked and then speaking to the manager who apologised for the “booking error” but regrettably the hotel was full. She sighed and looked at Joseph as the manager left. “I guess we are sharing then.”

Joseph spluttered a bit but Sarah stroked him on the arm and told him that she trusted him to be the perfect gentleman and he responded with a smile.

They had several things to talk about, Joseph was presenting a new app to a multinational who were interested in placing a big order with the small company and as such he rehearsed his speech and read through the documentation he was going to give them.

By the time 11pm had come, and they had both raided the mini-bar, Joseph looked at the clock and said he needed to get some sleep. Joseph cleaned his teeth and had a wash, and emerged from the small en-suite in a pair of pyjamas.

Sarah groaned as she darted into the bathroom to “get ready for bed.” She stripped, putting on the flimsiest, see-through negligee she had and cleaned her teeth and washed before emerging.

“Hiya Joey,” she called from the en-suite doorway, her heart beating furiously and Joseph sucked in air at the near-naked secretary. “Don't tell me you haven't been thinking of me.”

“Look Sarah. I don't know ... look, I'm happily married ... I can't.”

Sarah grinned and looked seductively at her boss. "Can't what?"

"Do this."

Sarah looked at Joseph out of the corner of her eye as she put a finger in her mouth. "Oh come on," she said dismissively and strode over to the bed. Joseph looked at her up and down, she had been the subject of his fantasies but that was to be expected, she was young, smart and had been very flirtatious with him recently. He grunted and watched as she took the book out of his hands and peeled the bedcovers back. "Get them off," she told him and Joseph shook his head.

"Sarah. We can't."

Sarah smiled. "We can. I have needs too," she told him. In her mind, Joseph had been easier to ensnare than she had plotted, but she knew the rich businessman would succumb to her charms, and with an expectant look she slid the covers off and touched him on the thighs. He objected but made no moves to stop her as she climbed between them and ran her hands up and down his muscular legs.

"What have we here?" Sarah asked as she peeled back his trousers and Joseph grunted and moved his hands to cover his inflating cock. Sarah smiled and kissed the tip.

"Oh shit," Joseph murmured and gripped the bed as Sarah lovingly licked his cock and then suckled on it. Joseph felt powerless to resist and allowed his secretary to get him horny before she guided him on top of her, and slid a condom over his cock.

He looked at her and she smiled. "Go on. Please."

Joseph positioned his cock at her entrance and she guided him in before he started rocking back and forth, impaling the devious girl on his spear.

She was certainly enjoying the strong, firm movements he made and rocked her hips rhythmically in keeping with Joseph's thrusts. She squeezed his back and threw her head back, allowing her boss to kiss her on her neck.

He could feel it coming, and closed his eyes. His climax, he was ready and filled the tip of the condom with his seed, his body shuddering as he did.

Sarah smiled at the groaning, gasping man on top of her, and kissed him as he regained control. "You were wonderful," she cooed and watched as he slid off of her and disappeared to get cleaned up.

Joseph was embarrassed and sheepishly returned to the room. "I'm ummm ..." he started but Sarah was prepared.

"You were pretty special," she told him. "And I feel like I've had a real man. With

a really big cock.” Joseph blushed even further and Sarah patted the bed. “We should do it again.”

Joseph's head was spinning. “I'm not sure that's a good idea,” he said dismissively and Sarah grunted.

“Oh come on,” she told him. “Every secretary is supposed to look after her boss in every way. Hey, why not at the Christmas Party,” she told him. “We could slip away if you like. I live local.”

Joseph bit his lip. “Charlotte will be there,” he told her but she smiled.

“As I said, slip away. “And it's only two days away, I don't think I would last must longer without you inside me, you were amazing.” Joseph took a deep breath and closed his eyes, he wasn't sure about this at all.

Chapter V

Joseph laughed when he saw his employee walking up the short drive. “Is that really the smartest suit you have?”

Matthew shrugged and looked down on the navy “off-the-peg” suit. “It’s smart enough,” he responded defensively. “Not of all us can afford thousand pound designer gear,” he scoffed, although Joseph Wilson did look every inch a successful businessman in his pinstriped garments. “And anyway, I only need a suit once a year for my annual court appearance,” he said with a grin.

The Christmas Party always started with a meal, then the Annual awards and the employees were always encouraged to wear our smartest outfit as well as bring their families and partners. This always was the source of much amusement for Matthew, and although for the first time he had no partner to bring, enjoyed meeting the women (and in Trevor’s case, a man) who had partnered themselves with the paranoid bunch of misfits he called colleagues.

Matthew wondered about seeing if he could “borrow” Gareth’s wife for the night, an arrangement Gareth would happily have agreed to so he could watch his pornography on “the big telly”, but Matthew knew Katie might be offended at being prostituted and he would not be the only person on his own; half of the development team were without partners.

Joseph had brought his entire family, Charlotte wearing a long, elegant green ballgown and Katherine wearing the short, electric blue cocktail dress that she looked radiant in. She bounded over to Matthew and took his hand, “come on,” she whispered and guided him to the bar.

“I suppose you want a drink?” Matthew asked and Katherine licked her lips.

“Well you are my date for the night!”

“Date?” Matthew said with a grin.

“Well I am accompanying you. I can be your escort if you’d rather but that would get expensive. I charge two hundred pounds an hour.”

Matthew laughed at her and bought her a large glass of sweet white wine and a pale ale for himself and he introduced Katherine to a couple of his more presentable colleagues. The single Carl smiled as Katherine sat down between him and her date, and she did her best to steer some conversation towards something she could converse on, but the employees struggled.

Katherine gushed about a recent performance from Rebecca on a television talent show, but finding only Ben’s wife able to converse (and she preferred the boy

band), Katherine limited herself to drinking her wine and trying to appreciate some of the chatter.

The meal was a standard affair, the melon balls or soup starter followed by dry turkey or a bland vegetable cobbler and then Christmas pudding to finish, although the bar had provided four bottles of cheap wine for each table. The room had four tables, holding eight people, arranged horizontally across the room, and then one top table containing the directors and their families, except Katherine.

She finished her meal and watched as Lewis shamelessly flirted with her father's secretary and grinned when she saw her father wince at his son's drunken lewd comments. As the last coffee was drunk, Paul stood up and gave a speech, thanking the employees for their efforts and successes over the last year and hoping that they would endeavour to reach new heights in the forthcoming twelve months.

He then held up a small trophy. "The Employee of the Year Award. Goes to the employee who has shown the most tenacity, drive, enthusiasm, spirit, the hard-working individual who goes the extra mile. And goes to ..." There was a hushed silence. "Matthew."

The room came alive with applause as Matthew tentatively walked to the front of the dining room to the top table and shook Joseph's and then Paul's hand. Paul, the short, beady-eyed director passed over the metallic-looking trophy, a mobile phone on top of a base and congratulated him again. Matthew was embarrassed, his cheeks were burning and he took the envelope, thanked him and hurried back to his seat.

Katherine smiled when she saw the trophy. "Employee of the Year. You swot," she teased and Matthew licked his lips with a smile.

"Yeah, but I have a hundred quid in bar vouchers that I have to spend tonight. You take a drink from the swot?" Katherine looked around, her mother was sat in the corner talking to Paul and his wife, her father was nowhere to be seen and her brother was happy to be chatting to a couple of the developers, both of them with their phones out. The employees had returned to the bar, as the tables were cleared away at the DJ set up his equipment, and Katherine was happy to tease and accept a drink from her "date."

Katherine looked at Matthew, her eyes narrowing. "I want Champagne," she joked and looked at the barman.

Matthew nodded and gestured to the barman. "Sure, bottle of Champagne please."

Katherine squealed. "I didn't mean it, I was only joking," she muttered, her eyes lighting up when five of the tokens was swapped for the bottle of fizzy wine and Matthew guided the tipsy girl to the corner of the room.

Katherine swayed slightly as she walked, her electric blue dress riding up to show the contours of her rear as she stumbled to a discreet corner and Matthew poured her a glass of the drink.

They clinked our glasses together and took a gulp. Katherine inhaled some of the bubbles and squeezed, she looked cute when she did, her wavy brown hair shuddering with the sudden movement.

“You like?” Matthew asked and Katherine nodded.

“Yeah, I like Champagne. It's nice,” she muttered and he felt a little envious, for only the third time in his life he had the luxury drink but Katherine's family were considerably wealthier than his own.

The two of them drunk the bottle of champagne and then ordered a bottle of wine that he shared with her. A number of his colleagues were dancing on the dance floor and apart from a couple of slow dances, Katherine was happy to talk.

Matthew learned a lot about Katherine, he found out that how she had split up from her boyfriend, where she wanted to go to University, what she liked, and the drink made her extremely candid.

“Fuck,” Katherine muttered. “He's nice.”

Matthew scanned the dance floor and she pointed to a bar man getting his coat from behind the bar. Matthew looked at the clock on the wall, it was 10pm, and the party was beginning to wind down.

Matthew nodded towards her. “Go on then. Ask him to dance.”

“Well he is cute,” she muttered, justifying herself. “Don't you mind?”

Matthew shook his head and watched as the drunken girl staggered onto the dance floor and then over to the barman in the corner, pulling him into the centre of the room, his coat being thrown onto the bar. He felt a pang of jealousy as he watched the blonde bar staff being pulled and then wrapping his arms reluctantly around the drunken girl.

“She's a bit pissed,” Carl remarked as he sauntered past, en route to the toilets and Matthew snorted.

“You could say that.” Matthew watched as Katherine danced with the guy, he barely looked older than she did, and she waved her hair in tune with the music.

Matthew looked away when the DJ put on a slow dance. He was talking to Carl and saw Katherine gently grope her dance partner and felt guilty as well as jealous. She disappeared for a few moments, before slouching down on the seat and looking at Matthew. “He was cute, but is not interested in me.” Carl made a sympathetic sound of “ahhhh” and she snorted. “Yeah well, he can piss off. You

got any of those tokens left?”

Matthew smiled and pulled out two dog-eared vouchers than he exchanged for three whiskeys and three vodka-lemonades. Katherine downed her vodka while Carl and Matthew talked and then they savoured the cheap blended spirit.

By the time the party was close to winding down, Katherine was completely drunk. Matthew scanned the room for Joseph or Charlotte but they had both gone and they quietly slipped away outside. He held onto Katherine's arm as she stumbled out of the small restaurant and into the cold December air.

“Where's your coat?” he asked and Katherine pointed towards a car parking space.

“Dad's chargggh,” she blurted out and he groaned, swinging his suit jacket over her shoulders. They had to pass Matthew's apartment on the way back to her home, and as they set off down the road, he decided to pop in to grab a jumper.

Katherine was all over the pavement, her drunkenness bordering on inappropriate affection as her hands wandered over his sides and she giggled as she dragged him across the road.

“It's colllllll-d,” she squealed as they turned into the top of his road, and the wind rattled against them. He put my arm around her, he had forgotten to bring a coat and had already leant Katherine the jacket, shivering, but quite liked having drunken eighteen-year-old on his arm, she reminded him of some of his University girlfriends.

“Hey Matt,” he heard and turned to see a familiar face. Victoria, dressed in a Santa outfit, scowled when she looked at Katherine, and he wanted to tell her that it wasn't what it looked like, but she just nodded.

“Christmas Party,” Matthew offered as a way of explanation. “I've still got those orchids of yours,” he offered to her red hair and she just shrugged at him.

“Keep them,” Victoria suggested with a grin and looked towards Katherine. “Just don't kill them.”

Matthew smiled. “I'm umm ...” Victoria looked at the drunken girl on Matthew's arm, wearing his suit jacket and snorted. “I'll leave you to get home.”

“I got some bills I need to talk to you about,” Matthew told her and Victoria's smile vanished.

“Another time,” Victoria replied quickly and nodded towards him before walking back up the road.

He stood stammering and then uttered the first thing that came into his head as she waved at him. “Merry Christmas.”

She turned with a sneer, her red and white bobble hat bouncing as she did. “Yeah, Merry Christmas Matt.”

“Who was that?” Katherine asked, leaning against Matthew and he bit his lip, taking a deep breath before answering,.

“An ex,” he replied stoically and Katherine giggled and squeezed him a bit harder. She was getting more awake and excitable as they walked down the path to the plush apartment block he rented in. The rent wasn't cheap and since Victoria had left she had not paid a jot towards it even though she was a co-signatory to the property which caused him a degree of annoyance. They had only chosen that flat because she liked it.

“This is cool,” Katherine said as she stumbled into the flat and then looked into the first bedroom where Matthew was searching for a jumper. Boxes were lined up on the side, Victoria still had a lot of stuff to remove from the flat and he had stored them in the corner of his bedroom. “So this is where all the magic happens?”

Matthew looked at her with a grin. “I wish.”

Katherine gave him a teasing “ooo” and climbed onto the bed. “Come on then. Make magic happen.”

Matthew froze and wiped his brow. “Shit I have had too much,” he mumbled and Katherine smiled.

“What? Don't you fancy me?”

Matthew spluttered and Katherine sighed holding out her hand and pulling Matthew onto the bed with her. He looked into her glazed eyes and she smiled back, moving forward to kiss him on the lips. Katherine's hands were shaking and her, head spinning, she reached down to undo the trousers of her friend. Matthew kicked them onto the floor and she felt his inflated cock with her hand.

Matthew was scared, just what should he do? Katherine was drunk, clearly not aware of what was going on but she was beautiful and sexy, and he wouldn't normally stand a chance with her. He grunted and closed his eyes as Katherine gently stroked his cock. She moved his hands between her legs, and he sighed.

This might be wrong, but it would be the first time he had had any sort of sexual relations with anyone for over two months – and that was a long time for any guy to go without.

He grunted and felt between her legs, pushing her thong to one side and started toying with her slit. She felt moist and grunted appreciatively as he explored her.

Katherine's head was spinning, she was only acutely aware of what was happening, although whatever was happening, she liked and groaned with every

touch.

Matthew sighed and she looked over at him, pulling his right arm across her. She wanted him to toy with her breasts but Matthew was aroused; his decision-making process was skewed and he interpreted her motion as something else.

Matthew spun his hips round and slid up the still clothed Katherine, his cock gliding past her thong and Katherine groaned. She grunted as he slid in, Matthew was in ecstasy, he had forgotten how good sex felt and he kissed the teenager on the lips.

He felt his climax approaching and with a grunt, pushed forward and came inside her. She sniffed and sighed as Matthew stayed there for a moment before withdrawing himself.

It had taken just a few minutes but Matthew climbed off of the mattress and went into the bathroom to clean himself up and get dressed on his return. Katherine was asleep in his bed, and he could see his semen dripping down her crack.

Matthew was ashamed, Katherine had not given her consent to anything and drunk or not, he was old enough to know it was a bad idea. Tentatively, he took a tissue and cleaned her up before gently waking her; she needed to go home sooner rather than later.

* * * * *

Joseph kissed his secretary against her hallway wall. They had slipped out of the party and driven in Sarah's little car to her house and were busy disrobing. Joseph's hands slid up the short dress of the girl who sighed at his touch and bit her lips.

“Oh just there,” she whispered as Joseph ran his fingers over her pearl. “That's nice.”

Joseph smiled at her arousal, he loved it when Sarah got horny as she never held back showing it and she mewled at his gentle probing. Sarah closed her eyes and Joseph kissed her on the lips. “Shall we go through to the bedroom?” Joseph asked and Sarah cried out a satisfied moan and pushed her head back.

“Yeah,” she mumbled and she allowed her boss to guide her into her own bedroom. They had already removed Joseph's suit and shirt, and her dress was hitched up, so she took it off and allowed Joseph to throw her onto the bed.

She giggled as she bounced up, and Joseph's fingers darted to her moist slit, sliding along her labia until he reached her womanhood. Sarah looked at him with lustful eyes, as he plunged his fingers into her. She groaned, and began rocking her hips in time with Joseph's deep penetrative fingers, curling up to touch her G-Spot.

Joseph continued to massage her sensitive areas as she erupted into her first orgasm, and then pulled the stout man onto her and guided his uncovered cock into her hole.

She groaned loudly as Joseph slid his member into her and she gripped the mattress as he made long, powerful strokes with his solid phallus. She cried out, her loins tingling and itching as he rammed deep inside her.

She reached around him, and gripped his buttocks, muttering encouragement to him every time she exhaled. "Oh Joseph." Joseph felt his balls tighten and he gripped hold of the pillow, looking into Sarah's eyes. Sarah was panting, her own body taking her towards her second orgasm of the night. She cried out, her muscles tightening and gripping Joseph's cock.

Joseph gasped, he had reached the point of no return and pounded into his secretary, desperate for his release. His testicles tightened, and he was surrounded by an intense desperation. With a grunt, he felt a surge of semen leave him and splatter in the inside of the girl underneath him.

They lay there for a moment and Sarah kissed him. "Thank you," she whispered, nibbling on his neck.

It took them half-an-hour to be "finished," Sarah had wanted to play with her boss, sending him to a shuddering climax and covering her chest in his sticky deposit. As they cleaned up Joseph realised that it was 11pm, the party would be finishing, and he would be missed by his wife. He swore, got dressed and with his secretary, ran down to the car to make a rapid return to the party venue.

If Charlotte couldn't find him when the party finished, he would be having to answer some very awkward questions.

* * * * *

Katherine stumbled up the road. "Hey Kat," a voice from behind her muttered as she drew level with her home.

"It's Callum, right?"

He chuckled and looked at Matthew and then Kat. "This your new boyfriend?"

Katherine shook her head. "Nooooo," she slurred. "This eeeeees umm, this eees, this eeeeees Maff-yew."

Callum looked at Matthew. The older guy felt nervous being around Katherine and her friend and looked at his watch. "You OK now?"

Katherine nodded and smiled. "Fank you," she slurred and Matthew kissed Katherine on the cheek. He turned and watched as she stumbled up the drive to knock on the door to her house and then waved at her as he wandered back down

the street

Callum waited until Matthew had left. “No one in?”

Katherine scowled. “Fuckin' schlood be.”

Callum laughed and walked up the drive to sit down on the porch next to his friend. “I split with Rach,” he told her, referring to her best friend and Katherine sniffed at him. “A few weeks ago, but I want her back.”

“She'll blee back,” she murmured and Callum grinned.

“Hey babe,” he said with a smirk. “See this.” Callum slid his jogging trousers down and waved his semi-erect cock in front of her, and pointing a small bruise on the shaft. “She did that.”

Katherine shuddered and mumbled something unintelligible and Callum slid his abused manhood back inside. “She's well pissed with me.”

Katherine sniffed and leant back on the door, just as the headlamps of her fathers car illuminated her. “Sorry Kat,” Charlotte called climbing out. “Your father went for a walk and didn't tell us.”

Katherine looked up sleepily. “I need my bed,” she moaned and was helped to her feet by Callum, her mother eyeing her suspiciously. “He has a bruised dick,” Katherine announced as her mother opened the door and Katherine fell into the house.

Charlotte puffed; she would be having serious words with her daughter when Katherine was sober.

Chapter VI

Matthew had spent most of the weekend beating himself up about his dalliance with Katherine, but he had received neither a phone call or a text from anyone, except Victoria, asking about some boxes Matthew still had. Matthew had replied with “come get ur shit. Also pay me what u owe” which had not elicited any sort of a response.

He wondered how much Katherine could remember, or even her parents, but regardless of how much she was aware of he still felt awful. He wasn't sure if he had committed rape or not, Katherine had certainly consented to the sex but was she really able to? He might not have tied her down and forced her into intercourse, she came onto him, but did she know what she was doing?

Matthew concluded he had not committed rape, Katherine was old enough to consent to sex, and aware enough of her surroundings to come onto him, but this did not alter how he felt about what he did. He had taken advantage of a vulnerable teenager and they had had unprotected sex. He, Matthew Styles, was a complete and utter bastard.

After a sleepless night, he walked tentatively across the park to the Wilson's house on Monday, certain he was going to get screamed at, or even arrested, but Katherine happily let him in when he knocked on their front door. He waited as she flashed her smile and beckoned him into the house, her nightie covered by a woollen dressing gown and a coy grin on her face.

“How was your hangover?” Katherine asked as Matthew closed the front door. “I was in agony all morning.”

“Errr ... well, OK. I had some water and went for a walk,” Matthew summarised, he had had a lot to think about as he sobered up that night.

Katherine smiled and pushed open the door to the kitchen. Joseph and Charlotte were having breakfast and welcomed him in warmly. “You OK?” Charlotte asked and Matthew nodded as Katherine sat down in seat.

“Yeah, yeah fine.”

Katherine looked up at him with a smile. “Oh, and thank you for looking after me on Friday.”

Joseph looked up from his newspaper. “I take it was you that bought her all that alcohol?”

Matthew tensed up, butterflies doing somersaults in his stomach. “Umm, well, we umm ... we had those tokens to use up.”

Joseph laughed as he turned back to the newspaper. “Oh well, only happens once a year.”

“And thank you for walking me home,” Katherine said and passed Matthew his jacket back. “Did I stagger much?”

Matthew shivered. “Don't you remember?”

Katherine blushed. “No. I remember you buying me loads of drinks,” she said looking up at the ceiling. “There was a nice guy who I danced with and I, um, kissed him outside, but then it went black until I ended up here. Oh, and Callum flashed himself at me on the patio.”

Charlotte hummed at her daughter who looked unashamedly unworried about her confession. “Next time, don't get my daughter as pissed,” Joseph asked, looking up from the newspaper as Matthew shifted his weight from side to side. “I think she isn't able to be responsible yet. Know where her limits are.”

“Oh leave him alone, Joe,” Charlotte told him as Katherine went to respond. “They had a good time.”

“Well, next time someone could end up hurting her, I don't want anyone taking advantage of her when she is in that state.”

Charlotte puffed at her husband, passing Matthew a banana from the fruit bowl. “You will be late for work. Piss off and have a shower.”

Joseph grumbled, got up and disappeared to get dressed. “Don't worry about him,” Charlotte told him the moment her husband left the room. “He is just being a grump. You have a good time?”

Matthew smiled, feeling relaxed for the first time since he entered the house. “Yeah I did.”

“Good. We all did.” Charlotte took the banana skin, the dirty bowls and put them in the sink before walking into the lounge – the American website she had recently found had a special jackpot on and fifty thousand dollars would buy her a lot of luxury.

“Can you seriously not remember anything about Friday night?” Matthew whispered the moment Charlotte left the room. Katherine, reading her magazine, shook her head.

“You got me way too pissed,” the young lady replied with a smile. “But I think it was on champagne, so thank you. It is the style I could definitely become accustomed to.” Matthew grunted and Katherine got up from the table. “I think you could have seduced me that night.”

Matthew froze and Katherine cackled with laughter. “As if,” Matthew nervously

uttered.

“Yeah, as if,” Katherine replied.

* * * * *

“We need to talk,” Joseph said as he sat down at his desk at his secretary. Paul had texted Joseph to say he was working from home in the morning and Sarah looked up at him with a smile.

“What is it?”

“Us. We can't.”

“I'm not wearing any knickers,” she said with a grin and Joseph rolled his eyes.

“Charlotte and the kids are too important to me. I'm sorry, but what we did was silly.”

Sarah sighed and bit her lip, she had predicted this as well and rubbed her forearms. “It wasn't silly Joey, it was amazing.”

Joseph sighed, if Sarah was going to be dogmatic about this then she would have to go, but he had spent all weekend worried about this two liaisons with the beautiful girl and was determined to end it. “It was silly,” Joseph said firmly and Sarah shrugged.

“I don't love you,” Sarah said looking up from her keyboard. “It was just sex. Just fun. Amazing, magical fun, but nothing more. You do know that.”

Joseph breathed a sigh of relief and looked at her. He was scared she would run off and tell Charlotte when he told her but she wasn't obsessed with him, which was a good sign. “I'm glad you think that, but it can't continue.”

Sarah rubbed her nose and wiped her chin. “It's up to you,” she said with a deliberately disappointed voice. “But I thought it was good. I enjoyed myself, didn't you enjoy yourself?”

Joseph twisted in his seat. “Well yes.”

“And you like sex, don't you?”

“Well, of course.”

“Then what's the harm? I'm not going to tell your wife, and a bit of stress relief, it will do you high flying executives good. And I needed it, I've not had much sex since Darren dumped me.” Joseph shifted and Sarah looked over at him. “Why not go for lunch,” she suggested. “Have a proper chat.”

Joseph sighed and she looked pleadingly at him. “OK,” he muttered before he thought what he was saying and Sarah picked up the phone to book a private, secluded table in a local restaurant.

And a hotel room.

* * * * *

“How much?” Paul called out down the phone. “Yeah, I know it's genuine marble, but I ain't paying that!”

The woman at the end of the phone looked over at her husband; Paul Mason and Colorful Interiors may have been 4,000 miles apart but Paul Mason was making his feelings on the matter abundantly clear and Mary knew exactly what aggressive pose her client would be making in his English house.

“We can haggle with the supplier but if it is genuine marble then it costs to import. And your bathroom is big, Mr Mason.”

Paul took a deep breath and looked out over his sodden garden from his conservatory. “Well I liked the designs, the naked girls and boys looked sweet, I am just not buying marble at that price, 'cos, to be honest, I could 'ave it in gold plated ivory.”

The interior designer puffed. “Well I'll get some alternative designs sent over to you, but apart from that, are the photos OK?”

Paul looked back on his tablet and flicked through them all. “Yeah fine, just my en-suite bathroom to sort. When will you have the new designs here?”

Mary ran her fingers through her Caribbean hair. “End of the week?”

“Is that Caribbean time or proper time?” Paul asked and there was confused silence. “It's just tomorrow in your country is next week in ours. Bloody villa took ages to go through.”

Mary chose not to respond to the pointed criticism and sighed. “I will have the options to you by Friday 5pm G. M. T. at the latest,” she replied in a cold voice and Paul grunted.

“Good. I'll speak to you Friday then?”

Paul hung up and stretched his legs, the villa in the Caribbean was costing him more than he budgeted for, and he would need to find an additional income source, beyond the company accounts he was already raiding.

It had started quite innocuously, he had found money a little tight and had wanted to take money out of the company without his co-owner and director knowing so set up a company called “P Hamblet Offices Ltd” and paid them over £25,000, before paying the office block maintenance company £10,000, a “P Hamblet Offices Ltd.” from his false company.

He had had to explain away the dramatic increase in charges to his co-director, but he was responsible for the finances and as their games and mobile software

development company began to grow quickly, it easily absorbed the losses from Paul's embezzlement.

Once the end of year accounts, produced by the accountants, failed to spot this, Paul repeated it for a number of companies before branching into other frauds, such as diverting the rental income from the small office block they owned, or inventing an employee on the payroll. Joseph was keen to manage the software development teams, they had plenty of work to do, and just allowed Paul to administer the finances, something he was more than willing to do.

Paul was well liked in the office, he was generous around his colleagues, always buying the first round in the pub, or ensuring the biscuit tin was well stocked, and was always one of the last people to leave, but not a single soul knew of his double-dealing.

Paul had taken to running two ledgers at work, the real ledger was locked in his bottom drawer while the book that Joseph had access to resided in his top drawer, which showed a healthier state of company finances than was true. In fact, all of the revenues from their mobile sales in the Americas had been funnelled through a company that was paying for his villa.

Paul was lucky, the sales of his company's remote working suite had taken off considerably and while the support team complained of receiving untold amounts of e-mails (far higher than usual), no-one in the office had access to the portals to check the sales figures reported by Paul against the sales figures given to Paul from the companies that sold their software, which gave him ample opportunity to embezzle the funds he needed to.

* * * * *

“What the hell is this?” Katie thundered at her unemployed husband. She passed over a small shoebox containing graphically violent pornography. Gareth stammered.

“Well it's ummm, it's not mine,” he said quickly. Katie cocked her head to one side and picked up the first DVD of a woman with a whip and a naked cowering man underneath.

“Do you like this? Would you like me to get PVC underwear and spank you until you bleed?” Gareth hummed, temporarily sidetracked by that thought.

“Umm, it's not, it's not mine.” Katie sighed and glared at him. “It's not. It's Matt's,” Gareth lied, speaking quickly and Katie's eyes narrowed.

“Why would Matthew want to keep his dirty porn here and not at his flat?”

“Yeah, well, ya see umm, remember Vicky. Very boring girl, she didn't want to see it. So the cheeky fucker asked if I could stash it for a few weeks and I, umm,

said yes. Just while she was moving out and turning the flat upside down looking for her things. And I forgot to give it back.”

Katie puffed her cheeks and threw the material on the sofa. “Well I don't want it in the 'ouse. Tell 'im I don't like it.”

Gareth grunted. “Yeah well, he needs his porn. He ain't got a girlfriend, has he?”

Katie groaned and then looked around the lounge, there were three cups on the table, his cereal bowl on the floor, bits of rubbish and clothes everywhere. “Oh, and tidy this shit-hole up. I am not coming home to this,” she warned and stormed out of the room. Gareth sighed and hugged his porn collection, it had had a very narrow escape and he waited for Katie to leave before hiding his stash in the loft, alongside the really dirty stuff.

Chapter VII

“Can you believe this?” Gareth thundered, putting his beer down firmly on the table in the small and cold beer garden. “Katie has nicked most of me chuffin' porn. So not only am I now celibate, I can't even have a fuckin' wank.”

“Most of it?”

Gareth gave a guilty shrug. “Well, all but the odd disc I have hidden, but that's the point. She has taken and hidden it. And I have no fuckin' idea where it is.”

Matthew pursed his lips together and then opened the pack of peanuts he had in front of him. “Ah well, it had to happen. You do have an awful lot of it.”

Gareth waved his arms in front of him. “But needed. To a guy that doesn't get any shagging, I need it. And she's taking fuckin' liberties, and I'm not having it.”

Matthew forced a smile. “It might do you good. But apart from that, how are you doing?”

“Well I didn't get the job at the kennels.” Gareth looked thoughtful for a moment, staring at the table. “I don't like they liked the Korean takeaway joke to be honest, no chuffin' sense of humour. Beauty Parlour never phoned me back and the sex shop on the High Street don't have no vacancies.”

Matthew chuckled at him and Gareth sighed. “Come on, working with sex toys and corsets and stuff. And women trying on underwear all day. I tried to get in to the lingerie shop in the Shopping Centre, I mean I had a shave and everything but she told me to feck off. Said I wasn't the sort of person they wanted.”

“What about a bank?”

Gareth sneered. “Yeah, like when have I been able to add up.”

“I think they use calculators or computers or something. Maybe an abacus,” Matthew teased and Gareth frowned.

“What's an abacus?”

Matthew opened his mouth and then shut it quickly. “Peanuts?” Matthew felt sorry for Gareth, everything he held dear in life was falling apart and it had been almost nine months since he last had a job, losing it through no fault of his own.

Matthew had worked with him at a Garden Centre when they were both teenagers and their friendship had grown since, and while Matthew went off to University to end up with a well paid job at the mobile phones developer, Gareth had been stuck doing construction work, bar work and then working for a chain of estate agents erecting “for sale signs.”

It was difficult, but his wife and him were college sweethearts and they both agreed she was the only one who would put it with him. They spent all evening in their local pub and then spilled out on to the street.

A deluge of out-of-tune signing accompanied the two men as they meandered their way from the kebab shop to the house where Gareth lived and Matthew staggered as he tried to open the front door with Gareth's key.

“Hi babe,” Gareth called as the front door was opened from the inside, taking a step, tripping over the ridge of the door and falling flat on his face. He squealed as he hit the floor, rolling over and looking up at his wife. “I love you Katie.”

Katie groaned and looked at her husband's companion. “Oh, what d'ya get him drunk for?” Katie asked accusing Matthew who sniffed.

“We just ...”

“Cheering me up,” Gareth started. “Cos some nasty cow has nicked me porn and slapped a no shagging ban on.”

Katie sighed, she did not want the rest of the street to hear her business and prodded her husband into the lounge closing the door firmly with Matthew on the street side.

“Throw up on the sofa,” she warned. “And I am divorcing you. Wet yourself, and I am divorcing you. Wake me up and I am divorcing you. You hear me?” Gareth collapsed on the threadbare sofa and grunted. Katie's eyes narrowed. “Useless twat,” she muttered and slammed the door to the lounge.

Katie was getting very annoyed with Gareth, he may be unemployed and trying to get back to work but he was not helping himself, and while she worked extra hours to make up for the gap in their income he would go to the pub and get drunk. It was an insult and she made a mental note to ensure that he suffered for it. It was the third time in as many weeks that he had got drunk at The Crown and she wasn't going to stand for it any longer.

Matthew rubbed his head the moment he woke up the following morning. He had drunk two pints of water on his return to his flat but he still had a banging headache, and as Joseph was not going direct to the office, he had to get up even earlier and go via the bus.

Skipping breakfast, Matthew staggered down the stairs and then out into the cool January air. It had been raining heavily but dodging the puddles Matthew made it to the bus stop for the first of his two buses to work.

Matthew barely managed to concentrate and was oblivious to those around him. “You look worse than death,” Joseph said as he stopped by Matthew's workstation after lunch. “Heavy night?”

Matthew rubbed his forehead and groaned. "Something like that," he muttered, staring at the bright screen.

"If you want to go and get drunk," Joseph started. "Then I can't stop you, but I do expect you to be able to work today. You've been staring at that line of code for ten minutes."

Matthew had been thinking, the recent liaison he had had with Katherine was still going through his mind, why couldn't he meet a girl like that for a date? "Yeah, sorry," Matthew replied and rubbed his eyes. "It just won't compile."

Joseph looked at the screen and immediately added a semi-colon at the end of the line. "Wake up Matthew," he warned and left his employee to groan at the simplicity of his error.

Joseph sat down at his desk and nodded towards his PA. "You OK?"

Sarah was scratching herself and just nodded. "Just an itch," she moaned. "And not like that."

"Well you do have itches like that," Joseph teased her and got up to crouch down at her desk, looking at her in the eye. "And I can scratch them for you."

Sarah giggled and grinned at her employer. "Tomorrow. Paul is out, if you fancy a quickie."

Joseph smiled and kissed her on the cheek, withdrawing his face just as Paul walked into the office with a cheery "hello."

Paul passed over a magazine to Joseph. "It's that catalogue you wanted," he told him. "The brewing your own beer stuff. Those people are pretty good."

"Oh cheers," his partner replied, taking the glossy psychedelic object in his hands. "I thought you said you had chucked it."

Paul grinned. "Oh no, I knew I had it somewhere. I emptied out my shed last night to find it."

"Oh great."

"I've gone through and starred the kits I've had which are good, you'll like this one." Paul pulled up a bottle from his bag and passed it across. "It's the Golden Angel, and it's lovely."

"I thought I was the Golden Angel," Sarah teased and Joseph smirked at their secretary.

"You are my Golden Angel," Joseph told her with a grin. "I mean, our, golden angel."

A strong coffee and a walk in the afternoon rain restored Matthew's senses, and

feeling a degree of guilt for his lack of productivity in that morning, stayed until Joseph was ready to leave at 7pm.

“Haven't you got a home to go to?” Joseph teased as he got his coat. “Come on I'll give you a lift home.”

Matthew sighed and closed down his program. “Yeah, but I wanted to get that graphing module finished.”

“Well if you didn't come to work with a hangover,” he reminded him and Matthew glanced at the clock.

“I finished it half-an-hour ago,” Matthew replied in a cool voice and got up, grabbing his coat. “I've been productive today.”

“Good, 'cos employee of the year, you set a standard,” Joseph reminded him with a teasing smile causing Matthew to groan. “Everyone looks up to you.”

* * * * *

Matthew held the door open to the restaurant and the elegant “Amy” entered. He smiled at her, she looked very much like the photo he had been sent where her head had been cropped from, what was, clearly a topless photograph, although it showed little.

Amy and Matthew had a mutual friend in Katie and she had, quite out of the blue, offered to set them up telling Matthew she was just the girl he was looking for.

Amy was a shapely woman, blonde hair with a genuine, powerful smile who allowed Matthew to guide her to the table. She seemed slightly on edge and eager, and Matthew glanced at her well proportioned breasts barely contained within her dress.

They shared a bottle of wine, Matthew was fond of red wine but never had anyone to drink it with and Amy gleefully drank two glasses of the Merlot he had bought over her fillet steak.

Matthew certainly warmed to Amy, she was genuine with her smiles and laughter and although she was “just a secretary,” she was considerably well read and conversed on a number of subjects. She kept running her legs up and down his, and smiling knowingly at him, she was certainly flirtatious.

Matthew paid for their meal when Amy was in the toilets and she grinned at him as he held out her coat. “Just how I like my men,” she said with a smile. “Looking after me.” Matthew walked her home, she was animated and playful as they meandered through the well-lit suburbs before stopping outside her front door in a well-to-do neighbourhood.

“This is me,” she told him and looked into his eyes. “I've really enjoyed tonight.”

“Me too,” Matthew answered and Amy pursed her lips.

“I don't suppose we could do it again?”

“Sure, I'd umm, I'd really like that.”

Amy kissed him on the cheek and looked at his slightly embarrassed expression. “In fact, why not come in for a drink?” Matthew hesitated and hummed. “Well it's 10pm, surely you can have a beer or two?”

“Yeah,” Matthew replied with a grin and followed his salacious date up the steps to her house. She guided him into the lounge and asked for a couple of minutes, leaving Matthew sitting on the threadbare blue couch and staring around the dark room.

There was an almighty bang from the corner of the room, and Matthew jumped. “What the ...?” He started but stopped the moment he saw his date.

Amy had burst into the room and Matthew's eyes nearly popped out of his skull. His date, dressed in black leather bondage outfit, holding up a whip in one hand thrust it in front of her date.

“Get on your knees, you puny retch and lick my boots,” she said in a threatening low voice. “And then I am going to turn your arse red,” she said. “I am going to whip you senseless.”

Matthew mewed in a horrified voice. “Ummm, what?”

Amy bit her lip, her whip shaking in front of her. “I said lick my boots, and, don't you want to play?”

Matthew frowned and spoke in a concerned voice. “Umm, well not like that.”

“What?” Amy asked shocked.

“Not like that. I don't want to be whipped or lick your boots.”

“You a top? You don't look like one.”

Matthew wiped his furrowed brow with his hand. “Am I a what?”

“A top?” Amy adjusted herself. “I need a bottom, I can't be a bottom, I need to be a top.” She looked at her confused date and sniffed. “You are into BDSM, aren't you?”

“BDSM? You mean ...”

“Bondage and discipline and stuff.”

Matthew squealed. “No. Well I don't mind the odd spank but not that thing.” Amy slouched on the sofa, her whip strewn across her leather bustier. “Umm, what made your think that I was?”

Amy sighed. “Katie. Katie said you were into it.”

“Katie said I was into it,” Matthew squealed and Amy wiped her eyes apologetically.

“She said you watched femdom porn and—”

“Gareth,” Matthew exclaimed. “I bet you Katie found some of his porn and he has said it is mine. Lying bastard.”

Amy pursed her lips and looked at the embarrassed date. “I’m sorry for jumping to this, I should have checked I suppose.”

Matthew shrugged. “You do look very hot though. I just umm, don’t fancy the whipping and the licking and the stuff. It’s just scary.”

Amy reached up and pulled a dressing gown abandoned on the sofa from the morning around her. “You don’t know of any guys who want their asses leathering do you, it’s so hard to find dates with people who like this?”

Matthew snorted. “I can think of one guy who could do with a bloody good hiding,” he joked. “But I think that’s Katie’s job.”

Amy snorted with a grunt. “I’d love to see that.” Matthew felt uncomfortable, he didn’t want to leave immediately, it would be rude, but Amy’s dominatrix act had certainly made him ill-at-ease. Instead he talked to her over a cup of coffee and they chatted amicably but Matthew kept his distance, Amy was suddenly scary not sexy.

Before long, he had finished his drink and, after agreeing with her that a second date would probably be a waste of time, left her house to walk back to his flat, texting Katie to tell her that while Amy was a nice girl, he was not into getting his rear whipped by a crazy flagellatrix.

* * * * *

“Won’t the folks mind?” Lewis asked as Anna opened the door to the “big house” and the Russian girl shook her head.

“They out all night,” she promised with a smirk and gestured him inside. “And Josh is asleep.” It wasn’t the first time he had been to the house where Anna lived and worked, but it was the first time he had been invited inside.

Lewis rubbed his face, hiding his smirk as Anna closed the door and gestured for him to go into the lounge. Lewis looked around the expansive lounge, it was well decorated and smart. A couple of brand new sofas were arranged around a table and a giant television that was displaying a video game on pause.

Anna came up behind him. “Take shoes off,” she warned. “Carpet, it is new.”

“Oh of course,” Lewis said, transfixed by Anna pushing past him. Her short shorts and tight top made her look sexy and alluring. Lewis quickly shed his shoes, coat and jumper (the house was warm) and came into the room.

Anna had sent Lewis a text message inviting him round to keep her company and he had happily traded his Geography homework for an evening with the beautiful Russian girl. His Dad was too busy messing around in the garage, and his Mum was swearing at the laptop; he had no idea where Katherine was, and left the house with barely a murmur.

Anna passed him a glass of white wine. His hands were shaking as he took it, but took a sip as Anna flicked off the games console. “I bored,” Anna moaned. “I want to watch film.” She pointed towards a ceiling length cabinet that was full of DVDs and Lewis put his wine on the table to peer at them.

“Oh classic,” he cooed over a couple. “That’s an awesome film.”

Anna scowled at his choice. “That. It brain-dead American rubbish,” she said at the Terminator. “And that. That no better. I want proper film.” She rubbed the back of his shoulders and Lewis froze as her other hand came across him and selected V for Vendetta. “Good?”

Lewis nodded, he had no idea what it was about, but secretly hoped it was a bit scary so Anna would have a reason to curl up with him. It wasn't frightening at all but she did snuggle up on the two-person sofa and they drank the 1½-litre bottle of white wine between them. Lewis was buzzing by the time the Houses of Parliament were destroyed and Anna was resting her head on his lap, preferring the soft muscle of Lewis's thigh to the robustness of the new cushions.

The light flicked on just as the film ended and a tall, young man stood in the doorway. “Anna. Josh been OK?”

Anna looked up with slightly glazed eyes. “Not heard a thing,” she said and straightened herself up. An elegant lady walked in behind the man of the house and grinned at Anna adjusting her top.

“Ahhh, you must be Lewis,” she said with a smile, walking into her lounge. Lewis hummed and nodded, how did this woman know who he was? The lady sat down on the other sofa and looked at him. “Anna’s spoken about you a few times. And Josh.”

“Ahhhh,” Lewis muttered and Anna grinned at the reddening boy.

“Sorry, am I making you blush?” The lady giggled and looked at the doorway. “I’ll leave you two alone.”

Lewis watched her leave and looked at Anna, who shrugged. “Josh, he likes you,” Anna muttered with a smile.

“He’s a nice kid. Umm, I, er, better be going,” Lewis replied and got up. “It is nearly eleven.”

“You have school, right?”

“Yes.”

“I see you in your uniform. You look ...”

“Geeky,” Lewis finished for her but Anna shook her head.

“Ummm, smart.” Lewis blushed again as he put his shoes on. Anna gave him a hug before he left, thanking him for the company, while Lewis thanked her for the wine and waved at the two owners of the house, sat in their breakfast bar in the next room, drinking a hot drink.

“You not staying the night?” The lady asked and Lewis bit his lip. He would love to have stayed the night with the lovely Anna, she was friendly and beautiful, but she had never showed any affection towards him, and at three years his senior, was well out of his league.

“Errr, no,” Lewis added and grabbed his coat. “But thank you,” he muttered to everyone and no-one and escaped into the cold night.

Chapter VIII

The following morning, Matthew arrived just as Katherine emerged from the bathroom looking a little green. “You OK?”

“Bit of a stomach upset,” Katherine replied and traipsed into the kitchen to get a glass of water. “Oh, how was your date at the weekend?”

Matthew gave a tortured smile and sat down, helping himself to a banana. “Ummm, bit of a communication problem.”

Charlotte looked up from her newspaper. “Oh,” she said, Matthew's less-than-candid reply piquing her interest.

“Yeah, she was told I am quite fond of being whipped and tied up and stuff, so she turned into a leather-clad female dominatrix the moment we got back to her house with a whip and ummm, yeah, it went downhill at that point.” Charlotte and Katherine both burst into laughter and Matthew grinned at them. “It wasn't funny at the time,” he told them, “but yes I can see the giggle potential now. If only she had asked if I wanted Miss Whiplash or not at the start of the date I could have told her and it would have been fine. She was a nice girl, just not for me.”

Joseph entered and looked at Matthew. “What's funny?”

“Oh Matthew,” Katherine said before anyone could reply. “He went on a date with a leather-clad dominatrix at the weekend.” Joseph frowned and looked at his employee blushing and grunted.

“I don't want to know,” he said and glanced down at his hands. “Still nicking our fruit I see.”

“The Potassium in the bananas are good for whip wounds, right?” Katherine teased and Matthew groaned; Katherine would keep teasing him about Amy, he could sense it.

Charlotte shooed Katherine upstairs to get ready for school, despite her bout of sickness and was eager to get everyone ready and on their way out of the house. Lewis had barely shut the front door when Charlotte put on her boots and slipped out to go to the supermarket to do their “weekly shop” and then stopped at a run-down building on the main road leaving the town centre.

Charlotte sat down opposite the strange man in the empty pub, she had heard he was the right person and he looked like the description – tall, thin, white, short hair and a Rolex watch.

“Hello,” Charlotte said with an air of inappropriate familiarity. “I'm Charlotte Wilson.” He looked up from the betting pages of his newspaper at the middle-

aged mother playing nervously with her hands, saying nothing but watching her squirm. “Ethan, right?”

The guy bit his lip. “Who told you?”

Charlotte stuttered. “Mary, Mary Hollins. She is a parent at the school.”

Ethan bit his lip with a cursory smile. “What do you want?”

He looked at Charlotte. “A grand for four weeks.”

He snorted and glared at her. “A grand?”

Charlotte bit her lip and nodded. “Yeah, a grand.”

“If I lend it you, I will get back one four on Easter Monday at the latest. Yeah?”

Charlotte took a deep breath and licked her lips. “One three?”

Ethan laughed. “Ahh, ya desperate bitches, always try and haggle. It's one four lady or ya desperate ass can fuck off.”

Charlotte sniffed, shocked by his vulgar language and attitude. She had already exhausted the savings she had access to and the bank had refused to extend her overdraft, citing the current amount she had borrowed was sufficient. “OK, One four.”

“And if I don't get it back then I start breaking bones and taking stuff. You hear me?”

Charlotte nodded and he looked at her and then her car outside. He took out a small book and wrote her name, the amount, her car registration number, and then her phone number. He had been told by an existing debtor that she might be coming and he knew she lived in a big house containing a decent amount of “nice things” so he knew she was a good risk but the book was more to intimidate her than anything else.

“Whatcha writing?” Charlotte asked in a concerned voice and Ethan smiled at her.

“Stuff,” he muttered and opened his jacket pocket and took out two bundles of notes and passed them over to the shaking mother who sniffed and started counting them. “Don't you trust me?”

Charlotte glanced up and went through the small bundles of cash. “No offence but you are a loan shark,” she replied and he grunted. He was used to it, and knew the exact amount of cash that he had given her. She looked up and then thanked him, expecting a response but got nothing as she got up from the table and started walking towards the exit.

“Four weeks,” Ethan reminded her. “And I'll be in touch.”

* * * * *

“Katty, what's up?”

Katherine pouted and looked around the room. “I've missed two periods,” she whispered. “I should have come on at the beginning of the week.”

Rachel gasped, her hand gripping Katherine's wrist who looked down at the red nail varnish adorning the fingers. “You don't mean. Oh Katty, that Sam, he's in deep shit.”

Katherine shook her head. “No. Not Sam. I had, I might have had one after then. I, um.”

Rachel gasped and wiped her nose. “Have you? I my God, Kat, who? Come on babes, tell me? I can't believe you didn't tell me.”

Katherine rubbed her brow. “No-one. Well possibly one, I don't know.”

“Possibly? Kat ya making no sense. What's happened?”

“I don't think I am pregnant,” Katherine whispered, not answering the question and glancing at the door when she heard a noise. “My breasts have been a bit sore so I am definitely due on, things just things feel different. But I could be hormones, right?”

Rachel glared at her friend. “I guess it could be. So what happened, and with who?”

“It might have been at the Christmas Party for Dad's work. I got pissed with someone Dad works with and got close to another guy but I don't think he touched me, but then I got walked home and I, er, well I ran into Callum.”

Rachel groaned. “My ex?”

Katherine nodded. “I'm sorry Rach. I don't think we did anything. I vaguely remember him trying to kiss me and Mum coming home but he did get his cock out, so I don't know. I mean I would remember it, right?”

Rachel shook her head. “Yeah, you'd remember it. But Callum?”

Katherine sighed. “I don't think he did anything. He wanted to show me his cock and I remember that, but everything before then, I dunno.”

“What about the guy who walked you home?”

“Matthew?” Katherine laughed. “No, he wouldn't. We were both too pissed anyway. So maybe I didn't have sex that night, I did feel a little tender the following morning. Oh I dunno, it must be stress.”

Rachel looked at Katherine and then back at her folder. “Do a test. Do a pregnancy test, just in case.”

Katherine took a deep breath and pursed her lips together. “Sure, if I don't come on by the end of the week. It's just worrying me but I am never that regular anyway.”

Rachel smirked, she had had regular periods since puberty and joked that she knew when it was a full moon that year as she had been bleeding. Her friend was not so regular and wondered if it really was stress but Katherine didn't worry about much in life so her concern was striking in that it was unusual.

“Shall we go get something to eat?” Rachel offered and Katherine smiled.

“Yeah, please.”

“Take your mind off of it.”

Katherine got up and followed her friend out of the small college common room, idling towards the small canteen. They had plenty to talk about and Rachel took the opportunity to ask her about the Christmas Party, giggling like a schoolgirl as Katherine blushed with every word.

* * * * *

Sarah sniffed, her body shaking and looked down at the woman scrabbling between her thighs. “Pardon?”

“It's Genital Warts,” her doctor replied with a casual sigh and took off her gloves, throwing them in the clinical waste. “You are the eight person I've had this week, there is some Lothario in the area who needs to come and see me.”

Sarah rubbed her eyes as the Doctor told her to get dressed. “It's a simple treatment, topical, you've got small warts but it will take a month. It comes with a special applicator and I've got one here, I'll show you.”

Sarah was on the edge of tears as her Doctor guided her through the treatment, advised her about cancer and then implored her to contact all of her sexual partners from the last nine months as one of them had passed it on to her, and she had probably passed it on to others.

Sarah felt humiliated and chastised, the Doctor, although respectful, talked to her about unprotected sex and how unwise it was outside of a committed relationship; Sarah felt like she was thirteen again. She was on the pill so she didn't need to ask Joseph to wear a condom but now she was going to have to tell him that she had given him a disease. She wanted to cry and left the surgery in a trance to go home via the pharmacy.

The applicator stung as she put it on her loins and she burst into tears, staring at her phone. She knew she should tell Joseph, if nothing else, but she just couldn't face the conversation she needed to have. It was too humiliating and too embarrassing, and anyway Joseph always had a shower after sex so his wife

wouldn't smell any of Sarah's perfume on him, he probably just washed the warts away.

If Sarah was careful for the next month or two, then she might just get away with not having to tell him, as if Joseph thought Sarah was dirty he might not want to spend any time with her, and that would spoil all her plans.

* * * * *

Lewis took a deep breath. It had been two months since that first night with Anna to watch a film and it had turned into a very regular date. Anna's adopted family would go out most Thursdays and Lewis was always invited to stay for the evening. Sometimes they would watch a film, other times play a board game, or cards or even just talk.

Lewis noticed a definite improvement in Anna's English, her speech was clearer and she even started teaching Lewis some Russian, although he skipped the alphabet as it wasn't the "normal" characters: learning a new language was perfectly OK but a new alphabet was simply ridiculous.

Lewis found Russian very difficult at first; Anna was entertained by his pronunciation of her mother tongue, but he tried very hard to get it right and be able to converse with her in Russian, and she gave him every encouragement. To her, Lewis learning her language and making such efforts to do so, made her realise how much of a friend Lewis was to her.

Anna was much amused during Snatch when the Russian gangster was talking in Russian, that Lewis correctly pointed out that the English subtitles had been incorrectly translated, something she had failed to spot and proof, she said, that his Russian language was not as bad as he thought it was.

Each time, the lady of the house was a little surprised that Lewis was not staying the night with Anna, the au-pair had clearly been given permission for her partner or friend to stay if she wished but Lewis was never invited, or sought the opportunity. That is not to say he would not have leapt at the chance, but Anna was just a dream and a masturbatory fantasy.

He did pick a couple of scary films over the months, The Silence of the Lambs and The Birds, so Anna, normally dressed in her pyjamas, would cuddle up to him, but she started doing this anyway during the non-scary films.

By mid-March Lewis was getting a little frustrated and confused, did Anna like him or not? He considered asking, but if she really didn't then she might be offended and in the end resolved to do what he should have done weeks ago – he asked her out on a date.

Anna spluttered, she was in the playground watching Joshua and she opened her mouth repeatedly. Lewis's heart was beating furiously, he had butterflies in his

stomach and his hands were trembling. “But Lewis,” she started.

Lewis shrugged. “I do like you,” he replied. “And you make me smile. Go to a little restaurant. I'd love to take you out.”

Anna hummed. “I like you too,” she replied. “But it bad idea.”

“Oh,” Lewis muttered, disappointed at his friend's response.

“My visa. It expires soon.” Anna hesitated as she counted in her head and then added. “In few months.”

“Oh,” Lewis replied, his facial expression changing from disappointment to concern. “Does that mean that ummm ...?”

Anna bit her lip. “Da. Umm. Yes. I go back to Russia unless Police let me stay.” Lewis took a deep breath and sighed, watching Joshua spin a roundabout with a little girl. “I sorry,” Anna told him. “I like you too but I need good friend, not good boyfriend.”

Lewis took Anna's hand on her lap and nodded. “S'ok. Film tomorrow?”

Anna bit her lip and nodded. “Da, I want sexy film.” Lewis groaned inside – that meant Dirty Dancing, he just knew it.

* * * * *

Paul drove up to his new villa, boasting a small private beach near the small fishing village and glanced over at the view. It was a very secluded location, ideal for what he had in mind, and parked his hire car outside the garage. His two companions, both middle-aged men whom he had met on the Internet got out and whistled. “Pretty neat.”

Paul smiled. “It is. Cost a pretty packet but I ain't working my entire life while the company sits on hundreds of thousands.” There was a smile and he pulled out a suitcase. “I spoke to Kadema, he got a fifteen year old girl, and her twin brother. Oh and his niece who turned sixteen last week.”

The thinnest guy, a teaching assistant from Newport by the name of Rhys, grinned. “Oh, and you have a birthday present for her then?”

“Of course. She must be sixteen but she has the needs and yearnings of a woman,” he replied with a lecherous glance and strode inside the house. It was the first time he had seen it since he had bought it and left instructions on how to decorate it although he had seen photos. He looked around the hall, decorated with pictures of naked girls and boys and took in a lungful of the fresh air. The smooth lines of the hall led into a brightly coloured lounge decorated with two huge sofas and an open-plan dining room-cum-kitchen.

The ground floor had two bedrooms, each one with double beds and with lewd

photographs and pictures and the two bedrooms upstairs were adorned with similar artwork, as well as en-suite bathrooms. Rhys cooed over the small jacuzzi and gazebo in the small garden, but it looked out of place being tiled with an image of a dolphin. He pointed this out to his host and Paul mentioned about retiling costing too much money and the teaching assistant nodded, it was way more opulent than anything he could have imagined. Paul pointed to the tall trees surrounding his property saying that they were far enough away to allow the bright sunlight into his garden but tall enough to shield his property from everyone, which was ideal given what he had planned for it.

Rhys and Geoff, a computer programmer from the “Midlands” unpacked their stuff into the spare bedrooms. There was another one of Paul's friends – a university student from Cambridge coming over for the house-warming and a local man who had expressed similar tastes in the younger flesh. Paul toured his villa, and took the walk down to the private beach with white sand. It was only a very small cove, with barely thirty metres of beach but it was perfect and Paul bounded back up the garden.

Kadema had organised it perfectly: there was plenty of alcohol in the fridge, four tubes of lubricant, four dozen condoms (if anyone wanted them) and sex toys aplenty. Four in the afternoon couldn't come sooner.

Hope was the first to arrive, kissing Paul on the cheek. “I hope you are as sexy as before,” he asked and showed her to a side room to get undressed. Kadema arrived shortly afterwards with the two other victims who looked scared and worried.

Jermaine and Kellie were not virgins, but they were not highly experienced and if it was not for the obscene amount of money on offer they would definitely not be there. Instead the amount Paul was paying would keep their family fed and clothed for almost a year. Kadema felt guilty supplying them to Paul and his perverted friends, but he knew how tight money was for that family since their father had died six months previous and knew that any money Jermaine and Kellie could earn would be vital for them and their three younger siblings.

Their mother had almost screamed at him when he had mentioned it, she was appalled a close friend could suggest such a thing and, he had helped her out in raising the children, but Jermaine had overheard and the two kids had chased Kadema up the village to beg him to allow them to help. Kadema bit his lip when they asked, Kadema didn't want to “supply” Paul at all, not least because they were kind, gentle kids but they were insistent, their family needed the money and they had younger brothers and sisters who would go hungry.

Jermaine was a tall, muscular boy, fond of cricket and running and was the first to emerge from the room naked. Paul hollered and passed the boy a beer to drink

that had been laced with vodka. Rhys and Geoff had been joined by Toby (from Cambridge) and Francis (from the village) and they drunkenly admired the teenage boy and then his twin sister.

Paul and his friends plied the three teenagers with drink and made suggestive but not lewd comments, pornography playing on the televisions in the lounge and dining room. The perverted adults watched the three victims become at ease, getting drunker and intrigued by the adult material being played to them, and then starting to relax in their presence.

By five Paul was ready to make the mood a little more racy and started kissing the neck of Hope. Hope smiled back and reached back holding the erect prick of Paul in her hands. The first act of sex was enough and suddenly the two teenagers were almost pounced on. Kellie cried when Rhys tried to have sex with her, as she wasn't ready but Rhys grunted and pushed her over the chair to spank her rump.

Paul came over Hope's hands and he sated himself with a touch of Jermaine's cock, he was not adverse to some underage bisexuality. As the day wore on, Paul relocated the games to his garden, he loved the idea of alfresco sex and watched as the teenagers "serviced" the men with glazed looks in their eyes, their laced drinks serving their purpose.

Kellie was still refusing to have sexual intercourse with anyone, and Paul sighed. "I paid good fucking money for that piece of pussy," he yelled as she tearfully disengaged herself from Geoff, it hurt too much. "Get her." Kellie was immediately grabbed by Rhys and Geoff and dragged to the centre of the garden.

Kellie was tied to a bench outside, and the men took it in turns to rape the fifteen year old. Paul got so annoyed with her tearful screams that he tied a scarf over her mouth before savagely entering the girl. She started bleeding the moment he withdrew, his semen mixing with the red liquid as it dripped down her inner thigh.

"Fuck her," Paul said firmly and Jermaine, being restrained by Francis, shook his head.

Tears streamed down his face and he muttered under his breath to his sister. "What have you done, she's only young?"

Paul snarled. "Fuck her, or I will rape her up the butt with no lube." Jermaine gasped at Paul, who watched as the two burly gentlemen forced Jermaine towards his bleeding and sobbing sister. Francis pulled out a gun, and levelled it at him, commanding him to commit a sickening and incestuous rape to the evil cackling of five adult men.

Two gentleman pulled up in a car and watched from the small hilltop with binoculars and a camera. "Fuck! Did you get that Oli?" He asked and his

companion snapped the scene with his telephoto lens.

“Yeah, I got it,” he said. “Bet you he says it isn't enough though.”

“You're probably right, we've got to stop it now though.”

The man with the binoculars put them down and shook his head. “No, we are too late to stop much, and he will want to get everyone and everything. There is more to this than just him.”

He nodded and looked back. “Fuck. Those poor kids. He'll pay for this.”

“Oh yes, he'll pay for it. The sick cunt.”

Chapter IX

The photographs were laid out on the desk and the man turned to his two subordinates. “Good. But it's not enough.”

“He goes back to London today; word is that he will be back in seven weeks time.”

“Right, well we get it then. I want ...”

“Word is, Guv, that he will be moving here.” A smile crept over the face of the aged gentleman who looked at the pictures. “I want a low-profile, and try and pick up any of these weak links. That guy, he came at the end and he's local, Kadema, let's go pay him a visit and see if we can find out any more about him. But we keep it quiet. I don't want him scared off. I don't want Kadema knowing what's going on. Keep it subtle.”

“No Guv. But what about umm, those three?”

“I know 'em. I'll deal with that end, but I need to get that sick bastard. This is my island and no-one comes here and starts messing with kids on my turf. I see Francis there, so that means Ricardo's been over. And I want all of those sick bastards, I want details on them, who are they?”

One of the gentleman pulled up a sheet of paper and passed it across. “We would have stopped it, got 'em then but we knew you wanted everyone.”

The “Guv” rubbed his chin and then spoke with his London accent. “Yeah. He hasn't bought a big villa like that with a private beach for five people. And he hasn't got the cash to buy that outright unless he planned on getting some dough from somewhere. I bet, we'll have every pervert in the Caribbean coming here soon for some sick parties. I want to know when he next comes.”

“But Guv ...”

The experienced man held up a finger. “I know what you are going to say. They are good kids, and you want to protect them. We all do, but I want to get that bastard and I want to get all of his friends. Now if he holds any more parties and we can get there in time, we will stop it and we can grab the sick fuckers but until we can get every link in this fucking chain, I don't want them nabbed.”

There was a nod, and the pictures were filed away, Paul would be trailed the moment he stepped foot on the island, and what with the contacts that he had “Guv” could make sure that he knew the moment the Englishman stepped foot on his turf.

“Oh, and Oli. Pay the kids a visit, and make sure they are OK.”

* * * * *

“Happy birthday, love,” Joseph said and passed his wife a small box that she eagerly unwrapped, the contents sparkling seductively in the light.

“Wow,” she cooed and kissed him on the cheek, she had wanted a new necklace since she had silently pawned her other necklace the week before to pay for a night on the betting sites but was now regretting it. “It's ...”

“Is it diamonds?” Lewis asked his speechless mother and he nodded. The entire necklace had cost him in excess of £10,000 but he was feeling especially guilty, what with his dalliances with Sarah and felt it right to treat his wife. Katherine passed over a small, wrapped gift that contained an engraved glass while Lewis gave his mother a book about cake making.

Charlotte thanked her family and edged them towards the door; she wanted to get on the laptop and her reminders that they were “late” went unheeded. Matthew arrived a few moments later and passed the mother another card and gift that she opened, glancing at the clock. She only had ten minutes until the \$25,000 jackpot from AsianBingo started and felt her fingers twitch over the wrapping paper.

Matthew had bought her a bottle of gin, Charlotte's favourite spirit, from the islands of Scotland and the mother licked her lips appreciatively, but she wanted to get online, before her family saw.

“Come on,” she yelled at her husband who sauntered down the stairs, straightening his tie. “You'll be late. Lewis!”

Lewis emerged in his school uniform, still dirty from the day before, and she shoed them out of the house. “What's the rush Mum?” Katherine asked and Charlotte snorted.

“You mustn't be late, just on my account,” Charlotte told them and glanced at the clock; four minutes. “Go on.”

“We won't, we got loads of time,” Joseph said and picked up his cup of tea that was removed from his grasp.

“No you haven't, go on.”

“Honestly love, we are fine, now give me a kiss and ...”

Charlotte reached up and kissed him on the lips. “Now go. Come on.” Matthew shrugged at Katherine and Charlotte looked back at the clock; three minutes.

Charlotte closed the door behind them waving her children off and sprinted into the living room, tripping over a small stool, and skidding to a halt at her laptop. She had set it to “hibernate” the day before and tapped at the keyboard as it booted.

“Come on, come on,” she moaned as the slow machine creaked into the Operating System; one minute. She frantically clicked on the browser, frustrated as the page took a few moments to load. “Oh for fucks sake.” The computer finished loading the Anti-virus and eight browser sessions opened. Charlotte frantically typed in the Domain name and let it automatically sign in. She registered for the game with three seconds to spare.

It might cost \$25 but there was a top prize of \$25,000 and it would be hers. Which is exactly what the other 7,391 other contestants thought as well.

Only Charlotte needed to find £2,500 to buy back her old diamond necklace, a family heirloom and the inheritance from Joseph's parents, that she had pawned and whose absence would be noticed by her husband at some point in the not so distant future. \$25,000 would make everything better.

* * * * *

“Oh look is Vicky's ex,” screeched a high-pitched voice. “Vicky!” Matthew groaned as he turned to see a gaggle of girls on the table adjacent to where he and Gareth were due to sit. “Vicky!” The aforementioned ex-girlfriend turned around at the bar and looked at the table. “Look it's the inadequate you used to fuck.” There was a gaggle of laughter and Matthew scowled at his ex-girlfriend.

“Hey mate, it's that frigid witch you used to live with,” Gareth said an equally loud voice and Vicky screwed up her face.

“Yeah, fuck you Matt,” she said with a snarl and was warned as to her language by the barman.

Matt held up his hands. “Hey, I said nothing,” he told her, his heart beating loudly as he watched her bring some drinks over.

“I want nothing more to do with you,” she told him as she sat down, ignoring his perplexed look. “And don't look at me.”

Matthew looked at Gareth and then back at the small group of girls, Victoria deliberately sitting with her back to Matthew. “I don't want to look at you,” he told her and positioned his chair away from her. Matthew and Victoria may not have parted on good terms, but she was the daughter of a friend of the family and their less than amicable split had caused interesting conversations with his mother who had always liked the self-centred girl.

Victoria snarled and then said something that made the girls giggle. “She fucking with you, shall we move?” Gareth asked and Matthew took a gulp of his beer and shook his head.

“No,” he told him and then turned around. “It's OK Vicky, I really don't want to look at you, your nose, bent and large as it is, makes me realise how much prettier

your sister is.” Victoria gasped and turned around, her eyes blazing. “Tell me, do you open beer bottles with that, or is it just useful for snorting drugs?”

Gareth clamped his hand to his mouth and watched as Victoria's eyes narrowed and she brought her finger up to wave in his face. “How dare you?”

“How dare I?” Matthew asked with a vicious look in his eye and smirked. “Oh that'll be because you fucked off without paying for the flat.”

“Yeah, so what! I moved out, you pay, you live there.”

“It's joint names on the tenancy agreement, we took it together. You owe me,” Matthew told her and Vicky waved her hand in front of her.

“Oh fuck off Matt. I owe you nothing. You just a desperate toad who still wants me.”

Matthew gave a smirk. “I don't want you.”

“Yeah, 'cos he found someone else,” Gareth lied but with a smirk.

“Bollocks,” cried one of Victoria's companions. “He couldn't get a granny.”

Gareth snorted. “No, straight up. Not a hook-nosed bitch, it's quite refreshing really. She's got cracking tits on her.” Victoria pushed her chair away and stood over her ex-boyfriend who was still chuckling away at Gareth's lies. A couple of her associates jumped up to put a hand on their friend's shoulder to comfort her but Victoria's eyes were flashing dangerously.

“You bastard Matt.”

“Guilty,” Gareth said with a grin and gestured with his hands. “I know this, but for some reason the ladies just love it.”

Victoria's eyes narrowed and she watched as Matthew stood up to face her. “What do you want Victoria?”

“You to fuck off and leave me alone.”

Matthew motioned with his hands and hissed aggressively. “You fucking started it, you started on me. I came in for a quiet drink.”

“Yeah I know you still want me and I can see it. But it's over Matt,” Victoria said in an airy, patronising voice. “I don't want you, any more.”

“It most certainly is,” the young man replied in a calm, assertive tone. “Oh and if you don't start paying for the flat ...”

“You'll what? Kill my orchid?” Victoria taunted and laughed.

“No, I'll sue you.”

“Sue me?” Victoria cackled and turned to her friends. “He wants me to pay for a

flat, I don't live in.” She turned back and stuck her neck out. “Listen you thick bastard, you can't be made to pay for a place you dain't live in. Stupid twat.”

Matthew sniffed and rubbed his chin, downing the last of his pint. “Let's go to another pub,” he asked Gareth. “One without the selfish bitches in it.”

Victoria laughed to herself and Matthew turned to her as he got his coat. “I'll be in touch,” he threatened. “I want my money.”

* * * * *

Lewis hugged the Russian girl and sat down next to her on the low park wall. “I have an idea,” Lewis said and looked at her. “You said you couldn't bribe your way to stay in this country?”

“Yes, that true,” Anna replied in her heavy accent. “I tried, but the umm, the umm, the officials first time, they say no.”

Lewis gave a wry grin. “You have the money, right?”

“Yes, I have money, I have twelve thousands Euros. I offer him six thousand and he say no.”

“Right, then marry me.”

“Marry you? Why?”

“Cos you can stay if you get 'itched to a local lad.”

Anna screwed up her face. “I don't love you.”

Lewis shrugged. “So?”

“So, why you marry?”

Lewis sighed. “How about money? Marry me for six, the ceremony will cost a little bit, but marrying me will get you a British passport.”

Anna laughed and then clamped her hand over her mouth. “You serious?”

“Of course. I mean, we would have to consummate the marriage,” he said with a smile and Anna looked perplexed at his choice of verb, she didn't know what “consummate” meant but Lewis paused as he thought of the idea of screwing the gorgeous Russian girl next to hi before wondering why she hadn't considered of acquiring a passport through marriage before.

“You. You too young,” Anna replied eventually and grinned at her tenacious friend. “But it, um, good idea.”

“I'm being serious,” Lewis said and ran his hands through his hair. “I mean, I know I am in school uniform so I don't get much respect, but listen, marriage gets you a passport and a license to stay. If the cops catch you, you go home. With a ring on your finger, my ring on your finger, you don't.”

Anna laughed. “You serious Lewis, aren't you?”

“Yeah. As friends. We can get a divorce in a year I think. But certainly a divorce once you have the British passport.” Anna stared at him and then the park pond. “What are you thinking?”

“I’m thinking you are crazy man.”

Lewis hummed and sniffed. “Well think about it. Marrying me solves all of your problems.”

Anna smiled and glanced at her watch. “I gotta go,” she told him and smiled. “But you, you crazy.”

There was a sniff, the two friends bade each other goodbye and Lewis ambled towards his house, deep in thought: how close was he to getting the gorgeous Anna?

He opened his front door half in a daydream, looked onto the coat rack and scowled. “Mum,” he asked, running into the lounge, and she looked up from the laptop with a smile.

“What love?”

“Where is my coat? Have you seen it?” Lewis asked quickly and Charlotte gave a raffish smile.

“Oh,” she said. “Oh it was umm, filthy, so I stuck it in the wash.”

Lewis shrieked. “What?”

“It had mud all down the side. It’ll be dry by tomorrow, just use your summer coat, it’s not raining.”

Lewis ran towards the washing machine and groaned, the black coat of his was spinning round the machine and was covered with bubbles; his weed was in the inside pocket and he groaned.

“Looking for this?” Charlotte said with a smile and held out the bag in her fingers.

“Ahh yes. I mean no. I mean sort of.” Lewis could feel the apprehension in his body; he didn’t want his mother to know he smoked drugs but there was a smirk that unnerved him.

Charlotte cackled and passed it over to him. “I haven’t seen this,” she told him. “Nor did I see you the other day as I walked through the park.”

“Right.” Lewis muttered shocked and his mother smiled.

“And I don’t want to see you,” she told him with a grin. “And if your father finds out you will be in trouble.”

Lewis nodded and Charlotte turned to go back to her laptop. “Thanks Mum,” Lewis called out; why was his mother being so understanding?

Charlotte smiled. "It's OK. Don't look so surprised. You don't think you were the first generation to smoke pot, did you?" Lewis spluttered and Charlotte chortled. "Your father and I nearly split up because of it. But if you start smoking more than one a day, I will tell him, you hear?"

"Yeah, sure Mum," Lewis replied and watched as his mother scurried back to the computer, just in time to compete in the Mega-Jackpot game; she wouldn't want to miss that!

Chapter X

Katherine unwrapped the test and held the little stick in her hand, reading the instructions on the back of the packet. She had to hold it in her stream of urine for a few seconds and then looked at the flimsy paper. Why did the manufacturers have to make it so difficult for women to get a pregnancy test and she looked at the strip dangling from the end of her fingers, manoeuvring the tiny paper between her legs and the seat of the toilet.

Soaking her hand, she drenched the strip in her pee, her heart skipping a beat when she heard the front door slam and checked the bathroom door was locked. She brought her knees up as she withdrew her hand from underneath the toilet seat and put the strip inside the little plastic holder sliding it across and waiting for it to go blue or not.

It mustn't go blue, she mustn't be pregnant. Of course, she had had a bit of tenderness in his breasts, but that could be hormones, or growing up, she was only eighteen after all. It might be breast cancer, or all sorts of things, she didn't have to be pregnant. She may have missed three periods but she was stressed at school, her A Level exams were approaching and they were vitally important, and stress does weird things to the human body, not to mention the fact she was never regular anyway.

She looked down at her bosom, the soreness wasn't the only change, her bra seemed fuller and there was a definite change to the nipples, but this could easily be just growing pains, she was growing into a woman.

Apart from the missed periods there will little to suggest she might be pregnant, and her periods were never like clockwork – she could have two in a month or none, but she had never gone three months before. She had been feeling fine, eating well and although she felt a bit tired, her exams were approaching and she was working hard, she certainly didn't feel pregnant.

Katherine looked down at the strip, two minutes had passed and it was still thinking about it. She washed her hands and sat down to wait on the toilet. Of course, if she was pregnant then it would change everything. She wasn't quite sure who she had sex with around the Christmas Party, if she had had sex, although she had woken up slightly sore so she guessed she might have done but didn't even though if she gave consent or not.

This worried her, could she be carrying the child of a rapist? It didn't bear thinking about and she closed her eyes and looked towards the bath. If she had a child then she would end up sharing a bedroom and staying in the little town, her dreams of going to University would be over.

But she wasn't pregnant and she looked at her watch, four minutes. Just one minute to go so she knew she wasn't pregnant. Obviously she wasn't, she wasn't ready to bring a child into the world and she certainly didn't have the money. She wondered what her friends would say, they would probably call her a slut but she wasn't pregnant, she could feel it. If she was pregnant then surely she would be able to feel the "thing" growing inside of her, and she couldn't so she wasn't knocked up.

With a beep her watch indicated that it was time to look at the pregnancy test and Katherine brought it down from the shelf with an anxious grin.

"Oh fuck," she called out loudly as she looked at the blue line and then had to wipe her eyes to remove the tears. Callum had promised Rachel and her had not had sex that night, so just who was responsible for her baby?

* * * * *

Charlotte brought the coat in tighter as she stood on the corner of the pub car park, waiting for "Ethan" to turn up. He told her 1pm and not a minute later, but it was ten past, the rain was beginning to fall and she needed to speak to him.

At twenty past one, a slick BMW drew up alongside her and he motioned for her to get into the passenger seat. "Ethan," Charlotte asked, her long black hair stuck to her head and he snorted.

"Yeah, bit wet there," he chuckled.

"Well you are bloody late," Charlotte started, her eyes fizzing with annoyance and Ethan pulled his coat back to reveal his shirt cuffs.

"I was dealing with business, someone couldn't or wouldn't pay me," he said with a grin, pointing to the red stain that was clearly visible. His smile turned to a grimace and he stretched. "You owe me one four," he told and Charlotte bit her lip and took out a small bundle of notes."

He snorted. "This isn't one four. Fuck me, you trying to pull a fast one."

Charlotte sighed. "It's eight hundred. I need a bit of time to get the rest."

Ethan pulled his jacket back and stretched his shoulders. "First loan and you try to scam me."

Charlotte squealed and he raised his eyebrows. "Late payment of two hundred and—"

"Two hundred," Charlotte squealed. "Now come on."

"Fuck me lady, your debt now stands at one two, you got two weeks."

"Two weeks," Charlotte cried. "I'll not get it within two weeks." Ethan scowled

and grabbed her by the throat, pushing her into his car seat.

“You fucking will.” Charlotte squealed and looked down, the blood-stained shirt cuff directly in her eye-line and Ethan snorted. “Unless you want your face rearranging.”

He dropped his hand and nodded towards the door. “One two, two weeks time. I'll be in touch.” Charlotte sighed and put her hand on the door handle.

“Oh and don't think I don't know where you live. You babe, are Charlotte Wilson, live at 14 Riverbank, have two children, Lewis and Katherine and a husband.” Charlotte shrieked.

“How the hell? You leave them alone?”

“Oh I will,” Ethan promised with a smirk. “As long as you pay me what you owe. Now get the fuck out of my car, you're making it piss wet through.”

Charlotte sighed and opened the car door, stepping out into the rain and watched as her loan shark sped out of the small car park and splashed a couple waiting by the pavement. She groaned and walked towards her house, a fifteen minute walk away, but was distracted: a betting shop with a dozen fruit machines. Surely her luck had to change some time?

By the time she got home, she was cold, wet and miserable – her trip to the bookmakers had been an expensive visit. She opened her front door to the sound of Katherine's music, which was turned down after she called up the stairs and poured herself a large glass of Joseph's whisky.

She muttered to herself and started cooking dinner. Lasagne was a quick tea and was on the table when Lewis and his father arrived home. Her cooking skills were complimented and as Lewis and Katherine filed off towards their bedrooms or someone else's house, both of whom appeared very pre-occupied with themselves

Joseph sidled up to his wife and kissed her on the cheek and then on the lips, driving his tongue into her mouth. She smiled back and looked at him. “Good day at work?”

He nodded. “Very. But I have been very busy,” he replied. “And could do with some lovely kisses and cuddles from my gorgeous wife.” Charlotte giggled.

“Flattery will get you everywhere,” she joked and looked up at the stairs. “But Kat is still around.”

Joseph glanced out of the door and then pulled up his wife and led her up the stairs; Katherine was in her room, he could hear her music and was probably doing revision. “We got peace,” he told her at the top of the stairs and pushed her up against the patterned wallpaper, kissing her on the cheek.

She let him run his hands over her body and unclip her belt. “Come on,” she said as he looked yearnfully into his eyes. He grunted as she guided him into their bedroom and closed the door. He was certainly exceedingly eager but their sex life had stalled somewhat in the last year and what with the threats Ethan had made, was happy to accommodate him. Hell, she would have even have swapped whatever he wanted to do for some money.

Joseph was horny as Sarah had not been in the office much that week and had been distant with him, saying she didn't feel too well. It made him wonder if she was going off of him but if his secretary couldn't satisfy his urges then his wife would have to do.

Charlotte stepped out of her jeans and watched as Joseph frantically disrobed, scattering his clothes on the floor but watching her undo her blouse lustfully.

The naked businessman embraced his wife and unclipped her white cotton bra to let her breasts fall. She grinned up at him and then glanced down at her knickers, waiting for Joseph to remove them and gleefully kiss the inside of thighs before working inwards, like he always did.

* * * * *

Lewis kissed his “fiancée” on the cheek and held her hand, Anna had reluctantly agreed to his scatter-brained plan as she was convinced her visa would not be extended. He had mistakenly assumed that he could marry without letting his parents know but the lady in the Registrar's office had informed him he needed parental consent, given his age, and was waiting for for his mother to return from the gym.

“This, this bad idea, Lewis.”

“It's fine,” Lewis said, dismissing her. He had convinced himself that his motives were firmly allied to the wedding night sex he thought Anna would have to give him and the small matter of the six thousand Euros, but he desperately needed his mother's approval.

The door slammed shut and Charlotte smiled at Lewis the moment she came through the door. “Oh hi honey. How did your exam go?”

“Fine,” Lewis responded immediately and then looked at Anna. “Mum. I'm engaged.”

Charlotte stopped in her tracks and turned to look at her son in the eye. “What?”

“I'm engaged,” Lewis replied with genuine excitement. “I asked Anna, and she said yes.”

“Who the fuck is Anna?” Charlotte asked and a small voice replied from behind the door.

“Me.”

Charlotte stood motionless in the hallway staring at Lewis and straining to catch a glimpse of the Russian girl.

“Who are you?”

“Hi,” Anna said and stood up to bring herself in view of the fiery mother. “I, Anna

Kornilenko.”

Charlotte sighed and walked into the dining room, looking at her son. “What is going on?”

“Nothing. Other than I am getting married. Four weeks time. All we need—”

“Four weeks?” Charlotte thundered. “Four weeks?”

“Yeah, well when you are in love, no point hanging around is there. So anyway four weeks time—”

“You are not getting married in four weeks, son.”

“No we have to,” Lewis argued. “It has to be four weeks. I just need you or Dad to give your consent at the Registrars.”

Charlotte wiped her face. “Why four weeks? You are sixteen. It's too young to be getting married.”

“It isn't,” Lewis said with a firmness to his voice. “We are getting married. Here with your consent, or Scotland without it.”

Charlotte sat down and looked at Anna. “And how long have you two known each other?”

“Two months,” Anna said as Lewis replied with “a year.”

Charlotte raised her eyebrows and Lewis took a deep breath. “We have been good friends for two months, we have known each other for a year.”

“And you are how old?”

“Nineteen.”

“Nineteen?” Charlotte squawked and put her hands face down on the table.

“Look I know it doesn't look good,” Lewis started. “But I am an adult now, and it is my choice. And Anna is wonderful, she makes me happy.”

“Well so does peanut butter,” Charlotte replied instantly. “But I don't see you marrying a jar of Sun-Pat.”

“It's just, it is the right time for us. So if you will just give your consent.”

“Lewis, no. When we know Anna a bit better than maybe, but right now, no.”

Lewis grunted. “OK I'll cut you in,” Lewis said aggressively. “I am prepared—”

“Cut me in?” Charlotte thundered and Anna fidgeted. “Don't tell me ...”

“OK, yes, Anna's student visa expires in four weeks. Hence the marriage thing. Now I am getting...”

“I don't believe it,” Charlotte said, her mind swimming with confused concern. “You are actually trying to sell yourself.”

“You hear about it all the time in the papers. And Anna is paying me a small sum to get married, which is incidental as I do like her, but I will pay five hundred Euros for the parental consent.”

“Lewis, no,” Charlotte told him firmly. “I am not for sale.”

“Well I am. Ok, Seven fifty.”

“No,” Charlotte cried and banged her fists on the table. “And no to a grand as well.”

Lewis rolled his eyes. “OK. One thousand, two hundred. Now that's my final offer as I reckon Dad'll cave in around that.”

“Lewis, stop this now. You are not marrying Anna. And that is my last word on the subject,” Charlotte said quickly, her mind briefly thinking that the money could pay Ethan, but then disregarded it.

Lewis sighed and screwed up his face, biting his nails. “I bet Dad will let me.” Charlotte took a deep breath.

“If he wants to sleep in the marital bed any time in the next decade, he will do no such thing. Listen, you don't marry someone for money, you marry for love.”

Lewis snorted and smiled. “So what was that Anna Nicole doing? Or Hugh Heffner or any of those. Was that love?”

Charlotte groaned, and rubbed her forehead. “Oh, Lewis. This is silly, neither your Dad or I are going to let you marry someone at sixteen, especially if the only reason you are doing it is because you might be receiving a bundle of cash. It's dishonest, illegal, immoral and utterly ridiculous. And we will be having words later.”

She looked at Anna and went to speak when Katherine opened the door and walked into the room, her eyes red and puffy. “You OK?”

Katherine nodded. “Yeah, just Sam being a cock,” she lied and took a glass to get some water allowing Lewis and Anna to slip away, frustrated and annoyed at Charlotte's reasoned refusal to sanction their plan.

“To Scotland?” Lewis whispered and Anna hesitated.

Chapter XI

Rachel hammered on the door of Katherine's house and the tearful eighteen year old let her in, Charlotte was out and Katherine had spoken to her friend on the phone, telling her everything. "Fuck Kat, you really pregnant?"

Katherine passed her two positive pregnancy tests and the blonde girl took a deep breath. "Oh babe. Is this from Christmas?"

Katherine sighed. "Must be. I've not had sex since."

"So this is Callum then. I mean we asked him before and he said he didn't touch you but this shows he is a fucking liar. He was begging me to take him back, the little creep," Rachel ranted and Katherine shrugged. "I'm going to get the little shit."

"Don't," Katherine said. "I don't think it was him."

"Well who was it?"

"I don't know," Katherine cried. "But I just don't know what to do. I don't want to be knocked up." She wiped the tears away from her eyes and looked at her friend. "I can't look after a baby."

Rachel glanced down at her. "What about an abortion?"

Katherine sighed. "Twelve weeks I think. I dunno, I need to see the doctor."

"You've not been," Rachel exclaimed and pulled at her friend. "Come on, go see her."

Katherine stood there motionlessly and wiped her eyes again. "I umm, I don't want Mum to know."

Rachel bit her lip. "Well unless you see the doctor she will know in a few months time." Katherine shrugged and screwed up her face. Rachel was right, and her friend guided her into the lounge and made her drink, getting Katherine to talk to her about what she was thinking.

Katherine was scared, she genuinely had no idea what to do, and certainly didn't want to be a parent at such a young age. She explained about her ambitions being curtailed and Rachel suggested she put the child up for adoption if she couldn't face motherhood, but most of all told her to go see her doctor.

Katherine grunted and Rachel rolled her eyes before walking to the phone and passing it over. "Make an appointment."

"What?"

“Make an appointment and I will go with you.”

“I don't know the number,” Katherine replied dogmatically and Rachel picked up the phone book, finding the surgery and calling out the six digit number. Katherine reluctantly made an appointment, the doctors' surgery had had a cancellation earlier that morning to see the female doctor at 1pm, just after lunch, and she agreed to take it. She looked at her friend with scared eyes. “Will ya come with me? Please”

Rachel smiled. “Of course. I better go make us some lunch.” Rachel left the room and came back with a sandwich and a drink for each of them. Kat picked at the ham in silence.

“You know, the more I think of it, the more I don't think it was Callum,” Katherine admitted and Rachel glanced up at her.

“What about the guy who walked you home?”

Katherine snorted. “Matthew? No, he would be too scared to touch me. I was dancing with a barman when I got drunk, Mum told me. I think it must be him.”

Rachel pursed her lips together and glanced at her watch. The Doctors' surgery was no more than a ten minute walk and Rachel did accompany her friend inside to see Dr Helen Wickham, who looked at the strips with blue lines and then back at the young girl.

Obviously, she was pregnant and all she could do was to send her for a dating scan but when Katherine told her the likely conception date she rubbed her chin and warned her she was probably out of time for an abortion and referred to be under a team of support workers. Suddenly, the truth hit Katherine: she was going to be a teenage mother, and she burst into tears the moment she left the Doctors' consultation room.

Katherine was still in a daze when she got back home and saw her mother on the laptop, idly clicking away. “You OK,” her mother asked and Katherine nodded.

“Busy day,” she lied and took a step towards her room.

“You OK?” Charlotte asked, slightly worried by her daughter's quietness and Katherine grunted and trooped up to her bedroom. Rachel had suggested that they talk but Katherine wanted to be alone as much as her friend had tried to console her; she had no idea how she was going to tell her parents anyhow.

Her phone rang as she reached the top of the stairs and instinctively picked it up without checking the phone number displayed on the screen, it would be Rachel worrying about her anyway and she closed her door, as she put the small handset to her ear.

“Sis, it's me.”

“Oh hi Lewis.” Her heart skipped a beat, had Rachel told him about her pregnancy already?

“Kat, tell Mum not to worry but I am away for a day or two so I won't be home.”

“Away? What the hell are you doing?” Katherine asked.

“Holiday,” he replied down the end of the phone. “Anna and me, well we wanted to get away from it all,” he lied and Katherine grunted.

“Nice. Where are you?”

“Scotland.”

“Scotland? But that's bloody miles away.”

“Yeah, it's a holiday,” Lewis replied. “It's supposed to be. I'll be back at the end of the week. I got a Maths exam.”

Katherine snorted and Lewis moaned about “being out of credit” and they said their goodbyes. Katherine was already tuning out of the conversation, she had other things on her mind.

Katherine had to tell her parents, they needed to know and they would find out soon enough, but she had to tell them that she had no idea who the father was. In fact, she had no idea exactly when she conceived, although she knew it had to be around the Christmas Party.

She was certain it wasn't Sam, which in itself would please her father, but was Callum any better? The more she thought about it, who would he want the father to be?

Katherine felt tearful but gazed out of the window, she genuinely had no idea what to do or who to talk to about it. She couldn't be a mother, and certainly not a mother on her own. She had plans, big plans, University, travelling, parties. Something she couldn't do with a little baby.

Charlotte called up the stairs an hour later, she was about to dish up dinner and Katherine was shaken from her daydreaming and worrying. She plodded slowly down the stairs, pausing to wash and dry her eyes.

“Where the hell is Lewis?” Charlotte asked as she set the last fork on the dinner table and turned back to the oven. “He is supposed to be home by now.”

“Oh he rang,” Katherine said idly. “He's out.”

“Oh where is he?”

“Scotland.”

Charlotte screamed, dropping the tray of food from the oven. “Scotland, oh my

God. Joseph!”

Her husband came running into the kitchen, hearing the voice of his distressed wife panicking and the sound of dinner hitting the top of the worktop. “Lewis has gone to Scotland to get married.”

“Oh, he said he was just getting away from it all.”

“No Joseph. He has got that Russian girl to pay him to marry him so she can stay in the country. I said no to giving them my consent so they have run off to Scotland. Joseph, stop him. Do something.”

Katherine listened in awe, her mind removed from her pregnancy. “This is my brother we are talking about, isn't it?”

“Joseph! Get the Police on the phone. Stop them.”

Joseph picked up his phone and dialled his son's mobile phone while Charlotte fretted. “I'm gonna kill him,” she muttered and Joseph put a finger to her lips.

“Lewis,” he said firmly as he answered the phone and there was a sigh.

“What Dad?”

“What are you doing in Scotland?”

“Nothing. Just a holiday,” Lewis replied evasively and Anna squeezed his forearm.

“Mum thinks you are going to get married. Are you going to try and get married?”

Lewis sighed, they had been to the Registrar's office that day. “No,” he said firmly. “We aren't getting married.”

Joseph looked at his wife and relayed this and Charlotte snatched the phone from him, bounding into another room. Lewis was annoyed at the lack of trust from his parents, despite it being well-founded. “What the hell do you think you are doing?” Charlotte shrieked. “You get you arse right back home now.”

Lewis snorted. “We aren't getting married,” he replied in an aggressive tone. “We came up to spend a couple of days in Scotland. Anna was given some time off by her family.”

“You've got an exam in two days time,” Charlotte countered. “You are in so much trouble lad.”

Lewis groaned and Charlotte began to lecture him, but for Katherine it allowed her quietness to go completely unnoticed.

* * * * *

“Paul. Mr Mason. What can I do for you?”

Paul shook the hand of the investment manager who smiled back at him. “We are looking to expand,” Paul told him and sat down on a leather chair. “Our mobile office suite is doing very well, we want to open up a branch in the Caribbean.”

Mark Gowers scowled. “The Caribbean? I thought you were going to say New York or Los Angeles.”

Paul smiled and shook his head. “The low wages, low taxes and same time zones as America make the Caribbean ideal,” he replied and rubbed his hands. “So we are looking for some investment.”

“What kind of investment?”

“Five hundred thousand. Million, maybe”

Mr Gowers scowl turned to a frown. “That's a bit, not sure why you need it, I mean, your company was buoyant wasn't it.”

Paul dismissed him with a wave of the hand. “Oh it is. But it seemed like a good time to get some investment options in, you know in our market, if you keep up you go backwards. Some of our software has done very well, but I think we need to expand quickly and I want to go to Joseph with some ideas. Offices in the Caribbean would be the start and we will have a couple of damn good business apps at the end of this year so looking at Singapore maybe as well.”

Mr Gowers nodded and hummed. “Well, a million is a bit much for me,” he told him. “Especially in just one company. But I know a couple of guys who would definitely be interested. Can you get a copy of your books and business plan?” Paul gave a wry smile and withdrew a small folder from his bag.

“And there is a flash drive in the front,” Paul told him. “It's got electronic copies on it.”

Mr Gowers smiled and opened it reading the front page. Paul was being generous, offering up to a 40% stake in the newly enlarged company, depending on the investment, but still secretly wondered why Paul needed the money, his bank should be crawling over to lend money to a business with a gross profit margin in excess of 25% and sales well into seven figures, Paul had a solid business making money.

Paul finished his coffee, shook the hand of his friend and sidled off, towards his bank to discuss loans. Very large loans, in fact, to be paid very quickly into the company accounts.

* * * * *

Charlotte and Joseph were waiting for Lewis and Anna when they walked up the

drive and Lewis scowled as he was called into the lounge, Anna walking up the drive towards her adopted family.

“Right, tell me, what's been going on,” Joseph asked and Lewis sighed.

“Nothing. OK, I had an idea about marrying Anna to get her a British passport, but we didn't.”

Charlotte wiped her eyes and Lewis gestured with his hands. “So what did you do in Scotland?”

“Nothing. We did a couple of days of walking, that is all.”

Joseph puffed out his chest and stared at his son. “Tell me the truth.”

Lewis sighed and he looked at his father. “OK. We spoke to the Registrar but they couldn't marry us, and we decided that it probably wasn't a brilliant idea after all.”

“I don't believe you.”

“OK,” Lewis snapped. “We went up but we needed to tell them 14 days or more before we got married so they wouldn't. And then they said I needed to be 21 for them to issue a marriage visa, so we spent another night there and came home.”

Joseph looked at his son and then the wall. “You tried to sell yourself?”

“Well, sort of,” Lewis admitted and then looked at his parents. “Can I go now?”

“No,” Joseph said firmly and stretched his arm over the doorway. “You don't marry someone you don't love,” he said firmly and sat down next to his son.

“Anna and I could have been married and then divorced before I was ready to go to University,” Lewis countered. “And in doing so Anna would have stayed in the country and I would have got a couple of thousand towards Uni, but we decided not to and then were told not to.” Lewis looked at his father who was staring glassy-eyed at his son. “Now can I go now?”

“No,” came the response and Joseph began to lecture the sixteen year-old on running away to a foreign country; something that Lewis didn't want to hear: after all they hadn't committed the deed and apart from walking, they had done very little. Lewis hadn't even got to see Anna in her underwear and they had just enjoyed themselves, with each of them paying their own way from their respective allowances.

In all, it had been a welcome break with a good friend, not that his parents would see this. Joseph was insistent that Lewis should not see Anna again, a suggestion that was met with a large amount of incredulity, Anna was his friend and she would remain so, irrespective of what his father said or thought.

Chapter XII

Katherine stood in the doorway and looked nervously at her parents, she could feel her heart beating furiously and she closed her eyes and clenched her fists.

“Mum,” she called out and her mother looked away from the television and glanced over towards her daughter.

“Oh hi Kat. Shouldn't you be doing revision?”

Katherine pursed her lips and sniffed. “I've got something to tell you,” she admitted, her hands shaking. She felt the insides of her cheeks heat up and inhaled sharply.

Joseph turned to look at his daughter anxiously waiting in the doorway and raised his eyebrows. “What is it?”

Katherine sighed and licked her lips. “I'm pregnant,” she said quietly and her mother shrieked.

“What?” Joseph asked.

Katherine cocked her head to one side and repeated herself, wiping her eyes with the ball of her hand.

“Well who is the father?” Joseph thundered. “Is it that little runt Sam 'cos I kill the fucker. It's—”

“It's not Sam,” Katherine replied instantly. “But I don't know who it is.”

“What d'ya mean you don't know who it is?” Joseph shouted and pointed to the chair opposite. “Sit down, young lady.”

Katherine came into the room, the eyes of both her parents fixed on her as she nervously walked across to sit on the leather armchair. “I don't know.”

“You better explain yourself,” Joseph replied, his body language oozing aggression and anger.

Katherine took a deep breath. “I think I had sex at the Christmas Party and my dating scan looks like I conceived that week but I just don't remember it.” Katherine burst into tears and Joseph looked at his wife. “I just don't remember, I promise you. I never said anyone could have sex with me, but it must have been that week. That night.”

“You danced a bit with that barman,” her mother told her. “Was it him?”

Katherine shrugged through the tears. “I don't know. I think my drinks were laced as Matthew had to carry me home. I met someone from school outside and he hit

on me but I don't think we did anything. I just don't know. I wish I did, but I don't."

Joseph took a deep breath and stared at his wayward daughter. "Top of the class, you are. Going to University, you were. Why did you have to fuck up your life?"

Charlotte scooted over to put her arms around her daughter quietly sobbing and looked over at Joseph, telling him to be more gentle with his daughter. He grunted and picked out his mobile. "Who are you ringing?"

"The bar," Joseph replied and asked to speak to the manager. Joseph was sharp and cold when he asked for the name and forwarding address of the blonde barman from Christmas, and was told that he was a backpacker from Australia making his way through Europe and apart from his name, Winston, the barman knew nothing about him. Joseph swore and put the phone down.

"Right well if it's Winston, he could be anywhere," Joseph told her after he repeated the story. Charlotte groaned and then looked at Katherine.

"When are you due?"

Katherine took a deep breath and rubbed her face. "Mid August," she told her and Joseph cried out.

"But that's only a few months away. And you should be getting ready to go to Uni then. What are you going to do about that? And how are you going to pay for it?"

"Oh be quiet," Charlotte snapped and wrapped her arms around her daughter who muttered a "I don't know" in a tearful, stressed voice.

"We'll sort it," Charlotte promised and looked over at her husband. "It'll be fine, won't it. We'll be here for you."

Katherine wiped her eyes and then looked at her father. "And I was thinking of adoption," she told him with a steely glare. Charlotte's stomach lurched, she certainly didn't want her first grandchild to be given away and she stared with panicked eyes at her husband, who just grunted and then looked away. "I can't be a mum. I just can't"

"Do you really not remember having sex that night?" Joseph asked aggressively.

Katherine shook her head. "I don't remember much. I remember dancing and kissing the barman when he knocked off, I remember Matthew picking me up outside and helping me to my feet and then walking home."

Both parents glanced at each other but Joseph was the first to speak. "So you may have been raped at the party?"

Katherine looked into her hands and shrugged. "I don't think so, I don't know." Her voice showed a stressed anxiety and she sighed. "I know how emotional I

was at the time, I could have said yes when I was drunk or not, I just don't remember. I was stupid, I know but I have been replaying that night again and again, I just can't remember.”

“You were a little drunk love,” Charlotte told her daughter and then sighed. “It's a bit of a mess.”

“I know,” Katherine admitted and preceded to explain everything that had happened. Her parents were a little upset that she hadn't approached them earlier, her father was particularly upset with the manner in which she got pregnant but there was little Charlotte and Joseph could do except support their daughter.

Matthew was met with stressed faces in the morning and he even thought twice about stealing a banana. Lewis smiled when he heard the news, “so I am going to be an uncle then, wicked!” His excursion to Scotland had been momentarily forgotten given his sister's predicament and Charlotte glared at him as he looked around the table.

Matthew looked up and then at Katherine just meandering past him. “Are you pregnant?”

“Yes,” Joseph snapped, glowering at his son. “We found out yesterday.”

“I thought you split with Sam,” Matthew asked Katherine who looked up.

“It's not Sam. It happened after we split up.”

Charlotte turned to their guest and looked at him. “You didn't see Kat get too close to anyone except the barman at the Christmas Party did you?”

Matthew's heart skipped a beat and he stammered. “Mum, everyone was drunk that night. Bet you can hardly remember it,” Katherine answered her parents and Matthew nodded appreciatively, spluttering nothing coherent.

“No, why was that....? Did it....? What I mean is...?”

“Yes,” Katherine told him, answering his confused mutterings. “I conceived it that night. Or at least, I think I did.”

“Wow. Shit,” Matthew replied and looked down at the yellow fruit in his hand, suddenly he realised what had happened and that Katherine genuinely had no knowledge of their liaison. He decided it would be a wise idea to ensure that neither Joseph nor Charlotte had any idea that he might be the father until he had thought it through.

Suddenly, he felt very very sick.

* * * * *

A black leather hand came over Charlotte's face and she squealed and kicked out.

Ethan pulled her into the alleyway and put his hand over her mouth. She glared at his angry eyes and a hand smacked into her stomach to push her against the wall. "You stood me up yesterday. Now, where's my money."

Charlotte gulped and a tear fell from her cheek. She sniffed and shook her head. "I don't have it," she muttered and Ethan sighed.

"I hate it when people don't pay," he replied and brought his gloved across her face that made a satisfying sound, echoing in the small passageway between shops.

She let out a muffled squeal, her eyes bulging and looking fearful at her tormentor. "Please."

He snorted and struck her again and again, her terrified face peering out over his hand.

Charlotte was shocked and scared. She knew he would hurt her if she didn't pay but she was a respectable housewife and he just striking her. She brought her hands up to protect her face and Ethan grabbed her left hand and gripped her ring, pulling it off roughly.

"Oh please, no," she cried and Ethan looked at the diamond and sapphire engagement ring.

"This buys you four weeks to come up with the money," he told her and she sobbed, trying to take back her ring.

"Please," she begged but Ethan frowned and pocketed the ring. "And you now owe one five."

Charlotte shook her head. "Please, let me have my ring back. It's my engagement ring."

"It's mine now," Ethan said calmly and released his grip on the woman. "See you in a few weeks. And you better have my money."

She pawed at him, and his pocket. "Please not my ring."

Ethan pushed her away, sending her sprawling onto the floor when Ethan stared at her.

"Listen slut. I'm being fucking nice here. I've taken a piece of jewellery instead of fucking you up. Now peeps round here know not to steal my cash but you think you can fuck me over and not pay me. Now next time I'll not take some crappy ring but me and me mates will want a good fucking."

"Oh my God," Charlotte cried and Ethan smiled.

"Oh and I will take it."

“Oh no,” she mumbled and scrambled to her feet, revulsion and fear in her eyes but Ethan just sneered at her and looked back at her, covered in dirt.

“Oh yes, but not from an old hag like you. I like the look of that slutty daughter of yours.” Charlotte burst into tears and Ethan smiled. “Just pay me, you will in the end.”

Charlotte slouched against the wall, her head in her hands and sobbed; just how could she have got herself into this situation?

* * * * *

“You look like shit,” Paul said as he sauntered in at midday.

“Where the fuck have you been?” Joseph snapped and Paul raised his eyebrows.

“I’ve been at the bank,” he said defensively. “Service Review.”

Joseph scratched his hair and looked at his business partner. “Well it wasn’t in the calendar.”

Paul sighed. He had been to arrange loans in the company, secured against the office block they owned and future earnings, all for “expansion” and the bank manager was extremely accommodating, the lines of credit for the company were plentiful as the company had been very successful.

He pulled out a calculator and worked out that if he added the four hundred thousand in their UK account to the four hundred thousand pound loan from the bank loan and seventy thousand in their European account, he would have over three-quarters of a million – not a bad sum to retire on at 43 – and that excluded the money he had taken to pay for the villa.

“What’s wrong with you?” Paul asked as he put his calculator down and then bit into his baguette.

“Nothing. Well nothing much.” Paul shrugged and Sarah looked across at him. She waited until Joseph left the room and then she told him about Katherine.

Paul chuckled. “She was dressed like a bit of a goer,” he said tactlessly and stretched out. “Oh and do us a favour, I’m going out of the office in a couple of weeks, trade fair in Florida.”

Sarah bit her lip and then looked at Joseph’s seat. “Is Joe going?”

Paul hummed. “No, but I will be out of the office, I have told Joseph but he forgets.”

Sarah forced a smile, if Paul was away then Joseph and her could possibly sneak off to a small little hotel somewhere, on the company’s tab, of course!

“Let me know and I will add it to the diary,” Sarah promised and Joe smiled,

throwing the secretary a chocolate bar he had been given with his sandwich.

“I hate milk chocolate,” he told her and bit into his BLT to a muttered thanks from the girl on a diet in the corner of the room.

* * * * *

Anna slid across the park bench and rested by Lewis's side, leaning over and taking the spliff out of his mouth. “These kill you,” she told him and took a puff of the rolled up joint. “So what did mother and father say?”

Lewis grinned at the Russian girl next to him and he took his spliff back. “They OK now. They said I shouldn't see you but someone has knocked up Kat so I am not being mithered.”

“Knocked up? You mean hit with car?”

Lewis gave a chuckle. “No. I mean pregnant.”

“Ahhhh,” Anna gave a gesture with her hands over her stomach and Lewis nodded.

“Yeah, and she doesn't know who the guy who did it.” Anna looked shocked for a moment and took the spliff back from Lewis taking a deep breath before passing it back. “Dad was going proper mental. Kept saying that she'd never find a husband or a University place and stuff.”

Anna smiled at him. “She could find Russian man. My brother. He wants come to London.”

Lewis laughed heartily. “Hey. Civil partnership. Now, why didn't I think of this before, this is brilliant.” Anna groaned but Lewis choose not to hear her. “She is going to need lots of cash for baby stuff, they eat nappies and crap every twenty seconds or something. She is over eighteen so no need for parental consent. Ahh, this is perfect.”

Anna put her hand on Lewis's arm. “No. I fine. And anyway, she not 21 either. Remember, Registrar say partner need be 21.” Lewis hummed, and Anna smiled. “I am going to get visa extension in two week time.” Lewis bit his lip and looked at her.

“And what happens if they say no?”

Anna shrugged. “I go back to Russia.”

“Shit, could you not come stay with us?”

Anna smiled and took the spliff again. “Russia. It not that bad. I just like it here. I like people here. It good here.”

“So when do you find out?”

“Two week.”

Lewis bit his lip, the thought of Anna going away was not one that he had dwelt on over the previous few weeks, all of his friends lived too far away to see very regularly outside school but Anna was just up his road, beautiful, smart, and very sexy. He liked her a lot, she made him laugh and everyone wanted her to stay – she did, he did, her adopted family did – but it would be some unelected, unaccountable official in some office that got to decide. It was, unfair, and he took another drag on his spliff. It was very unfair.

Chapter XIII

Anna passed Lewis his wine as he finished looking through the personal statement she had written on some tatty A4 paper. He had rewritten most of it, and corrected much of the grammar, the spelling and tidied up the punctuation of what was left before passing it back to Russian girl looking expectantly at him.

She smiled. “Eet done?”

Lewis nodded. “Yeah. Some of your language was a bit crap but it's better now. Just copy it out and ignore the bits where I'd crossed it out.”

“I ask Maria and she said it fine but I not sure. She too busy to read it.”

Lewis shook his head, they had spent most of the last two hours working on the statement and he had happily given up revision to help the au-pair when she asked. “Your handwriting is pretty shit,” he told her with a grin and looked up at her. “Worse than mine.” He realised it was a little unfair, Anna was used to writing in the Cyrillic alphabet, but he found her handwriting untidy and almost unreadable.

Anna poured over the text, sought clarification from Lewis on some of his spidery handwriting and then pulled up a small bag from behind her, passing it to him. “See thank you Lewis.” Lewis gasped and peered inside the bag taking out a bottle of beer and a small bag of sweets. “Yes?”

Lewis bit his lip as she peered at him wanting to see appreciation and he grinned at her straight hair and inquisitive look. “Thank you, you didn't need to,” he told her. Anna shrugged and took a gulp of her drink.

“Can I ask you ...” Anna started and hesitated before passing him another small bag. “What you think? I find it cheap. It, how you say, bargain? Is it nice?”

Lewis tentatively opened the pink bag marked with “Blush!”, he knew that name and couldn't picture the store. He took a big intake of breath as he pulled out a lacy garment – it was the name of the lingerie shop in town. Lewis peered up at her holding the black bra, wonderfully suggestive and then the skimpy thong. Lewis spluttered, he felt his cock harden instantly, and looked at the twinkly eyes of his Russian friend. “It cheap. In, ummm, sale. Tell me, is it sexy?”

Lewis puffed out his cheeks and took a gulp of his water, nodding his head. “Yeah. Very sexy,” he admitted eventually, his hands shaking as he felt the softness of the knickers. “You will look ... lovely,” he eventually added and then back at the au-pair cocking her head to one side.

“You smile too much,” she said with a grin and took them off of him. He was

thinking of the girl in the underwear she had just shown him and his eyes had gone glassy-eyed as he desperately pictured Anna's body in the lacy garments.

Anna giggled and offered him a game of tennis, her family had got a net and created a makeshift tennis court in their expansive garden, and as they had been cooped up since early-afternoon when Joshua had gone down for his afternoon nap, she wanted a breath of fresh air.

Anna changed and retrieved the sleeping toddler and put him in his buggy in the garden. Joshua smiled, groaned and put his head facing the buggy. "He, he tired," Anna muttered.

"You look like Anna Kournikova," Lewis teased as she picked up a tennis racket and passed it to him. "Da, but I no play tennis in my knickers." Lewis felt his shorts for a moment, playing tennis with an unwanted erection would be impossible and he tried to put the imagine of the sexy Anna on the tennis court with him prancing around in any underwear. It would be a most welcome sight.

Anna served a ball towards Lewis and he snapped out of his daydream and hit it back, but Anna was a good player and before long she hit her stride spewing balls all over the small court that had Lewis scurrying. This amused her as she watched, Lewis struggled to return the ball back to her and when he did she would flick her racket to send him scampering over the well manicured lawn in the opposite direction.

After an hour, Lewis was exhausted, grass stains littered his clothes and Maria giggled when she came outside. "You look knackered," she teased at the panting teenager who puffed and whistled, pointing accusingly at the smiling au-pair.

"She play, she play nasty." Maria gave Anna a sultry look who put the racket down on the green outside table and crouched down beside Joshua.

"I play, he no play well," she muttered in her Russian accent and Maria smiled. "You tell Mummy." Joshua was only just waking and Lewis glanced at his watch announcing he "better be off" and wearily waved goodbye at his friend, traipsing towards the gate and towards dinner.

"Oh, and Anna," Maria said the moment Lewis departed. "I found these." Anna gasped as Maria held out the lacy underwear in her fingers with a grin. "Don't tell me you were showing Lewis."

Anna blushed. "I buy them in sale but he like them," she said with a sniff, her cheeks reddening. "He think they sexy."

Maria smiled at the au-pair getting back up from the ground. "I'm sure he does," she muttered.

* * * * *

Sarah was relieved, she had been given the all-clear from her doctor and was determined to resume unfettered sex with Joseph; it felt so much better and sat down with Joseph in her flat with a glass of wine.

She hadn't told Joseph about her STD but had been careful for a couple of months until the small spots had cleared up and her adulterous lover was always more than happy to receive a blow job without questioning why he couldn't do much more, their liaisons were becoming increasingly snatched and quick as the workload in the office increased.

Joseph had told his family he was off to London and was staying the night there but instead he had been promised a night of rampant debauchery with his secretary in her flat. He felt guilty about the deception and lies but had shaken this from his mind the moment Sarah opened her flat and greeted him.

Sarah was dressed in a see-through lacy teddy that shimmered in the candle light, that left little to the imagination. Joseph looked into her concupiscent eyes as she made herself comfortable on the couch and licked her lips. "You OK?"

Joseph nodded, he hadn't imagined Sarah would be quite so "full-on" and allowed her to unbutton his shirt and then unbuckle his trousers, grunting in expectation. "Go," she whispered. "Go have a shower and put on what I have got for you."

Joseph bit his lip and waited but Sarah prodded him towards her bathroom. He laughed as he went in, there was a towel folded up on the toilet seat and a bottle of shower gel neatly perched on top of that; Sarah had planned it meticulously. Joseph showered the day's tension away, sopping his tired body with the bright green liquid that lathered nicely and smelt strongly of mint, it was his favourite and Sarah had known this from their trips away.

Joseph was working hard, their software had been generating a lot of support calls and their servers were creaking under the workload. Paul had said sales were up and promised everyone that the company could probably afford a very good bonus at Christmas, but this didn't help his team now when they had to put in ten, twelve or even fourteen hour days. Paul was rigidly claiming he wanted to wait before hiring any more staff and holiday season was fast approaching.

Joseph laughed heartily when he saw what Sarah had left out for him in a plastic bag on the door of the bathroom. Some short black boxer shorts, with a white panel at the front and a black bow tie. He would be little more than a sexy butler and slid them over his knees and up to his waist. He felt his thighs encased in the skin-tight cotton material and then put on the black bow tie and looked in the mirror: he was Joseph Wilson, respected director, father and a now an incredible lover.

Sarah squeezed her partners rear as he came back into the room and kissed him again, moaning as his hands felt the inside of her transparent lingerie. "That's

nice,” she whispered as his hands darted up her flanks in the soft-light and cupped her bosom.

They resumed kissing, their lips intertwined and hands wandering, Joseph pushed her back on her couch and she sighed as she did, her legs opening to allow Joseph to slide up over her. Joseph glided over his secretary, their bodies separated by their flimsy clothing and Sarah dug her fingers into Joseph's back as he kissed her neck and played with her hair.

She sighed, and pulled him closer, bringing his body into hers and then waited as his fingers darted over her erect nipples, cupping her breasts. “I love these,” he whispered and looked into her eyes. “You have the sexiest eyes, the most luscious kissable lips I have ever seen.” Joseph paused to kiss her lips and then looked into his lover's gaze. “The most slender of necks,” he whispered and brought his face into partner's neck to lightly caress it with his mouth.

“You're breasts my dear, you're breasts are the fullest, sexiest most fantastic orbs on this planet.” Sarah smiled as Joseph lowered his body and parted her teddy, kissing the outside of the breast and then sucking gently on her right nipple, before repeating this smooth, soft kisses on her left one. He continued down her body, offering loving kisses to her “elegant hands”, “radiant mound”, “pert butt”, “perfect toes” and “toned thighs” before settling his mouth at the masked slit of his partner. She waited for him to slide her out of her G-String and as the flimsy underwear rolled off her feet, he gently pressed his tongue against her moistened crack.

She groaned and he savoured her musky aroma running his tongue up and down her aroused slit, swirling around her clitoris before gently sucking on it. She felt her legs quiver and Joseph slid his finger inside her and pushed on her insides, rotating his fingers and finding her G-Spot. Sarah felt weak-kneed and emitted a huge sigh, panting and crying out every time she exhaled.

She professed her undying love for her boss as he took her to her first orgasm, and her knees shook, gripping Joseph's head hard as his tongue worked overtime on her sensitive loins. She screamed when her body lurched into a second, more powerful climax and Sarah loved the intense sensations Joseph caused in her, she had not had a lover who could do that and curled up her fingers gripping hold of the couch as Joseph tickled her G-Spot to a third climax.

“Oh no, I need you,” she cried and pulled him to her face, her juices covering her chin. “But on my bed,” she muttered and dragged him away to give “her a damn good fucking”

Joseph smiled and looked back at the wet spot on the couch, he had signed up to a night of debauchery, and was very much going to get it.

And after the sex, they could think about something to eat.

* * * * *

Maria put her book down and looked at her naked husband, checking off some figures on a spreadsheet. “Anna seems happy,” she eventually said and Adam looked up with a snort.

“Yeah well, her boyfriend took her out.”

Maria grinned. “She says he isn't her boyfriend, but they are spending a lot of time together. She was showing him her new underwear yesterday. I think she likes him.”

Adam looked up from the laptop and turned to look at his wife. “Is there a point to this? I mean I know you like interfering with other people's love lives but she is a big girl, doesn't need it.”

Maria scowled at her husband and slid her hand under the bed. “Reminds me of us, when we were getting together.” Adam grunted as the hand made contact with his thigh and he looked at his other half with a quizzical expression. “Oh come on, your mum and dad hated me, they thought I was too much of a distraction so you used to come to my house to do revision, said you were going to the library.”

“Ahhhh,” Adam muttered as he realised what Maria was getting at.

“Only you never did do much revision, did you?” Maria looked at her husband with a grin and he smiled, the recollections of their frequent trysts, and sexual experimentation with the wild girl from down the road. “Anna never goes to spend any time at Lewis's house.”

“Well that's 'cos you work her too hard,” Adam replied and looked at his wife. “She never has any time. She has to stay in to babysit Josh.” Maria bit her lip with a grin. “And when it's not that, it's something else.”

Maria snorted. “Well when we go away at Christmas and Anna comes, should we offer to take Lewis?”

Adam snorted and looked at his wife. “If she says he isn't her boyfriend then leave it at that,” he said with a firmness but Maria shrugged.

“Look I had to set up Sophia with that French guy at my soiree.”

“Ahh yeah. That ended in a bitter divorce, didn't it?” Adam asked and Maria winced.

“OK, but for awhile they were happy.”

“Until both Sophia and Pierre were found to be screwing the gardener?”

“Yeah,” Maria said matter-of-factly. “Look I told her at the time there was perfect scope there for a threesome but she was too distraught and chucked him out. I still say that she acted too hastily on that one.” Adam sighed at his wife and she brought herself back to the original subject matter. “Anyway, some people are too shy, they need a helping hand. And he is a nice kid, he was helping her with her visa application and takes her out. And Josh likes him. I think he would be ideal for her.”

“If she gets her visa extension?”

Maria grunted. “Well obviously. I mean, we are all hoping for that. I spoke to the lady at the agency and she sounded quite hopeful but said they would sort something out if need

be. But assuming she can stay, her and Lewis would be an ideal couple.”

Adam looked at his wife. “I mean it. Leave them alone; if they are happy as they are, then let them be. You are a crap matchmaker and there is probably a good reason why they haven't ...”

Maria snarled and picked up her romantic novel. “You have no romance in your soul,” she told him interrupting what he was saying. “It is a bad place in there.”

“Yes, indeed,” he told her with a feint grin. “I am an accountant, and I strongly advise against attempting to facilitate a merger between Lewis and Anna.”

* * * * *

Gareth tapped away at the keyboard, his laptop was broken (he had dropped it in fright when he heard Katie get up for a glass of water in the small hours and there was two naked women and a farm animal in an unsavoury clip on his computer), and he needed to send a few emails.

“What are you doing there?” Gareth asked as Matthew finished signing an official looking document.

“I am suing Vicky.”

“What!” Gareth finished sending the email and looked up and his friend. “Why?”

Matthew spun his hands around. “This place. “I am paying for it, but we signed for it together. So I want ten months rent off of her. It is the renewal next month, the tenancy was for twelve months, so she owes me thousands.”

Gareth bit his lip. “Wow.”

“Yeah, well I sent her a letter via recorded delivery asking her to make a contribution and she sent a nasty one back in response. I told you in the pub.”

Gareth sniffed. “Yeah, I think you might have done but I was pissed. Dun'nae start serious chats when I'm pissed.” Matthew sighed and raised his eyebrows at his friend drinking from a can of lager on the table.

“Well anyhow, I am suing her and I know she won't be happy and will probably turn up screaming abuse at me. But I don't care, I want to see that little stuck-up hook-nosed bitch in a courtroom squirming.”

“Shouldn't you just let it go?” Gareth suggested and Matthew sniggered.

“Look, I don't care she walked out on me, but I've had to dip into my savings some months, so I thought about it, and thought why should I pay for everything, she knows how tight money is for me and she is just being selfish. So I am teaching her a lesson.”

Gareth grinned. “So what are you going to do with all that money if you win?”

Matthew sighed. "I don't know. She can't afford to pay me, really. She would have to live like a nun for years, so that's what's appealing really. Knowing it would fuck her over." Gareth laughed and Matthew stretched his hands and signed the bottom of the page. "I mean, I know she will struggle to pay, her parent's business is really struggling and she isn't rich so I will be messing with her life, but she has done that to me. So this is payback."

Gareth grunted. "Well don't tell Katie about it, she'll lecture you if you do."

"I know," Matthew replied and then filed the paper away, glancing at the laptop screen and seeing a naked woman on it.

"It's just an email attachment," Gareth protested before Matthew could speak and the host grinned.

"I'll go get us another beer each," he said and got up, making a mental note to thoroughly virus scan and clean his history on his laptop when it was returned to him.

* * * * *

Charlotte sniffed as Ethan stood there. "I've come," he warned her and she nodded looking up at him in his leather jacket and gloved hand. She glanced down at a chair in the café that he took and sat down at her table.

"Can I get you anything?" The waitress asked and he ordered a cup of tea. Charlotte had hoped that the public nature of their rendezvous would mean he wouldn't get, or be able to get violent with her and she slid over an envelope.

"This isn't one five," he muttered and held it up. "One two this is like."

Charlotte sighed and nodded. "One thousand two hundred and fifty. And I've had to borrow it from the Children's savings accounts."

He grunted and took his drink from the waitress. "So you still owe two fifty plus the late payment and stuff. Comes in at seven hundred."

Charlotte grunted, her eyes falling to his hot drink that he took a sip of. "Can't you just let it go," she begged. "I mean I tried to get more out but the banks won't let me without Joe's signature."

Ethan shrugged and looked at her. "Not my problem," he said coldly and clinically and ran his hands through his short hair. "Now what did I say I would do if you didn't pay me."

"Oh no," Charlotte cried, tears forming in her eyes. "Not that. Not Kat."

Ethan snorted and took a sip of his drink, looking at her squarely in the eye. "I'll leave her alone if I get a blow job from you," he said in a low voice and Charlotte spluttered.

“You what?” A few patrons turned to look into the corner where Ethan and Charlotte were in hushed conversation.

Ethan pulled his coat closer around him and hissed at Charlotte. “You still owe me. You still owe me lots of money and you ain't paid on time. I can take it out on you or your daughter, now I don't fucking care but what's it to be?”

Charlotte started gasping and sighing. “No please,” she cried. “Leave me alone. I'll get you the rest of your money, I promise, just leave us alone.”

He snorted and took a sip of his drink. “So that's Katherine then. She did look nice in her school uniform as she went to school today. I love pregnant chicks. Who knocked her up, was it the lad who was walking her home, or the guy who turned up at 8am this morning?”

Charlotte sniffed and looked at him in the eye. “Oh my God. Leave her alone. She's only a baby.”

Ethan grunted. “She's old enough to get knocked up. Now finish up and pay up, you got a cock to suck.” Charlotte shivered, she never went down on her husband, it was a filthy practice, but Ethan was not going to negotiate, Charlotte had to offer herself or he would find Katherine and take it out on her.

Charlotte sobbed, left a ten pound note to pay for the drinks, and allowed Ethan to push her towards the door and into a small alleyway at the back of the shop. It was quiet, and Ethan smirked at the middle-class woman shivering with fear opposite him. Ethan loved women like Charlotte, so prim and proper and scandalised by everything sexual but so desperate at the same time.

“Well?” Ethan asked and pushed Charlotte to her knees. “Undo my trousers, get it out. It's not going to suck itself, is it? Dumb bitch.”

Charlotte started crying, her hands shaking as she touched his trousers. “I can't,” she wept, looking up at Ethan who slapped her hard against her right cheek.

“I do that slutty daughter of yours then. Oh, I do love teenagers. Pregnant teenagers. Tell her she has to pay Mommy's debt.”

Charlotte howled, tears falling from her face and undid Ethan's fly, fishing out his sweaty, slimy cock. “I've been to the gym,” Ethan told her. “Suck it nice and clean before you start.”

The sobbing Charlotte stuck up her nose before gently touching the top of his manhood with her tongue. Ethan sighed, grabbed the back of Charlotte's neck and rammed his member onto her face, holding her there for a few seconds. Charlotte gasped and gagged, her arms flailing about miserably as her body fought for air, and her throat tried to repel the invader impacted against her gag reflex.

Charlotte panicked, she thought she was going to die of asphyxiation, her mouth

and windpipe obstructed by Ethan's member ramming its way past her tonsils but Ethan eased up, and allowed Charlotte to gasp for some air.

“Come on bitch,” Ethan told her and waved his now erect cock in her face. Slowly, Charlotte gently sucked on the tip, running her tongue underneath his foreskin. Ethan's shaft were smelly and sticky, and Charlotte wanted as little to do with them as she could but Ethan was insistent and began to ram his cock into her mouth telling her to “do it properly.”

Charlotte was still crying, her eyes streaming, but she was no longer blubbing, instead trying to get the loan shark to release himself as soon as he could so she could end the torment. Ethan gave a grunt, he could feel his climax nearing, there was a scarcely a better pleasure in the world than receiving a blow job from a tearful woman - “A blow job is better when the bitch is crying,” he muttered and exploded his vile semen into the mouth of Charlotte.

“Swallow,” Ethan warned and Charlotte was too beaten to fight. She did an exaggerated swallowing motion to show him that she had taken it all. “Good,” Ethan told her refastening his trousers. “You have two weeks or I will do Kat.”

Charlotte burst into tears as her loan shark disappeared and struggled to her feet. She found a ten pound note in her purse and rubbed her eyes. The 3:30 was in twenty minutes, there was a bookmakers around the corner, and her luck had to change some time.

Chapter XIV

“Hello stranger,” Matthew said, jumping down from the four foot wall as Katherine passed him. He had been out with Gareth at the pub watching the lunchtime football game while Gareth's wife did some shopping in town and was busy eating a kebab when his ex-lover went past.

Katherine looked up, her bump was pronounced and Gareth gave a brief wave at the pregnant girl. “Sorry,” she muttered. “In a world of my own. That looks nice,” she said looking into the fast food and Matthew passed her a piece of donner meat on his fork. “Cheers,” she said as she chewed the unhealthy food.

“What you up to? Shouldn't you be at home resting?”

“I'm pregnant not ill,” Katherine replied somewhat indignantly. “Mum mentioned Mothercare had a sale on prams and stuff so I thought I would come and have a look,” she muttered. “Everything is so expensive.”

Matthew smiled and Gareth grunted from the wall. “Yeah, I told Katie that's why she couldn't get knocked up. Kids are fuckin' costly.”

Matthew gave Katherine an apologetic look and she turned back and rubbed her stomach. “I know, and I have years of it.”

Matthew felt a pang of guilt and looked at her. “You've always got your friends to help,” he told her and she forced a smile.

“My friends are off to Uni,” Katherine told him. “None of them were stupid enough to get a bun in the oven. And I wouldn't mind, I don't even have sex.” There was a pause as she realised what she said and then added. “Well not often, I don't have a boyfriend.”

There was a loud voice from the other side of the road, and Gareth looked up at his name.

“Oh crap,” he muttered and dropped down from the wall. “I gotta go,” he said, looking towards his wife in their battered car and Matthew turned to Katherine after bidding his friend goodbye.

“Can I come with you, to the shops, like?” Matthew asked and Katherine nodded.

“By all means,” she said and helped herself to the last of Matthew's unhealthy snack. Matthew found it weird looking in the baby shop, he had never been there before and had to ask Katherine why they needed a baby bath when she already had a sink and a big bath. Katherine laughed and held up a baby-grow. “It's so cute.”

Matthew suppressed a grin and then started looking at the prams and the buggies.

He realised that the baby, far from being small and insignificant and therefore having little needs, would actually require lots of money and time. He stared at his friend looking at each of the buggies before returning to him. "I like that one, but they are so expensive. It might be a third-off but they need to be cheaper before I can get one."

Matthew sniffed and looked at Katherine. He wanted to tell her that the baby was his and was conceived from consensual drunken debauchery not a violent rape, and that he would pay his way with her. He wanted to tell everything would be all right, but he couldn't and stammered.

"I'll umm, I'll help you," he promised.

Katherine's eyes widened and she rubbed her face. "Ahh that's sweet," she said. "But I'll manage. I will get help but it's just so weird."

"No, what I mean is, is that I am expecting to come into some money soon. It's not a lot, but it will help. I'll help you. I mean, do you want to get a pram?"

Katherine smiled and Matthew's heart pounded. She shrugged and gawped. "I can't borrow money from you."

"I'll buy it," Matthew said quickly and Katherine looked at him in shock, wide-eyed and surprised.

"That is so nice, but I can't," she said with a deep breath and looked at the buggies. "I just can't but thank you. Dad said he would help but he has been a bit busy lately."

Matthew sighed. "Yeah, Paul's not been around much." Katherine looked at the pram one last time and turned away. Matthew felt wretched and called her back, pulling out his wallet and finding his Credit Card – it maybe £150 but his child would need it, and it was the sort of thing savings were there for. "Come on."

"No, Matthew," Katherine said firmly but Matthew strode over to the buggy that reclined into a pram and then asked her "what colour?"

Katherine stammered and so Matthew suggested the neutral brown on the basis it wouldn't show the dirt as much and Katherine mewed several thank yous at him. Matthew felt she shouldn't be showing him any gratitude but they took the big box to the till and he jabbed his PIN into the little machine before walking out of the shop carrying the container that was almost as big as he was.

Matthew could only just move it, but he walked her home via the bus and she gave him a hug on the porch.

"I'll pay you back," Katherine promised, tapping the top of the box and kissed him on the cheek. "And thank you so much. You really are wonderful, Matt, you've really helped me out."

“No problem, that's what friends are for.” Matthew blushed at Katherine's display of appreciation and waved at her, walking away down the drive. He knew, more than ever, that he needed to properly help her but just didn't know how to do so without causing problems. He had a proper dilemma and not one anyone could help him with.

* * * * *

Matthew answered the knock at the door, his heart in his mouth. Was this Joseph and Charlotte coming to rip him to shreds, did they know? Was buying the buggy too much of a give-away? He peeped through the spy hole and grinned when he saw his mate staring back.

“Hiya mate,” Matthew said jovially as he opened the door and then gasped when he saw the two suitcases with him. “What've you done?”

“She's thrown me out,” he said expressionlessly and Matthew groaned.

“Oh Gareth,” he said as Gareth pushed past him. “Oi,” Matthew replied indignantly as his friend sailed past.

“Oh come on mate,” Gareth pleaded. “I've got nowhere else to go.” Matthew sighed, he needed Gareth staying with him as much a diabetic needed a lifetime supply of chocolate bars but he looked at his friend begging him and sighed. “Please, two weeks tops.”

“OK,” he murmured relenting. “But no staying up until 6am watching porn. I have neighbours and a job. And you clean up after yourself and no, I repeat no, wandering around my flat naked. And no looking at porn on my laptop, I do work on that sometimes.”

Gareth stood up straight and touched the side of his head. “Aye aye mate,” he said with a smile. Matthew groaned and Gareth pulled his suitcases into the flat. Matthew pointed him towards a small box room containing a mattress (but no single bed) and gave him some sheets from the airing cupboard.

“I couldn't borrow a few quid could I? I'm starving, could really do with a ruby.”

Matthew sighed and looked at him as he slung the sheets over the bed in a heap and Matthew picked up his wallet and passed him a ten pound note. “Cheers, you having one?”

Matthew ran his hands through his hair and shook his head. “I've got an interview tomorrow,” he said calmly. “A job interview. I need to prepare, go to bed early and not smell of curry and beer.”

Gareth patted his rotund belly. “Ahh a bit of beer never hurt no-one. And what do you need to prepare for a job interview for? Come on, lets grab some tins from the office.”

Matthew closed his eyes and counted to three. “No,” he said firmly. “I need to prepare. This is an important job interview, and I need to get it.” He watched his friend leave the flat and sat down with his books, only to be disturbed a few minutes later when he returned with a curry and a bag containing cans of lager, sitting down on the sofa and watching a sports game show by shouting out the answers.

“Fuckin' twat,” he shouted at the television, his mouth full of Lamb Rogan Josh. “Obvious that's not Schmeichel. His nose isn't purple. See Matty.”

Matthew looked up and sighed, putting his book down. “So why did you and Katie split up?”

Gareth tore his eyes away from the television screen and glanced down at the floor and then at his friend. “She ummm, she went skitz. We had a row, and she threw me out.”

Matthew sighed and scratched his hair. “What d'ya do?”

“I did nothing,” Gareth said indignantly. “It was her, she just went fucking mental.”

Matthew rubbed his chin and hesitated. He had known Katie for a long time and while she had a temper, she was not overly impulsive, there had to be something else.

“Did you cheat on her?” Matthew asked and Gareth shovelled the last of his curry into his mouth.

“Fuck no.” He scowled, spraying rice over his trousers and looked back at the television screen. “She decided she didn't like my porn any more.”

Matthew sighed. “It's not kiddie porn is it?”

Gareth's scowl turned to a grimace. “No it isn't,” he said indignantly. “You really think I'm one of those 'paedos?”

Matthew spluttered a half-hearted apology. “Well you do have weird tastes in porn,” he replied and grunted, picking up his book. “I mean I think not, but it wouldn't surprise me what you watch.”

“It was some bondage porn, OK? Some girl beating a guy up and doing stuff.” Matthew froze, he didn't want his friend to elaborate on his fantasy and left the rest of the question unanswered. He bade his friend good night and ambled into his room, he would need his rest.

Matthew woke at 4am and saw his friend asleep on the couch, a film blaring in the background and turned it off, before returning to his bed. Gareth was barely awake as he darted in and out of the room, trying to iron his smartest shirt while

eating some cereal and then frantically getting ready.

“Suit? You are wearing a suit? What are you going for, mega manager or somethink?” Matthew brushed him off and ran out of the room with his file in his hand, bidding his friend farewell.

The company was based in the same town where he lived, and although he only had to catch one bus, he left in plenty of time and arrived an hour early. After sitting down and drinking a coffee at one of the four coffee shops in the out-of-town industrial park, Matthew wandered over to his destination a mere thirty minutes early.

Matthew was shaking as the receptionist beckoned him into the side room; it had been a few years since he had gone for a job interview and was incredibly nervous. He had to check his suit still fit him and was a little disappointed that the trousers were a lot tighter than he remembered to the point of them being almost uncomfortable.

He put that down to the dry cleaning, if tumble drying could shrink clothes then it stood to reason that the big machines his local cleaners used, which looked like tumble dryers could do so also.

The suit was, however, the least of his worries. When and if, Joseph found out about his role in Katherine's pregnancy he would be fired and wanted to leave his place of work before he was found out. He really did want to be accused of taking advantage or raping Katherine across the office, or being the butt of the office gossip, he wanted out and it was why he had applied for several jobs at competing software houses in the local area.

Matthew was introduced to Kieran, the Development Manager at High Energy Games, and Samuel, the Managing Director, and they shook hands. They welcomed him and passed him a bottle of water before settling down and asking questions.

Matthew answered confidently and truthfully until they asked about why he was leaving his current employer, and obviously not wanting to disclose the story about Katherine he spun the interviewers a line about wanting a new challenge. They smiled at him and Matthew forced a smile back.

The technical challenge that followed the interview was no more tougher than the questions he was asked and he was passed a laptop and asked to code a simple application which he did in no time and then demonstrated it on the emulator.

It took almost two hours but Matthew was confident, he might just escape his destiny in the office with Joseph. Not that this made him any happier and sat down on a park bench with a sandwich looking out over the small grassy football pitch and assorted swings and slides.

Whichever way he looked at it, he was going to be a father in a few weeks time, a young girl was bringing a child into the world and it was his fault. He rubbed his eyes and exhaled sharply, making a decision that if he needed to give Katherine some money of their baby, he just didn't know how to pass her money without her knowing why.

* * * * *

A hand came over Charlotte's face and she struggled before being pushed down onto her sofa. She looked into his eyes and groaned. "Ethan. This is my home. You can't break in—"

Ethan interrupted her by striking her across the face with his gloved hand. "I'll do what I fuckin' like when bitches owe me cash. Nice house you got here, lot of nice things."

Charlotte bit her lip. "Go, please go." Ethan looked down at the mother in her nightie and grunted as Charlotte desperately tried to preserve her modesty.

"Fuck off," he grunted and looked around the room. "Where's my money?"

"I'm getting it," Charlotte cried. "You said I had until the end of the week."

Ethan pursed his lips. "Yeah, well. I want to make sure I'm gonna get paid."

Charlotte sniffed. "You will, you will."

Ethan chortled. "Yeah well, I think a little reminder is in order." He walked over to her and undid his belt.

"Oh no," Charlotte cried and Ethan grabbed her wrists.

"Oh yes, unless you want me to tell other members of your family what a dirty little whore you were."

Charlotte sniffed and brought her knees up, clenching them together. Ethan withdrew a knife from his belt before his trousers slid to the floor and he held up the blade to Charlotte.

"Do as I say unless you want my blade up your cunt." Charlotte shrieked, she was terrified, and her eyes were fixed on the cold weapon being waved in front of her. Ethan grunted and stepped out of his jeans, all the time ensuring that his eyes were focused on the knife.

Charlotte was sobbing, she knew no-one would hear her scream if she yelled out and just kept watching the knife in front of her face, seeing Ethan gently stroke himself to an erection in her peripheral vision.

She did not want to give him sex but Ethan just grunted as he climbed on top of her, prising her knees apart and causing her nightdress to ride up to expose her tan

lines. She thought of running or hitting him, but she was too preoccupied by the blade, she knew he would kill her and think nothing of it if she tried to fight.

“Please,” she cried, pleading with her attacker and tears streaming down her cheek. She tried to push him away but Ethan grunted and raised his other hand, slapping her across the face and then pushed the knife onto her throat.

“Shut it,” he hissed and moved his erect penis into her crotch, impaling her unprepared body on his organ. She squealed in pain through the tears, she wasn't ready, and he was rough as he mercilessly pounded himself into her.

Charlotte sobbed uncontrollably crying in pain with every thrust he made into her unprotected loins. She was dry, and he was showing her no mercy. She felt the coldness of the blade press against her windpipe and he was pushing her further into the leather sofa, his elbows pressing against hers to restrain her.

“Fuckin' love this, you fuckin' slut,” he sneered and grunted as she felt his cock twitch and he stopped ramming his cock into her and just felt him shoot several waves of semen into her.

She cried. “Get off me,” she squealed and Ethan withdrew rubbing his leaking phallus on a cushion and then tossing it over to her. Charlotte howled in shock and her grabbed a tissue to wipe herself, seeing a few specks of blood on the paper towel.

“Don't get knocked up,” he warned her with a smirk “And next time, I'll do that to Kat,” he warned her as he quickly got dressed. Charlotte gasped and shook her head.

“Please no,” she wailed and Ethan grunted.

“I want my money Friday. You have until 5pm.”

“But that's two days away,” Charlotte cried through the tears. “You said I had until Sunday.”

Ethan gave her a rakish smile. “Give me the cunt of your daughter and you can have until Sunday.”

Charlotte burst into tears as Ethan left the room subtly grabbing hold of a diamond necklace as he walked out of the door leaving Charlotte crying uncontrollably on the sofa.

Charlotte knew she should report the attack, but she also knew Ethan would hurt her children if she did, and she would have to explain to Joseph about her odd gamble; it was something she couldn't afford to do and struggled to her feet tentatively walking towards the stairs and her bathroom.

If she wasn't going to report it, she needed to be clean.

Chapter XV

“More champagne, Mr Mason,” the stewardess asked and Paul nodded. The plane was two-thirds of the way over the Atlantic and he had more than enough money in his secret bank accounts to fund the life he wanted once he touched down in the Caribbean.

Paul stretched out and made a theatrical groaning sound as he pushed his arms up in front of him. The rotund man looked at his watch, “Joe” would be getting into the office and he felt a pang of guilt: he had known Joseph and his family for years but he had always wanted a place in the Caribbean – an immoral bachelor pad – and now he had one, as well as hundreds of thousands of pounds in an offshore account.

He had what he wanted and it was Joseph's fault anyway; he should never have been so trusting in business, didn't he know everyone was in it for themselves? Business was ruthless, no room for sentiment and Paul had used his position to get rich, something any half-decent businessman would have done.

Sarah called out across the executive office. “Joe, it's the bank on the phone. They need to talk to Paul or you urgently.”

Joseph grunted. “Where is Paul?”

Sarah shrugged. “There's nothing in the diary.”

“Oh pass them through,” Joseph muttered and picked up his phone when it rang as Sarah transferred the call. “Joseph Wilson,” he answered confidently and then went white.

Sarah watched concerned as Joseph argued about “there being a mistake.” There was no way that the company had borrowed hundreds of thousands of pounds, or that their working capital had been exhausted, or that DirectDebits were being returned and certainly the automated payments for the wages due today should not have been returned unpaid: the company had loads of money, Paul and their accountants always assured him that they had were well financed.

“There must have been some fraud then,” Joseph told the lady on the end of the phone and strode over to Paul's desk wrenching it open. He searched for the ledger that his Financial Director kept and picked up the huge book, striding back towards his desk.

“What's up?” Sarah asked and Joseph ignored her, his eyes drawn towards a letter in the book on the most recent page addressed to him. Joseph groaned, this was not going to be good news, and he wrenched open the envelope.

“Dear Joseph, by now you will know my secret in that I have emptied the company bank accounts and fled the country. I'm sorry, but I couldn't face working for the rest of my life in this shitty town. All I can say is that I am a long way away from you, and I know you will wonder how I can have done this, but I know you are fucking Sarah behind Charlotte's back. I am no less of a cheating cunt than you. The staff wages are in my bottom drawer, good luck telling them they are all out of work. Paul. P.S. Sorry it had to end like this.”

“The fucking bastard,” Joseph cried out and Sarah looked at him. Joseph picked up the phone and told her that he would ring her back later, and that he needed to speak to his co-director.

“What's up?” Sarah asked concerned as Joseph threw the ledger showing that the company had over £300,000 in credit across the room.

Joseph pulled open the bottom drawer, breaking the lock on the flimsy cabinet, and took out a tray of envelopes each one filled with notes and looked at Sarah. “Paul's fucked us,” he said without emotion and sat down at the desk rubbing his forehead. “Fucked us good time.”

“Fucked us? What does that mean, Joseph?”

Joseph rubbed his eye and looked out of the window. “It means he has emptied our bank accounts and left the country. He has ruined everything.”

He rubbed his hair and stood up as Sarah shrieked, his mind was still trying to work out just how Paul could have done such a thing. “Oh my God Joe, what does this mean?” He leant over to kiss her on the lips and then taking the tray of envelopes strode into the main office, he had to tell the staff something.

Joseph explained what he knew and handed out the envelopes, each one with the employee's name written in Paul's lazy handwriting, and they stared ashen-faced at the co-owner. Some were tearful, others angry, but as Joseph explained, he did not know what was happening until an hour ago and had no idea if he could save the company or not.

Joseph was popular in the office, he was rightly believed and even the angry employees directed their vitriol towards the absent director not Joseph. “Go home,” he told them. “And take tomorrow off. I'll know on Monday,” he promised and watched as all but two of his employees left the office.

“I'll be awhile,” he told Matthew as he watched him count through his bundle of notes.

“I know,” Matthew replied mournfully and stared at the envelope. “But I thought you might want some help.”

Joseph snorted. “I don't know where to start,” he muttered and looked at Sarah

hesitating in the doorway. “Go home,” he told him. “And update your CV, there is nothing you can do here.”

Matthew nodded and Joseph watched him pick up his things and leave the office. “And don't tell Charlotte, please.”

“No I won't,” Matthew promised and wandered out of the building. His phone rang the moment he stepped into the sunlight, him idly answering it before checking who it was.

“Matthew, it's Kieran from High Energy Games Ltd.”

Matthew was snapped out of his daydream and shook his head. “Oh sorry, yes, hi.”

“Right, I'm ringing to offer you the post. We were very impressed with you and think you are right for us. We'd like to offer you £28,750 with an uplift of five percent if you pass probation.”

Matthew gave a sharp intake of breath and smiled at his phone. “Yeah, yes, I'd love to take it. Yeah, that's brilliant.”

There was sniff down the end of the phone. “Umm, right I'll stick the contract in the post. Obviously, we would need to discuss start date.”

Matthew sighed. “Ahh right, this isn't easy, but my existing employer may just have collapsed, ummm, there's been some fraud at the director level, so that might be real soon if you want.”

“Wow,” Kieran replied in shock. “I'm sorry to hear that. Yeah, umm, as soon as references come back we can talk. I'll put a reference request in the post.”

Matthew looked back at his employer and turned around, he needed to speak to Joseph about the job. If Expressive Games Ltd was about to collapse, he needed to make sure his reference requests would be responded to and pushed open the double doors at the bottom of the office block.

He heard the sounds the moment he opened the door to Expressive Games. A panting, a furious squealing. What was happening? What was going on?

He quietly edged along the corridor and peered through the window unto the executive office, and gasped in shock, Joseph was having sex with Sarah on his desk, and he immediately dodged out of sight.

Did Charlotte know? Should he tell her? He looked back, took out his phone, and surreptitiously snapped a photograph of the two adults screwing on the desk, it might just be needed if Joseph found out about Katherine and his behaviour at the Christmas Party; it was a good insurance.

Matthew quietly walked out of his employer and picked up his phone, texting

Joseph, "I have a new job. Just need references. Please ring when free. Matt."

He scowled at the building thinking of Joseph, he had always been a bit of a father figure to him, someone who he had looked up to. It was natural, Joseph was successful and had a loving family and Matthew was just starting out in the world, but he was cheating on his wife, on Charlotte. His perfect family life was a mirage and he found it faintly depressing.

He sighed and walked around to his bank to pay in some of his money, he would use a thousand pounds of it to give to Katherine, just as he had promised himself, which would pay for quite a few baby things. Matthew had resigned himself to using some of his savings not to get onto the property ladder as originally intended but to ensure that his child had a proper start in life.

Matthew knocked sharply on the door to Katherine's house and waited. He knew Charlotte was in, her car was on the drive, but he needed to see the teenager. The one thousand pounds was burning a hole in his jacket pocket and he wondered if his story would hold up. Would Katherine get suspicious? Would Joseph get suspicious if he knew?

He knocked again and there was running footsteps to the door. "Oh hello Matt."

Matthew smiled. "Is Katherine in?"

Charlotte hesitated and shook her head. "No, why, what's up?"

Matthew pursed his lips together and took an envelope out of his pocket passing it to her. "Please can you give her that?"

Charlotte looked down at the burgeoning package and frowned slightly. "Sure, what is it?"

Matthew took a deep breath. "I, um, I bullied my credit card provider into giving me some money back that they took," he lied, his heart beating furiously. "And they sent it, but I think that Katherine needs it far more than I do."

Charlotte's lips curled and then she glanced down at the package. "Are you sure?"

"Of course. It was just a refund. What she doesn't need can go to the baby in a trust fund, I think she needs it, she is expecting it."

Charlotte looked down and nodded, thanking him. "That's um, very generous of you. I'll pass it onto her." Matthew hesitated and then left. For Charlotte she scrambled to count the money and put aside two hundred pounds putting it back in the envelope – the rest would pay for Ethan. Charlotte looked up at the ceiling, muttering a silent "thank you" to God: Matthew's generosity had saved her.

Ethan was surprised and a little disappointed to see Charlotte, she threw the money onto the table in front of him in full view of the pub and a number of eyes

turned to watch him. Ethan scrambled the money up and glared at the woman who glowered angrily at him and spoke aggressively. "You paid up now?"

Ethan scowled and pushed the money under the table, counting it out of sight. "Yeah," he replied gruffly. "Pity, I was going to enjoy fucking up your daughter."

"Tell me," Charlotte asked, her arms extended and looking at the moneylender. "Do your friends know that you rape women? Defenceless woman? And then threaten pregnant teenagers? Do your friends know you are a NONCE?" There was an intake of breath as all eyes looked at Ethan.

"I'd shut the fuck up now if I was you," he hissed and waved his fingers in front of him. "I know where your daughter is, and—"

"And if you touch my daughter, I will not rest until I have ripped your—"

"Shut it," he interrupted and returned to his pint of beer. The silence in the pub evaporated and everyone turned back to their own conversation. "You've paid. Now get the fuck out of my sight."

"I want my ring back," she said and he grunted. "It was my engagement ring. I want it back."

"No chance love, now get the fuck out of here."

"I want my ring back," she said firmly, her eyes fizzing with anger and he stood up, pushing her against the wall. "I had to pawn some jewellery to pay you, I want my engagement ring back."

"I said, get the fuck out of here," he hissed at her, his hand pushing against her throat. "You ain't getting that ring back because I used it to pay off ya debts. Now unless you want me to go fucking up your daughter, fuck off," he barked at her, his eyes boring into her face. He took a deep breath and spat at her, causing Charlotte to wipe her face in disgust.

Ethan released his grip on her. She glared at him. "You're a nasty piece of work," she muttered, grabbed her handbag and walked out of the dated pub. She was free from debt but it had cost too much.

The rape had played on her mind and with as much trepidation she could muster she drove towards the local sexual health clinic: she needed to be tested.

* * * * *

Gareth guffawed with laughter, they were celebrating Gareth and Matthew both being offered jobs although Gareth would be earning less a third of Matthew's new salary. "So he was nailing his secretary? Is she fit?"

Matthew opened and shut his mouth. "She's not too bad I suppose. I mean you wouldn't say no, but then you'd fuck anything with a hole in it."

Gareth chortled. "I know. That's why I am banned from the doughnut place. But it was just a misunderstanding," he teased and Matthew took a swig of his beer sitting back on the sofa, leaning back. He pulled up his phone and passed him the image that contained the copulating couple and Gareth smiled.

"Ahh well she's one tasty bitch." There was a quietness as Gareth looked at the photo and Matthew took the phone back and turned off the display.

"Yeah well, I'll be out of there. I mean she shagging Joe while she is on the payroll you can see it, I mean she needs him to keep her on. She will be out of a job, and fuck knows what Joe will do. I don't know if they will be there next week."

Gareth snorted and downed the last of his can. "What the fuck do you care? You are fuckin' off on thirty 'K' a year. Fucking wish I was on ten grand a year."

Matthew pursed his lips together and waited for Gareth to open another can of beer and then glance over at him. "But well done. I mean, you ain't got a care in the world. Lots of cash, no women, no debts, no kids, nothing."

Matthew gulped. "I have," he admitted with drunken candour. "I will have a child. The mother just doesn't know it was me."

Gareth stared him and then laughed. "Yeah, good one." He awaited for Matthew to laugh, showing him it was a poor attempt at a joke but looked at the sullen face of his friend, gently shaking his head. "You're joking right?"

Matthew shrugged. "No. I mean, I know it's wrong. I want to tell her, but she thinks she was raped now and if I tell her she will think I forced myself on her. And I didn't, but I can't tell her, I've told no-one, until now."

Gareth looked at him. "Fuck man, that's screwed."

Matthew sighed and then wiped his eyes. "I know. I mean, I want to see more of her, the mother I mean, and I want her to know. I want to be part of the baby's life and I'm happy to pay my way, but I just don't know how. And her parents will proper freak at me."

"Parents? Oh, she ain't under-age is she?"

"She is eighteen." Matthew replied instantly. "And you've met her. She is due in three weeks."

"Oh shit," Gareth exclaimed, open mouthed. "You knocked up your boss's daughter?" Matthew gave a twisted face and Gareth laughed. "Dude, no wonder you wanted to scarper."

Matthew snorted. "Yeah well, wouldn't you?"

Gareth took a sip and then stretched out his legs. "Yeah I would. But then every

bird I've been with has known it was me. I mean what did you do blindfold her?"

"We were both drunk," Matthew admitted. "Very very drunk. I can remember and she can't."

"Ah that's proper screwed man, you took advantage of a drunk eighteen year old." Gareth looked up smiling. "Nice work."

Matthew put his head back and looked up at his ceiling. "Well I have given her a grand today, in cash, to help with stuff the baby needs, but I did it under a pretext of—"

"You gave her a grand? Wish you'd give me a grand."

"I ain't got you knocked up," Matthew replied instantly and then looked at his friend. "But seriously, what would you do if you were me?"

"If I was you, I'd give me a grand." Matthew snorted and Gareth stared at his friend, passing him over another beer. "Drink until I've forgotten about it and hope that it goes away."

Matthew rolled his eyes and opened the drink. "Cheers."

Chapter XVI

Katherine sat up in bed with a start, she felt the movement inside her again and an involuntary spasm. She cried out in pain, clenching her fists. She had had many in the last hour but that was the most painful. She wasn't due for another week – in the middle of August – and she wasn't even out of the first week – she couldn't be in labour.

Katherine took a deep breath and sighed, closing her eyes, staring at the shadows in her room caused by the moonlight. She sighed and panted, and sat up in bed. There was silence in the house, and she wiped her brow, glancing at the clock, it was 3am. She stretched her legs and rubbed her eyes, it was time to be asleep and she felt awake.

Clearly, the little bugger inside of her was turning and it had disturbed her, so she sat back down and slid under the bed covers gently. There was no movement and she felt her bump, all was asleep.

“Do you mind,” she hissed at her bump. “Some of us need our beauty sleep.” Katherine had barely closed her eyes when she felt it again, a fierce spasm, gripping the top of her bump tightly and she cried out in shock and pain.

Charlotte came rushing in. “What's up?”

Katherine gripped her belly and stared at her mother. “I've had a contraction. I have had two.”

Charlotte sniffed, she was bleary-eyed and tired. “Time them.”

“What?”

“Time them.” Charlotte looked at her watch and sat down on the bed with Katherine, it may have been 3am but she had been up all night with her husband talking about Paul and the business.

Katherine gripped her mother's hand and took deep breaths trying to be calm and rubbed her belly with the other one.

“You OK?” Charlotte asked and Katherine nodded wiping her mouth and panting with every breath. She groaned and held her breath before gasping.

“It hurts,” she wailed. Charlotte looked at the watch and then her daughter.

“We better go to the hospital.”

Katherine barely registered an objection as her mother picked up her overnight bag and told her daughter to get dressed. Katherine screamed and squealed in the car as her mother drove her daughter to the maternity unit at the local hospital, her

pregnancy seemed to amplify the jolts in the road. The nurse moaned the moment they rang the bell, Katherine should have telephoned before leaving but she was taken to a Delivery Suite the instant she described the length of time between the contraceptions.

Katherine needed the Gas and Air and gleefully put the mask over her face, finding the experience quite enlightening and carefree, like her mind being occupied and transported to another dimension. She felt the world spinning but the mask certainly eased the pain she felt and happily consumed more of the pain relief.

Charlotte was worried, Katherine was crying out louder than she remembered and there was simply no midwife with them. A midwife appeared the moment Charlotte opened the Delivery Suite door and Charlotte nodded towards her as she checked Katherine and then left.

“Aren't you staying?” Charlotte asked in an accusatory tone and the midwife shook her head.

“No need. Call us if you need us Katherine.”

Charlotte grumbled about the hospital but Katherine was crying too much to listen. Her contraceptions had got stronger and closer together, she had felt the baby move a lot the previous few days and thought nothing of it, but the pain she was experiencing was simply overwhelming.

“It's coming, Mum,” Katherine called, gripping the side of the bed, and screamed in pain as the baby started pressing down on her cervix.

Charlotte called the midwives back and they returned, helping Katherine into a more relaxed and comfortable position and then checking for any sign of the baby. Although Katherine was fully dilated, the baby wasn't coming through yet and they calmed her down, reassured her and got Charlotte to hold onto Katherine's hand.

Katherine's torment was just beginning, her body convulsing and contracting forcefully and painfully for the next hour and a half, before the baby started to appear. The midwives who kept leaving and checking on her, moved into “Delivery Suite 4,” now completely ready to assist in the birth of Katherine's baby.

A student midwife was admitted, a girl who looked not much older than Katherine, and she watched and spoke to the mother-to-be. Katherine warmed to Trudi, she was calm and got her mind off of the pain between her legs and got her to tell her what the names she had chosen.

Charlotte watched and gripped hold of Katherine's hands as she pushed and the midwife at the end of the bed, squealed excitedly. “It's coming,” she told the

tearful teenager. "I can see it's head."

It took another twenty minutes for the baby to be born, tearing Katherine in two places, before the bloody mess was put on the mother's stomach.

Charlotte smiled and glowed, taking a picture on her phone of the tiny infant. "She looks wonderful."

Katherine sniffed and looked at the tiny doll-like creature on her. Blood and mucus covered the baby and a purple cord, twisting like a pig's tail adjoined it to her.

Trudi offered congratulations and cooed over the little baby coiled onto Katherine's skin. Katherine didn't answer, she felt overwhelmed. Suddenly she was a mother, and everyone in her family shifted up a line. Her grandparents were great-grandparents. Her mother and father were grandparents. Her brother was an uncle, but she was a mother.

Katherine wiped her eyes, the little bundle of trouble was her responsibility now and she sniffed. For the next couple of decades, the little bundle of life in front of her, would need her, in the same she needed her mother. She looked at her mother, she had not heard a word she had said for the last few minutes and shook herself out of her stupor.

"She's lovely."

Katherine looked down, she had forgotten about looking for the gender of her baby, she had a baby girl! The midwives allowed Charlotte to cut the cord and Katherine's baby, her "little bundle of joy," was taken from her to be weighed and checked.

"Well done," Charlotte said patting her on the head and wiping her face. "She is absolutely wonderful."

Katherine sighed, she knew her father wouldn't quite agree! Joseph, who had been receiving texts through the morning from his wife, arrived with Lewis shortly after midday to see the baby. Lewis crowed when he glanced down at the tiny infant asleep in the cot and sat down passing his sister some grapes.

"I'm not ill," she moaned and then thanked him. "She is seven pounds exactly."

"Not a bad weight," Joseph replied and then cocked his head to one side smiling at the new addition. "So what are you calling her?"

Katherine sighed. "I was thinking Evie. Evie Rachel Wilson. What do you think?"

Joseph nodded. "It's a nice name."

"You do know that I am the only one in the family now who isn't a parent," Lewis told her and she smiled.

“That's just the way we want it,” Charlotte told him and Lewis smiled at his niece.

“Yeah,” he muttered. “But she is beautiful. So peaceful.”

“They don't stay quiet and innocent for long, do they love?” Joseph teased and Lewis smiled, he had never liked children or the idea of having children when he was older but seeing his niece lay there, quiet and peaceful made him think: he liked Joshua, perhaps he could be father one day after all.

For Katherine, her determination to put the baby up for adoption when it was born had evaporated the moment Evie gripped her mother's fingers when she was ten minutes old, and she scooped up her child in her bare arms. Evie was staying a Wilson, no matter what anyone said.

* * * * *

“It's seven in the morning,” Gareth moaned as Matthew turned on the bright light in the spare bedroom.

“Yes I know that,” Matthew snapped and pulled a shirt over his head. “But I start my new job today so I really don't want to be late.”

Gareth stretched on the bed and Matthew pulled the duvet off of him, to reveal his friend's naked body and erect cock. “Oh that's ...”

“Natural. Every guy has morning wood. Look just 'cos you got to be there early.”

Matthew stood at the end of the bed. “I thought you started your new job today as well.”

“Yeah, but not til nine. I can just ...”

“Get the fuck up. Come on, I am chucking you out when I leave the flat at eight.”

Gareth groaned and pulled the covers back over him, so he could alleviate his erection in peace while his friend was in the shower.

Gareth sauntered into the kitchen, naked and tired but sated as Matthew was making the coffees in his dressing gown. Matthew squawked when he saw him advance and told him to make himself decent, which Gareth pooh-poohed and sat down to eat his breakfast, the cold wooden chair pressing against his hairy, naked buttocks.

“Cold?” Matthew asked in disgust and passed him a bowl of sugary cereal that he had bought the previous day and a coffee.

Gareth shook his head. “Nah, it's good to get some air round there.” Matthew suppressed a laugh and left to get dressed himself.

Matthew and Gareth left the flat at eight o' clock exactly, Matthew dressed in a shirt and trousers and Gareth in a faded T-Shirt and shorts. His job at a builders'

merchants would be hard work for little pay, and he only had twenty hours work a week, but it was the first step back on the ladder and he was just happy to be earning again.

Matthew arrived just as Kieran was unlocking the offices. “You're keen,” he teased and shook his hand. “Good journey?”

“Not bad,” Matthew replied. “It's only one bus, but it was a bit late.”

“Oh well,” Kieran told him and took him into the office. Matthew was given a large desk in the corner of the room, with views over the local park, and an easy assignment for his first week. The team around him were friendly and the secretary extremely sexy, Matthew knew he would like it at his new employer.

There was nothing to make his place of work any better, or to take his mind off of things. Matthew was focused, he was a “senior developer” and he was ready to climb the next rung on his career. Nothing could distract him.

Except a picture message containing a picture of a baby that is, from a friend, eager to show off her newborn to all her friends.

* * * * *

Paul pulled into his driveway and slammed the car door shut. He had noticed another vehicle stopped outside his house for the previous two days and it unnerved him. Was Joseph catching up with him? Or the British authorities?

The little road that went out of the village went nowhere in particular and although there were a few other villas, there was no obvious reason for a car with blackened windows to be parked yards from his gate.

Paul walked down to the gate and squinted at the car around his wall, it was reasonably new and had recently been polished, the dust and dirt from the tracks had not dulled the bright sheen on the flawless black bodywork. Paul shut the gates to his villa and walked back up the drive, he had a meeting in twenty minutes at his villa with a friend of Kadema's.

“Dwayne” was an American citizen with a house on the island and buzzed Paul from the gate five minutes early. Paul let him in and watched as he parked up next to his car.

“Paul,” he greeted him holding his hand out and slapping the outstretched arm of the Englishman. “Kadema said you had requirements.”

Paul nodded and guided the man inside his large villa to the lounge, passing him a drink of beer. “So my main man, what dya need?”

Paul took a gulp of his cold beer, his house was excruciatingly hot and slipped his shirt off. “You can do the same if you want?”

“I'm OK,” the man replied, mopping his brow and drinking the cold lager. “I'm from these parts.”

The topless Paul nodded and shrugged, and stretched out on the sofa. “I want a girl to live with me,” he replied. “To cook, clean and fuck.”

Dwayne whistled. “That's quite a big ask. How old?”

Paul wiped his nose. “Under sixteen. And not at school, I don't want the Police to turn up and ask questions.”

The man rubbed his chin and sighed. “I might know of a couple. Ya gotta tell me what would happen to them?”

Paul stared at him and then the floor. “Does it matter?”

“Err .. yeah, man. I gonna be selling ya a daughter. No bitch is going to sell their daughter if she is gonna be proper fucked up. Ya gotta look after her.”

Paul snorted a derisory laugh. “Well, I want all the domestic shit doing. Fuckin' hate cleaning and cooking. And in the evening, she can suck me off or I can fuck her. Just want a wife without the fucking around.”

Dwayne snorted. “She'd have be to under-aged, guv'nor?”

Paul nodded. “Problem?”

Dwayne bit his lip. “It shouldn't be.”

Paul laughed heartily. “Good. Look, we had a party here a couple of months ago. There were this brother and sister – both fifteen – and we got him to rape her. Jermaine and Kellie, I've seen them about a couple of times but a load of us did her properly. I love young 'uns. Now can you definitely help or not?”

Dwayne rubbed his nose and looked at Paul. “I might. So what do you do all day?”

“Nothing. Except sunbathe and fuck.”

Dwayne ran his hands through his hair. “So when the mother asks what her daughter's master does what shall I say?”

Paul chuckled. “Say I am a businessman from England who retired on the profits of his endeavours,” Paul said cockily and as Dwayne smiled, he added. “I raided the bank accounts.”

“Well one of the girls, her mother wanted five thousand from you for her, and then a grand a month.” Paul whistled and Dwayne sighed. “It ain't cheap.”

“No, it ain't,” Paul murmured and stretched his legs. “But I can do that. But she better be a good cook and an even better fuck. And I want to see her.”

Dwayne nodded towards Paul and shook his hand, with the promise of being in touch shortly with the girl for him to look at. Paul showed Dwayne out of his property and watched as he drove away, nodding to the occupants in the black car as he went.

Chapter XVII

Matthew sat around the coffee table at his Aunt's house who looked down at him. Lynn Styles, the divorced sister of his mother was celebrating her sixtieth birthday and her entire house was being occupied by her entire family who had all travelled the small Worcestershire village to see her.

Robert Styles, Matthew's younger brother, had just finished his PhD, was engaged to be married, and was about to start work at a pharmaceutical company in London. Amelia Fetherstonhaugh-Hamilton, their baby sister, had recently celebrated her second wedding anniversary to a city financier, by announcing she was pregnant. Matthew felt, and was made to feel the failure.

“So when do you think you are getting married?” Lynn asked for the third time that day. “Cos you'll be too old before too long.” Matthew sighed again and Amelia giggled.

“Perhaps he is gay. Are you gay Matty?”

“No, I am not gay.”

“You sure,” his sister teased. “It's OK. It's just when I rang a few days ago another guy answered. Said you were in the bedroom.” Matthew went bright red and Lynn chuckled.

“Answers so many things,” Lynn answered, her eyes sparkling. “I mean you hear about it all the time. If you want to do dirty things just make sure you don't get that AIDS thing.”

“I am not gay,” Matthew said loudly and a few heads turned in the dining room to look into the lounge. Matthew lowered his voice. “I mean it, I have dated, I just haven't found the right woman. And the man who answered the phone is Gareth, he is staying with me because his wife threw him out because he has a porn collection so big, it can be seen from space.”

Amelia sniffed. “Still weird, two men living together, in sin. I mean, what happened to that Victoria. I liked her.”

Matthew scowled, Amelia only liked Victoria because they both shared a desire to spend more money than they could earn. “She was a vacuous, self-obsessed, self-important, selfish witch,” Matthew muttered and looked at his sister. “Who I really am no longer fond of. Ever since we took out a joint tenancy and she fucked off paying nothing. But I'm suing her for that.”

Amelia grunted. “Did you split because she wanted you to do something with your life?”

Matthew took a deep breath; he had always struggled to get on with his sister and her living in London and only coming to the Midlands every few months had scarcely improved their relations. “No, because she had no morals, or any redeeming features.”

“You mean she dumped you,” Robert teased and Matthew broke into a grin.

“Yeah, we, er, decided to split up. For the best really. I've seen a side to her I don't like.”

Lynn rubbed her nose and looked at him. “But you need to settle down with someone, you'll never have kids and a family.”

Matthew licked his lips. He closed his eyes and his mind wandered. He wanted to take a deep breath and look at his Aunt and his sister with a smirk and say. “Yes, I do have a child, you have a niece and a great-niece. She was born a few days ago to an eighteen year old, but she doesn't know who the father is, and I am too scared to admit that it is me because she thinks that she got pregnant while drunk and was raped, but it wasn't. I am secretly paying money to the said eighteen year old though.”

There was silence as they waited for Matthew to consider what the reaction would be if he had said that but when he glanced up from his fantasy shrugged. “When I meet the right person,” he muttered. “There's no rush.”

* * * * *

Lewis pushed open the door to the dining room tentatively. He had been summoned to the “big house” and Maria had taken him to one side when he got there and told to wear his smartest suit, and be at their house for 8pm the following day. He had arrived, nervously, and squirmed to a side room where he was given a solitary red rose and told to go into the dining room.

Anna had been given a similar treatment, told to dress up in her sexiest, smartest clothes and was awaiting the arrival of “someone special” in her host family's exquisite room. The table had had the middle folded inwards, and laid with a tablecloth and candles.

Anna gasped as Lewis entered the room, holding his red rose and grinned. “Is this your doing?” Anna said with a smile and Lewis shook his head.

“I thought it was yours.”

“It's mine,” came a voice and they turned to see Maria in the doorway. “Well you two are hopeless,” she told them and lit the candles with her lighter. She sniggered at the accusatory and confused expressions and rubbed her hands. “You weren't going to get it on without my help, Josh and Adam are at his Nannas so you have peace and quiet. And I have prepared the perfect dish for you two.”

Lewis and Anna looked at each other and Maria passed Lewis the bottle of chilling champagne. “Off you go,” she muttered and slid effortlessly out of the room.

“She. She crazy Lewis. Just like you.”

Lewis giggled as he tore of the foil to the bottle and looked at his friend. “I am not crazy,” he told her and popped the champagne cork into his fist, pouring some to Anna and then some to himself. He held out his glass and clinked it with the smiling Anna’s.

Maria returned a few moments later with an asparagus starter, followed by a spicy salad – containing lettuce, chilli, ginger and avocado. Lewis smiled when she brought it out, even he knew that there were some aphrodisiacs in the meal but Anna thanked her profusely and they chatted warmly.

There was a sexual tension between them but Anna was a touch reticent, she had only chose to come to Britain as her best friend became her lesbian lover and they had split – it had left her isolated and alone. While Anna mixed with other mothers and au pairs at the “baby groups” she attended, Lewis was the only person she really called her friend.

There was good reason for this, he was interested in, liked spending time with her and was good fun, but most of all he was non-threatening and genteel. She wasn’t too sure if she wanted to change the dynamics of their relationship to something else when she already had it so good, but she did like him and she wanted to be wanted.

It was different for Lewis, for months he had lusted over the Russian beauty, she was perfection to him in every way and while she was out of his league, he still yearned to date her. She was sexy and playful, good fun and vivacious, and most of all she was mature. He hated the giggly, self-obsessed culture of the girls at his school, he wanted a woman, he wanted Anna.

Maria finished the meal with coffees, a chocolate and cherry dessert and a promise to leave them alone with the living room. Anna and Lewis both thanked her and Anna watched as the dirty plates disappeared. “Is this something we should help with?” Lewis asked and Anna shook her head.

“I’ll do it tomorrow,” she whispered and passed a spoonful of the chocolate into her mouth. “But this is delicious.” Lewis agreed, and after finishing their meal, Anna blew out the candles and they retired to the lounge. Maria had selected a film, *Lost In Translation*, and this lay on the table. Anna giggled at it and they resumed their usual pose on the couch, adjusting themselves with Anna lying on the lap of Lewis.

She wrapped his arm around her and as she fidgeted her dress rode up to display

the lacy underwear she had proudly shown him earlier in the year; Lewis's eyes were drawn towards them and Anna looked up to see him glancing at her legs. She smiled and briefly kissed him on the lips, she wanted to give him a massage later and see where things led, but she had been awake since six o' clock with demanding child and as the film moved on felt her eyes sag.

She was too tired to be romantic, and as much as she liked Lewis, he clearly didn't feel the same way about her, he wanted to be with her purely in a soulless business transaction and as much as she liked him, she didn't know if she wanted a relationship with him. She had her visa decision in a week and that was still playing on her mind; she needed Lewis as a friend more than she wanted him as a partner.

Instead, she felt her eyelids drag and closed them, savouring the warmth of her friend, and dozed off. Lewis waited, he watched the breathing girl and gently stroked her hair and then her smooth flanks. He wanted to peek at her knickers and kiss her, but looked down with a smile, he had not been as close to Anna before, and happily caressed her smooth cheeks before holding her tight.

When the film finished he slipped away from her and called out to Maria, she seemed almost disappointed to him to see him leave, but he explained that Anna was tired and that they had both very much enjoyed the evening.

“Good night,” she said as she peeked into the lounge, to see the sleeping au-pair flashing her underwear at the door. “She looks so pretty, don't you think?”

“Yes,” Lewis said, blushing in the half-light of the lounge. “Yes, she does.”

* * * * *

Joseph looked forlornly at the office, almost half of his staff had been “let go” and the business was skating on the edge. Although the co-signatory on the loan was himself, he had not signed it and had reported the problem with Paul to the Police.

In all, as far as Joseph was concerned, Paul had committed fraud, embezzlement, misappropriation of funds, tax evasion and theft, and after arguing with a number of Policemen had got an appointment with an appropriate officer.

The three Policemen heard Joseph's complaints, he had provided them with Paul's real ledger along with a list of everything that had happened without his consent, but as he had found out, with the exception of the loan he had taken out from the bank, Paul had the authority to move money out of the company. It was a civil matter between Paul and Joseph.

Joseph had also discovered months of VAT and tax payments, due shortly to the Inland Revenue, were missing and had to dramatically cut costs to give the company any chance of survival. His solicitor had warned him that Paul was still a co-owner of the company and there was little Joseph could do about that, except

try to buy him out, but that when and if Paul resurfaced to England, Joseph could happily hit him with a sizeable court claim.

Joseph though, just wanted to put the company back on an even keel, and if it hadn't been for Sarah who had eagerly taken to addressing their accounts while Joseph tried to work out a business model that would keep the company afloat, there would not have been a business to salvage.

Joseph was honest with his employees, explaining why such savage cuts were required and asking those who stayed to take a pay cut. A couple joined Matthew in leaving immediately, while a couple more left to get better job security but most were happy to stay where Joseph could keep them on.

Their company had a couple of good business-orientated products and Joseph knew that the sales of these would sustain them for awhile but there had to be improvements and new versions. They had recently undertaken a commission to write an “app” for a local college and had tasked all four of his developers to construct this. The sooner they could finish and collect that money, the better!

Sarah waited for everyone to leave and then kissed Joseph. “It’ll be OK, won’t it?”

Joseph bit his lip. “Well I think so. I don’t know. I’m hoping so. I mean, I’ve known Paul for years, ever since we were eighteen. I don’t know why he would or how he could do this to me. To us. We worked hard for this company and he’s just ruined everything.”

Sarah sighed and put her hands on his shoulders. “Do you need some relief?”

Joseph stared at the window and looked up at her with a smile. “It’s ... er .. it’s nice but I think I need to get home.”

Sarah bit her lip. “You feel so tight, so tense. I worry about you.”

Joseph sighed, and closed his eyes as Sarah massaged his muscles on his shoulder. “That’s nice.”

Sarah hummed and leant over to whisper in his ear. “Would it be nicer if you were on my bed, I was naked and I had my massage oil rubbing all over your back?”

Joseph groaned. “Oh ... oh ... oh yes,” he murmured.

Sarah smiled and passed him his phone. “Phone home and then, lets go.”

* * * * *

Matthew guessed what the banging was the moment he heard it and wearily got up. “Open up you bastard,” screamed the female voice from other side of the front door.

Matthew walked slowly down the narrow corridor and checked the eye-hole: Victoria was alone. "I said fucking open up," the banshee-like voice yelled and Matthew unlocked the door and stood facing his ex-girlfriend. She held up a piece of paper. "What the fuck is this?"

Matthew screwed up his face. "It is, what it says it is," he replied evasively.

Victoria sniffed. "First you write a letter begging me for money, then you get a court to write it and I have to tell them," she yelled nodding her head patronisingly at the man standing in the doorway. "I dun live here no more. And now you get them to set a hearing date. You want me to go to court to tell them. What the fuck are you playing at?"

Matthew suppressed a smile, and looked at the girl standing on the landing. "You owe fifty percent of the water rates, the rent and some of the council tax. You don't get away from that by running away. Now, I don't want to have this argument here," he said and Victoria folded his arms.

"I see. So this is because I won't let you in my knickers any more, you have to be spiteful. You can't take it."

Matthew laughed. "Oh, I don't want to get inside your knickers any more."

Victoria scowled. "Oh yeah. 'Cos you were with some fifteen year old scally." Matthew let the hurtful comment slide and squinted at her.

"You finished? Cos I'll see you in court. Let them deal with this."

Victoria sighed. "I ain't going to court."

"Then don't," Matthew said with an air of indifference. "I mean you will probably lose if you don't. But I don't care, you'll probably lose if you do."

Victoria puffed up her chest and brought herself up to her full height. "Yeah, fuck you. 'cos I was talking to a mate, and she says you ain't gonna win. And Tony said he'd beat you up."

Matthew laughed. "Your brother. Oh, that is funny. Now as I said, if you want to agree a settlement of, say, two grand, then that's fine. Otherwise, I don't want to see you until the court date."

Victoria frowned at Matthew and watched as he closed the door on her. He felt angry, but somehow calm inside and listened as the latch closed. Victoria hurled a volley of abuse at him, about his inadequacies and about Katherine. He half-wanted to call the Police (wondering whether the judge would appreciate Victoria being arrested for harassing a claimant) but decided against it. It was too much trouble and she left after five minutes.

Victoria had claimed he had mistreated her, failed to satisfy her in bed, failed to

provide for her and that he was a spiteful, small-minded, petty individual, and while he didn't like hearing any of it none of it particularly hurt; he was suing her and a certain bellicosity was to be expected. The words she said about Katherine did hurt, she was an innocent bystander in their argument and the mother of his child should not have been called such things, but this was not something he would admit and would have to rely on winning in court to exact revenge.

Suddenly, the urge to win got a lot, lot stronger.

* * * * *

"Four A's," Katherine announced as she walked into the house. "I got four A's."

There was a shriek and the shape of her mother came into view, running into the hallway to embrace her daughter. "Well done," she said, congratulating her. "That's wow. We said you could do, we said you were clever enough."

"And now it's wasted," Joseph added and Katherine groaned. "What? You think you are going to Uni with a baby?"

"Next year maybe, I don't know. But four A's is better than I had hoped for."

"Well you are a clever girl," Charlotte told her just as Lewis came past donning his summer jacket.

"Four A's," Katherine told him and Lewis extended his arms with a smile.

"Congratulations," he told her, hugging his sister and nodded towards his mother. "I am just meeting a friend in the park."

Charlotte went to ask "who" but Lewis had gone, and disappeared into the August sunshine and she made a fairly shrewd guess.

Anna smiled at Lewis as she ran up the small path to the park. "I got it," she said triumphantly. "I got my visa."

Lewis leapt down from the wall he will sitting on awaiting for Anna to meet him and held out his arms. Anna looked at him with pursed lips, curling into a smile and she flung her arms around him. "I stay now. I stay for four years."

Lewis hugged her tight. "Wow. That's good. You were worried weren't you?"

Anna nodded and disengaged from Lewis's hug. "They ask lots of questions and, er, it not easy. Woman she no want me to stay but I get visa."

"Shall we go celebrate?" Lewis suggested and Anna smirked. "We could go for a meal and then you could fall asleep on me." Anna bit her lip and looked back at Maria with Adam and Joshua.

"We could," she said with a grin and then held his hand. "Or we could go and watch a film at the cinema."

Lewis smiled at his friend, she had always been fond of films and nodded, looking at the parents moving towards the small playground.

They darted off to catch the Saturday bus into the town and selected a comedy to watch, Anna cuddled up to Lewis during the film and they shared some popcorn.

Not for the first time, Lewis felt loss when they came to part and desperately wanted to tell her that he still wanted to date her. He wanted to ask her that now that her visa had come through would they still be able to go out? Would he be able to kiss her, to cuddle her, to make her laugh and promise not to make her cry? But Lewis was a coward, and as much as Anna half-expected him to ask, Lewis didn't feel able to.

Anna sulked on her return, and went up to her bedroom to read. Maria came up and put her arm around the sullen au-pair who looked up. "He didn't ask?" Maria asked and Anna shook her head.

"No. But he friend, not boyfriend. I think I want that." Maria smiled at her and then shrugged.

"If you wanted that, you wouldn't be sulking," she told her and Anna wiped her nose.

"No, he no want me," Anna summarised and looked at the window as Maria hugged her tightly. "But he still friend, so not bad. I like that."

Maria couldn't help feeling if the words spoken were more to convince Anna than Maria.

Chapter XVIII

Matthew pulled the chair out for his young female companion who kissed him on the cheek. “Drink?”

“Diet Coke,” she replied and Matthew beckoned over a waiter and ordered a coffee and a Diet Coke along with two cookies. “I do have a figure to maintain. Especially now that I am single.” Matthew rolled his eyes at the wife in front of him but she looked at him stoutly. “I mean it.”

“Katie,” Matthew soothed and looked at his corybantic friend. “I have something for you.”

“Well I hope the thing you have is Gareth's bollocks,” she said fiercely.

Matthew opened his back and slid over a book to his friend. “How to live with someone who is kinky,” she read out a little too loudly and then put it on the table. “Why?”

“Because it will help. Well it may help.”

Katie frowned. “I am not having him back. Do you know what those girls were doing in that video? Oh it makes me sick to think about it. And the dogs. Ughh. What sort of sick bastard gets off on that?”

“Your husband does.” Matthew scowled for a moment and then shook his head. “He is bored, horny and kinky. And he is missing you dreadfully.”

“Well I am not missing him,” Katie said obstinately and was interrupted by the waiter returning with their drinks. “And if he is sorry then he needs to come and say it. Not you, but it doesn't change anything.”

Matthew took a sip of his drink. “He is sorry he got caught. But he thinks you don't understand him. He likes his porn, Katie. He always has done.”

“Yeah, I know that. I don't like it, but I can live with that. I can just about live with a bit of bondage, but shitting in other people's mouths. Seriously Matthew, is that normal?”

Matthew hummed. “OK. It's a little extreme.”

“Would you watch it?”

Matthew sighed. “No. But then I don't think he wanted you to watch it, did he?”

Katie took a slurp of her drink and then a bite of her cookie. “It's such a shock,” she admitted. “I mean I know he had a dark side an' all but recently he has gone into sick porn and barely had a job interview. He is self-destructing, I don't want to see it.”

“He has a job,” Matthew replied. “OK, it is only part-time but does have a job.” Katie spluttered and Matthew cocked his head to one side. “And he is missing you. He wants you back. He would beg for another chance, if he was here, and wasn't being so stubborn.”

Katie gave a tortured smile and bit her lip. “He can plead and beg all he wants, I ain't having him back.”

“OK, now I am pleading with you. Please, take him back.” Katie chortled at the desperate pleas.

“Is he getting on your nerves then?”

“Totally,” Matthew replied with complete candour. “He is my friend and all that, but he is driving me up the wall.”

“So why should I have him back then?”

Matthew pursed his lips and looked at her. “Because your vows said for better and for worse. Talk to him, he is your husband after all.” Katie swore at him and buried herself behind her drink. “And for all your bluster, you are missing him as well, aren't you?”

Katie sighed and looked away. “Yeah, maybe. But things would have to be different. I don't want to tie up my husband and whip him until his butt bleeds. He has to understand that. And I definitely ain't doing what's on the videos and ...”

“I know,” Matthew said calmly. “But talk to him, try and find some common ground, agree on some ground rules.”

Katie looked out of the window, tapping her spoon on her cup and then pointed it at her luncheon companion. “I'll talk to him, try and compromise, but if he starts getting the silly stuff again, it's straight back to your spare room.”

Matthew bit his lip. “Bloody isn't. He can go sleep at the B&B if he gets chucked out again.”

Katie snarled at him. “I haven't said I will have him back yet, I just said I'll talk to him.” Matthew bit his lip, he knew if they talked they would make up, he was sure of that.

* * * * *

Katherine groaned. “It's not easy,” her mother said as Katherine hesitated. “It's expensive and you know about your father's business. We can't keep paying for everything.”

Katherine wiped her eyes. “Well they said I should have had it by now but I haven't. I'll pay you back when I get my benefits.” Katherine pleaded, her tax credits and child benefit payments had been delayed due to “technical difficulties”

which had meant she was begging her parents for short-term loans to pay for nappies and clothing for little Evie although Matthew had brought around some items earlier in the week; she was lucky to have him as a friend.

“You getting pregnant has really caused a problem,” Charlotte told her as she walked back into the lounge. “You need to take responsibility for it all.”

“I am trying,” Katherine pleaded and adjusted her top. “I mean, I am on the list for a flat and I do want to be independent but it is so hard when they are not paying me what I am due.”

Charlotte sat down in the seat next to Lewis and Anna, who were playing cards and looked over at her daughter. “We are really disappointed with you.”

Katherine seethed, why was her mother being so cold with her? It wasn't her fault that the benefits people were messing her about, and she had tried to get an evening job at a local bar, but her mother said she couldn't look after Evie every night, she had a life too.

“I am trying,” Katherine said firmly. “I tried to get a job at the pub but couldn't find anyone to look after Evie, and I have been in every day to complain about the money not being paid. Charlotte huffed and Katherine took a deep breath. “Well at least I didn't run off to Scotland to get married just for money,” she said angrily. “Perhaps I should do that, try and find a non-EU bloke and shack up with him for some cash? Or prostitute myself to the highest bidder? Or—”

Lewis looked up from the card game. “I didn't,” he replied, putting a six of clubs onto the table. “We didn't get married.”

“You tried to,” Katherine replied, her eyes flashing. “It's only because they wouldn't marry you. You only wanted to marry Anna because she would give you some money, you pimped yourself out.”

“No,” Lewis replied.

“Yes,” Katherine snapped. “Yes it is.”

“No,” he said firmly. “I like Anna. I mean, I really like Anna.” Katherine shrugged but Lewis looked at his friend. “I should have said this before, but I didn't just want to marry you for the money, I mean it was a good cover and all that but I just couldn't face you going back to Russia, I liked you too much and it seemed like a good way to get you to stay. And if you stayed we could go out.”

Charlotte looked at Anna and then at her son but Anna was the first to speak. “You marry me so I stay?”

Lewis nodded. “I didn't care about the money, but it was the only way you would agree.” Anna bit her lip and wiped her nose with her hand.

“But you would have taken the money, right? And you wouldn't have been together though, would you?” Katherine told him and Lewis sighed.

“Yeah I know. I suppose I didn't think about that bit. I just thought it would mean Anna could stay. And if Anna stayed then we would hang out and stuff. And maybe we'd go out.”

Anna raised her eyebrows at him and then looked at Charlotte. “Well I feel a bit better about that,” Charlotte puffed quietly. “But it was still a stupid thing to try and do.”

“Yeah I know. But Anna was desperate and so was I really. She wanted to stay and I wanted her to.”

“But you no ask me,” Anna told him. “You no ask-ey me out.” Lewis bit his lip guiltily.

“Yeah, I know. I'm just working up the courage.” Anna laughed and looked at Katherine sitting in the corner of the room with Evie who just shrugged.

“It's a male thing. They are weak.” Katherine turned back to her mother and looked at her with pleading eyes. “Please, it's ten pounds, it's just for a few nappies and an extra blanket, she was cold last night.”

Charlotte grunted and scowled, pulling out her purse and giving her the note. “We will be talking later, Miss.”

* * * * *

Katie knocked on the door to the flat, and Gareth shouted out a complaint and then sauntered to the door half-naked. “Oh shit,” he cried as Katie looked in disgust at her husband.

“Oh shit indeed. God dammit Gareth, who do you think you could open the door to, who would want to see your cock waving at them?”

Gareth spluttered. “I thought yo were Matty, forgot his keys. He's gone to get some tinnies.”

Katie sighed and looked at him. “And he would want to see it? I don't think so.” She softened her facial expression and looked at him. “Can I come in?”

“Sure,” Gareth muttered and opened the door wide, letting his wife come in and then closing it. “Matthew is only going to be a few minutes.”

“It's you I've come to see,” Katie told him, causing Gareth's heart to start beating furiously. Was Katie here to ask for a divorce? Was she going to be friendly or nasty? He sighed, and pulled the dressing gown tight to give himself a modicum of decency and followed her into the lounge. Katie bit her lip. “I spoke to Matty earlier in the week,” she admitted and sat down on the couch. She gestured for

Gareth to do the same and took a deep breath. “He says you are missing me. Well, are you?”

Gareth looked at the floor and then at Katie, who was staring at him expectantly. “Have you missed me?”

“I asked first,” Katie replied, evading the question.

“OK, yeah,” Gareth admitted and then shrugged. “But I know you are proper pissed with me.”

Katie took a deep breath and sighed. “Yes I am. But Matthew made me realise that I am missing you too. In a weird way.”

“So I can come back then?” Gareth asked, excitement in his voice and Katie hummed, hesitating.

“Maybe,” she replied, a little cryptically. “I know porn is your thing. And I know you have urges I don't satisfy,” she said, her own voice cracking. “So I want to come to an arrangement with you.” Gareth bit his lip and sniffed, watching his wife's body language. “Any porn you have, that is legal, you can keep, but it stays in a particular locked cupboard and it doesn't come out when I am around.”

Gareth sighed. “Sure, that was what I tried to do anyway.”

“And, we will try some of the stuff. I know you want me to whip and beat you, and it feels wrong, but I will try it.”

Gareth's mouth felt dry and he tried to swallow. “Wow.”

Katie clenched her hands. “On the understanding that no matter what it does for you, if I don't like it, if I don't feel comfortable, then we don't do it again.”

“Sure,” Gareth replied with a dismissive grunt and Katie smiled, moving forward into her husband's arms.

It took Gareth and Matthew half an hour to find all of Gareth's belongings that had been scattered around Matthew's flat and then a further five minutes to load all of them into Katie's car. While Gareth was doing a final sweep of the flat Matthew went down to speak to Katie, who was in her car. “Thank you,” he said to her and she shrugged.

“You were right,” Katie replied instantly. “I did miss the incompetent oaf. He might be a useless twat but he is my useless twat.”

Matthew laughed and went to respond when he saw Charlotte emerge. “Hiya Matt. I need a quick word. I need a small favour.”

“Umm. OK. I'll be five minutes. D'ya want to go up to the flat, Gareth is there,” he told her. What was Charlotte doing at his flat, and Katie looked at the

expression on his face.

“You OK?”

Matthew snapped out of his daze. “Fine,” he lied and rubbed the bridge of his nose. “Are you going to be OK?”

Katie nodded. “Yeah, I mean it's all new but we can try. I mean how do you punish someone who likes to be spanked?”

Matthew laughed at her and peered at the closing door of his block of apartments. What did Charlotte want? Did she know about him and Katherine, but then she said she wanted a small favour?

Charlotte wandered up to the flat and knocked on the door. Gareth answered it with a “yes I'm coming” and then recoiled when he saw Charlotte.

“Oh sorry, Matt's downstairs.”

“I know. He told me to wait for him.”

“Oh,” Gareth hesitated, should he leave this woman in the flat?

Charlotte saw the dilemma Gareth was having and smiled at him. “It's OK. I'm Charlotte, Katherine's mother. She said she had been around a couple of days ago.”

“Oh Katherine, the girl he knocked up.”

There was a silence as Gareth smacked his hand to his mouth and Charlotte looked at him. “What?”

“Ahhh,” Gareth said and looked at the woman, her expression changing. “I shouldn't have said that. I don't think I was supposed to know.”

Charlotte turned to go downstairs when she came face to face with Matthew, and instantly slapped him. “You screwed Katherine? You bastard.”

“Ow,” Matthew called out and Gareth shouted an apology from behind the angry mother. “Can we talk about this inside?” Matthew asked softly. “I can explain.”

Charlotte's eyes fizzed. “You fucking bastard Matthew. We trusted you, let you into our home. And all the time you raped Katherine.”

“I didn't,” Matthew responded, glaring at Gareth. “We were both pissed. I didn't rape anyone.”

“But you knew,” Charlotte hissed and Matthew sighed.

“Yeah, I knew. But I gave her money to help, you know that. I've tried to help.”

Charlotte stopped and considered this before turning and fleeing down the stairs. “I gotta tell Kat,” she murmured

“Sorry,” Gareth said biting his lip. “But I think you fucked mate,” Gareth said unhelpfully.

Chapter XIX

Matthew ran after Charlotte but she had a few seconds head-start and reached her car on the corner of the road before Matthew could get to her. She skidded off down the street just as Katie emerged from her car. “What happened?”

“He,” Matthew said, pointing at Gareth behind him. “Has just told that woman I am responsible for her eighteen year old daughter's pregnancy.”

“What?” Katie asked and then sighed.

“But I am, I just haven't told her, so she has just had a shock.”

“Matthew? What's going on? Are you in trouble?”

Matthew sighed and watched at the empty street. “Yeah,” he replied idly. “I just need to go and see Katherine. Gareth'll tell you all about it, he's told every fucker else.”

Katie took a deep breath and looked behind her at Gareth dawdling by the doorway. “Good luck,” she said and watched as her friend set off across the park and towards the house where Katherine lived.

“He's in such shit,” Gareth muttered and Katie glared at him.

“You and your fucking big mouth,” she roared in return. “Fucking learn to button it.”

Matthew sprinted across the barren park and across the plush housing estate where Joseph lived and stopped at the bottom of the road catching his breath. He could see Charlotte's car in the driveway and knew that she would, at that point in time, be telling all to Katherine but he needed to talk to them.

Matthew was scared, he hadn't raped Katherine, at least not in the traditional sense, and he did still want to be able to see the baby as it grew up. Would Katherine call the Police the moment he arrived? Or would Joseph try and kill him? What would Charlotte do?

Matthew had known the Wilsons for years, and they knew him, would that count for anything? He felt his hands twitching, he could get nothing done standing at the bottom of the road, and with as much trepidation as he could muster, he started the walk up the slow hill.

Matthew could feel his heart beating furiously, his hands going clammy, butterflies dancing in his stomach. What was happening to him? He stood on the doorway, hearing raised voices inside the house and took a deep breath. He couldn't hear what they were saying and with as much calmness as he could manage he rang the doorbell.

“You,” Charlotte screeched as she opened the door. Joseph came running into the hallway and saw Matthew looking into the room.

“You have some nerve coming here,” he yelled. “I’m gonna kill you.”

“Wait,” Matthew said, his insides lurching. “Can I explain first?”

“Explain what?” A small voice said from behind him and Matthew jumped. Katherine stood there, the pram in front of her and a pack of nappies hanging from the handle. She looked at him with her blue eyes and long brown hair intently.

Her mother was the first to speak. “He is Evie’s father,” she blurted out coldly. “He is the rapist.”

Matthew looked at Katherine’s eyes widen at this news and she wiped a tear from her eye, cocking her head slightly and then wiping her mouth. “I didn’t,” Matthew implored and Katherine sniffed. “I didn’t rape you. But I am Evie’s father.”

“You,” she said slowly. “You got me pregnant?”

Matthew shivered on the doorstep, aware of the cold weather for the first time and squinted at the girl. “Ummm ... yeah. Can we talk inside please?”

“I don’t want him in my house,” Joseph said firmly. “I want the Police here.”

“And the CSA,” Charlotte added. “He needs to pay.” Joseph turned to look at his wife who was still scowling at the man in the doorway.

Matthew looked at Joseph and then at Katherine. “Let me explain, talk to you, please. If not here, at the coffee shop. It’s something I should have done before, I know, but please talk to me.”

“I don’t want you anywhere near that man,” Joseph said firmly and Charlotte opened the door for Katherine and then Matthew.

“You got five minutes,” Charlotte warned.

Katherine was shocked and, checking that baby Evie was asleep in the pram, left her in the hallway as she walked into the room. Matthew sat opposite her on a chair, Joseph glaring at him and standing behind him, leaning against the wall.

Matthew glanced at him, the tall man watching his ex-employee as Matthew took a couple of deep breaths.

“Look. OK. I know this looks bad. It is bad, but I did not rape Katherine. You might not remember that night, but I do,” he said with a cool voice. He licked his lips, put his shaking hands together and then looked straight at Katherine who was been supported by her mother. “We got drunk, you got completely drunk and you nearly collapsed in the bar. Said I will take you home but your jacket was in your

Dad's car and he wasn't around, the car was locked so I gave you my suit jacket. On the way is my flat and I stopped off to get myself a jumper; I was cold.” Katherine sighed and nodded as Matthew spoke, her eyes firmly fixed on the fireplace in the corner of the room. “While I was there you made a few comments and came onto me. We kissed and we had sex.”

“She was drunk and you took advantage,” Joseph thundered, raising his hands and Matthew nodded.

“I know. I was drunk too, but it is unforgivable. I've spent months trying to work out why I did it.” Katherine sniffed and Matthew looked back at her. “I s'pose I went with it because I do like Kat and it didn't seem real, it was dream-like.”

“That makes no sense,” Charlotte said tersely and Matthew unclasped his hands, only to find them still shaking and clench them tight again.

“I know but after that I took Kat home and she said goodbye at the end of her drive, she met a College friend or something.”

“Callum,” Katherine whispered and Matthew sniffed.

“Yeah, him. I felt really guilty, was sure that you knew but you just didn't. And so I thought that would be that, but then you say you are pregnant and I start to wonder, and then it is because you got pregnant at the Christmas Party and I knew I was the father.”

“So why didn't you say anything?” Charlotte asked.

Matthew felt his insides lurch, and he stared at the skirting board. “I was scared. You said it was rape, and Katherine did consent. Although when I think about it I don't think either of us could properly consent to sex really. So I thought about it, and decided I would have to support Kat, financially and emotionally, which I have tried to do.”

“What about being a part of Evie's life?” Katherine asked, her eyes watery. “Didn't you want that?”

“Of course, but I couldn't see how I could get it. If you knew I was the father then I would be banned from seeing her.”

Joseph snorted. “So where is all this support then?”

Matthew rubbed his face. “Well I gave her some money when she was pregnant for things, that should have bought a fair bit, plus contributed towards her trust account anonymously.”

Katherine smiled. “Two hundred pounds was nice, but it doesn't go that far,” she told him. “But yeah, I did wonder why at the time.”

Matthew frowned. “It was two hundred. It was a thousand.”

Charlotte looked Matthew panicking. “It was two hundred,” Katherine replied and Matthew picked his wallet out of his pocket.

“I never throw receipts away. The money came from the money Paul had left us, I paid in three hundred, not one thousand and three hundred, see.”

Matthew passed a paying-in receipt to Katherine who looked confused and then looked at her mother.

“OK, so I borrowed a bit,” Charlotte admitted and Katherine gasped.

“What? Why?”

Charlotte sniffed and put her hand over her mouth and shook her head. “I’ll put it back.”

Katherine scowled and turned in her seat. “Why? Was it the business?”

Charlotte licked her lips. “It was ummm ... it was some money I owed.”

“What do you mean?” Joseph asked immediately and Charlotte took a big breath.

“I ummm, I had borrow some money from someone and they needed paying back.”

Joseph scowled. “I don’t understand. What do you mean, you borrowed money?”

“Well things were tight,” she said evasively and then begged her husband to “drop it.”

“No,” Katherine snapped indignantly. “Evie’s father gave me a grand to sort me out with baby stuff and most it got nicked. By my mother, I want a proper explanation.”

Matthew bit his lip and Charlotte sucked in air and then burst into tears. “I didn’t want to,” she sobbed. “But I had no choice. He made me.”

“Who made you?”

“Ethan.”

“Who the fuck is Ethan?” Katherine asked and looked at her father.

“He was the guy who lent me the money,” Charlotte admitted. “I did a bit of gambling.”

Joseph scowled. “How much?”

“I lost several grand,” Charlotte admitted. “From our savings. So I had to borrow some to try and get it back, but ...”

“You are joking? For God’s sake Charlotte,” Joseph bellowed. Charlotte tearfully shook her head.

“No, I'm sorry. I've been so stupid,” she cried and buried her head in her hand. “I had to use the last eight hundred pounds to pay him back or he said he would hurt Kat.”

Katherine shook her head slowly and looked at her father and then back at her mother. “So you stole that money from Evie.”

Charlotte sniffed. “I was going to put it back.”

“When?”

“Your father's business going belly-up made it hard. But I will do it.”

Katherine wiped her eyes, she had really struggled financially getting everything ready for the baby and her father had made it abundantly clear that the family's limited cash flow was being incredibly stretched when she came and begged for help. Instead, money had been provided for her, by Matthew for everything she needed, and it had been taken by her own mother. “I can't believe you stole it. You and Dad lectured me when I came down and begged for help to buy the Moses basket as my child benefit hadn't been paid, that what a burden I was being. You made me feel guilty, when all along, you had my money. Matthew's money he had entrusted to you to give to me.”

Charlotte bit her lip and went to put her arm around Katherine who pushed it away. “I'm sorry. I was desperate,” Charlotte sobbed. “I thought he was going to hurt you. He had already hurt me and I just didn't you to suffer.”

Katherine sniffed, and briefly looked at her mother when she said she had been hurt, but didn't press it any further; she didn't know if she would have believed what she said anyway.

Katherine glanced at Matthew and nodded. “Well thank you for your money but ummm”

“But you wanted help with Evie?”

Katherine nodded and then sniffed. “But that is quite hard when you didn't want to tell me.”

“No,” Matthew admitted. “And I am sorry. Really I am. I wish I could turn the clock back and not take advantage. Or be honest, or do a hundred things differently.”

Katherine looked at the carpet and sighed, biting her lip.

“But I do, I really do want to be part of Evie's life.”

“Not a fucking chance,” Joseph said from behind him. “Not a fucking chance.”

“What?” Katherine asked annoyed at her father dictating to Matthew, surely it

was up to her?

“Oh all this pleading for forgiveness.” Joseph hauled the guy to his feet. “You still messed around with Katherine and you kept secrets.”

Matthew looked at Joseph in the eyes. “Yeah, but I am not the only person with secrets though, am I? Please, let me see my daughter.”

Joseph scowled, what did Matthew mean? He raised his fists to Matthew's face and Katherine screeched at him. “He kept a secret, he screwed Katherine behind our back.”

Matthew felt his stomach lurch and Joseph drove his fist into Matthew's torso. Matthew collapsed, winded, the pain unbearable as he gasped for air. Katherine left her seat and went running over to him. “Dad,” she yelled. “He doesn't deserve that.”

Matthew struggled to his feet, and looked up, expecting another fist from Joseph who glared at him. “You are a nasty, evil, horrible excuse for a man,” Joseph thundered. “I am going to see that you never see your daughter as long as you live. You have betrayed me, betrayed all of us. Now get out.”

Matthew hands shook. “I am not the only one, you betrayed your wife when you cheated on her. With Sarah.”

Charlotte gasped and Joseph's eyes flashed dangerously. “You lie, you fucking lie,” he yelled and went to hit Matthew again.

“I saw you. When the company went tits-up. I went back into the office and you are her were on your desk.”

Joseph stared at Matthew. “You saw us?”

“I took a picture,” Matthew threatened him.

“You bastard, Matthew.”

Charlotte screeched and advanced, smacking a slap across the face of her husband. “You had sex with Sarah,” she yelled. “I knew it. Is that where you were at the party? And why you keep going off on trips to hotels?”

Joseph stammered. “He is making it up,” he cried and pushed Matthew. “Get out. Get out of my house, you filthy, nasty liar.” There was a pause, a brief moment where Katherine looked forlornly at him, their eyes meeting. Matthew went to speak but Joseph pushed him towards the door and then out of his front door, Matthew protesting vehemently.

“You horrible little shit,” Joseph yelled after him and Matthew snorted.

“So screwing Sarah when you had a wife. What did you promise her? I've come

here and been honest, Joseph. I've come and asked for forgiveness and asked to be allowed to make amends. You won't even do that.”

Joseph went to shut the door, and then saw the furious man waving his arms in his driveway. “You've ruined Kat's life, you've tried to ruin my marriage. I'm gonna teach you a lesson,” he threatened and took off his jumper, walking out to the front of the house.

Matthew had retreated slightly and Joseph charged at him, trying to grab hold of the sprightly younger man, gripping hold of his shirt and tearing it. Matthew pushed him away and swore at him. Joseph bounced against his car and grabbed hold of Matthew by the shirt and threw him backwards into the road.

There was the sound of a car horn, a skidding and things went very black for Matthew.

Chapter XX

“And this is Daddy,” the female voice cooed, showing the little baby a man on a hospital bed. Matthew opened his eyes groggily and squinted, his hand massaging his head.

“Katherine?”

The girl bit her lip. “Yeah, and ummm, Evie,” she replied softly.

Matthew blinked and went to sit up, but had a searing pain down his back so lay back down again. “What happened?”

Katherine sighed. “You and Dad were fighting, and you smacked your head against a passing car, got knocked out.”

Matthew's hand felt a large bump at the back of his head and focused on Katherine. “It hurts.”

Katherine sighed. “It will do. You were knocked out.” Matthew grunted and groaned.

“How long have you been there for?”

“Four hours,” Katherine admitted. “I had to tell them I was your girlfriend.” Matthew smiled and Katherine squeezed Matthew's hand. “I ... ummm ... I just want to say that you can have as much access to Evie as you want, and I do want you to get involved in her life.”

Matthew smiled at her and licked his lips before yawning. “I, I, um, I want that.”

Katherine gave a grin. “It kicked off after the ambulance left. Mum spoke to Sarah who confessed all, and Dad shouted at Mum about warts. It's all got messy so I came here.”

“I'm sorry,” Matthew said sincerely. “It wasn't meant to happen like that.”

“I know,” Katherine said softly. “But I've had four hours to think and if I had to choose a guy out of Callum, an Australian backpacker and yourself to get me pregnant, I would have picked you.”

Matthew gave a titter and even Katherine grinned, squeezing his hand. Matthew looked at Evie asleep in Katherine's arms and felt his bottom lip wobble. “She's lovely,” he told her.

Katherine looked down. “Yes she is. But I bet she doesn't know how much trouble she's caused.”

“No. And I will help you look after Evie. And I'll give it straight to you not your

Mum.”

Katherine smiled. “Thank you.” Katherine turned her head at the sound of raised voices outside of Matthew's room, and Matthew groaned, he recognised that sound.

“You,” barked the voice of his Aunt Lynn as she barged into the room and looked straight at her nephew. “Brawling in the street with another man, it's shameful.” There was a muted expression of concern from his mother who appeared in the doorway and glanced at her sister striding into the small room and then of surprise when the older woman caught sight of Katherine sat by his bed. “Who's this?”

“This is Katherine,” Matthew said instinctively. “A friend.”

“She's a bit young for you, must only be fifteen.” Matthew looked apologetically at Katherine but before he could respond his Aunt had pulled the top of the bed and raised the head section of the mattress so Matthew was half sat up.

“Ow,” he cried as she unexpectedly pulled him up and he scowled at her. “Careful, it hurts.”

“Well it's your own bloody fault,” she barked. “And you won't get better slouching in bed.”

“How are you feeling, love?” His mother asked, speaking for the first time and Matthew wiped his eyes.

“OK, I think. Tired. Everything aches.” Suzanne smiled as her son spoke and they both ignored a huff from Lynn who had seated herself next to Katherine.

“Is that your baby?” Lynn asked the teenager who nodded and gazed into the peaceful eyes of sleeping Evie.

“Ahh yes,” Matthew said with a start. “This is Evie, your grand-daughter Mum and my daughter.” There was a silence in the room as everyone turned to face Matthew and then the baby.

“What? You got a fifteen year old pregnant?” Lynn barked. “And you aren't even married.”

“We aren't even dating,” Matthew replied and wiped his eyes again. “And Katherine is not fifteen, she is nineteen in a few weeks.” Matthew looked at his Aunt staring at the girl in shock. “Well you wanted me to settle down and have kids,” he told her and Katherine fidgeted, she felt uncomfortable and uneasy. Why did Matthew have to break the news to his family so tactlessly? They were staring at her, and she felt like a freak show.

Lynn hit the patient on the bed and looked at him angrily. “You get a girl pregnant on a one night stand? How could you be so stupid?”

Katherine wanted to leave as Matthew's family looked accusingly at her and Evie, and she gently squeezed the leg of her baby causing her to squeal. "I better go," she said and got up, putting the crying baby in the buggy and getting her coat.

"Can I come and see you?" Matthew asked and Katherine's smile returned.

"Sure, I'll come and see you later," she promised and waved goodbye to Suzanne and Lynn, trundling through the door with her settling baby. Lynn turned to face him and he felt his heart sink, he wanted to be anywhere else but in the disappointed glare of his aunt and his mother.

* * * * *

Lewis sat down to watch the film and Anna scooted up to him putting her head on his lap and looking up and then at the television. As usual Lewis stroked her hair although Maria, the lady of the house, came in half way through.

"I hear you tried to marry Anna," Maria said with a smile. Lewis went red and shrugged.

"She would have had a British passport," Lewis said defending himself with a coy smile. "It's simpler than going and get a visa."

Maria laughed and then looked at her husband. "Someone who is almost as corrupt as you!"

The man spluttered into his whisky and then looked at Lewis. "I'm an accountant, I am not corrupt."

"He. He tax avoidance specialist," Maria corrected and looked at Anna still nuzzled up against the seventeen year old boy.

"You say visa not only reason for marriage," Anna muttered in her Russian accent, peering up at him.

Lewis blushed and shifted in his seat. "Yeah well, I didn't want you to go back to Russia," he said with a smile and Anna giggled. "I sort of like having you around."

They turned their attention back to the film and Maria poured a couple of glasses of wine, and passed them to the couple on the sofa who eagerly took them and thanked her.

Lewis liked being with Anna, he had spent more time with her since his parents had split, and what with the acrimony in the house and constant rows between them. Katherine had been preoccupied and confused since she had found out about Matthew; Anna had been the only happy person he could spend time with.

Anna yawned as the film finished and buried her head into Lewis's chest.

“I go to bed,” Anna announced with another yawn.

“So, are you staying the night?” Maria asked and Anna squeezed Lewis.

“Yes, yes he is,” she replied with a firm voice and looked into the lustful eyes of her friend, reaching up and kissing him on the cheek.

“But I thought ...” Lewis started and Anna grinned.

“Yeah, but I have visa now. I stay so we date, da?”

Lewis smiled. “Da.”

* * * * *

Katie took Gareth's wrists and fastened them to the top of the bed before taking his trousers off and similar restrained his ankles. They had talked and come to an agreement.

Katie would, once a week act out his fantasies to a pre-agreed limit and in return Gareth would try and help keep the house tidy. Furthermore, if he lost his job there would be no further kinkiness until he was gainfully employed and the pornography would be kept locked away in a cupboard in the spare bedroom.

This was a far better compromise than Gareth had hoped for and grunted as Katie pulled a blindfold down over his eyes. He felt her cool breath all over him, it felt sensual and wonderful.

Katie surveyed the sight in front of her, naked overweight man lying face down and tied to the bed. It felt like a dodgy cliché of bondage as she tugged her corset away from her skin around her middle. She picked up the first implement that Gareth had suggested, a cane and circled the bed.

“You've been a very naughty boy, haven't you?”

“Yes,” Gareth muttered and Katie flicked the cane across his rump. Gareth grunted and sighed at the same time, pain flashed through his skin as the cane left a red mark across his posterior and he clenched his fists.

“Yes what?”

“Yes Mistress?” Gareth suggested, awaiting the dreaded cane again but Katie smiled. She had “researched” the acts Gareth had suggested on the Internet at pornography video sites and while she had a very clichéd view, she guessed Gareth would enjoy it.

Gareth was very much enjoying himself and awaited for Katie to continue. “What have you been up to? Have you been wanking to nasty porn?”

“Yes mistress.” Katie smiled and brought the cane down hard again, and heard the distressed voice of her husband crying out. She wondered if she could make a gag

and but decided against it and brought the weapon down for a third time, and a fourth.

Katie punished Gareth repeatedly over the following hour – for his pornography obsession, his lack of domestic abilities, his laziness, his weight and his drinking habits. Each time, she would bring the rigid cane down on his bottom, allow him to call out in pain and savour the red mark left behind.

For Katie it was a little therapeutic, she had longed to discipline her husband and bring him into line before, but the act of doing it in the bedroom was something she had never considered. Instead, her husband lay there, a quivering wreck as she had free rein to discipline him and exact promises as to his behaviour over the following week.

Tired of the cane, Katie slipped a small butt plug out of the drawer and covered it in lubricant before holding it to the cheeks of her new “slave.”

“Please mistress,” Gareth begged the moment he realised what was happening. “Please not back there.”

“But I must, pathetic weakling,” Katie roared with a smile. “You see you love to stick your weak cock back there for me, I must share with you what it feels like.” Gareth sniffed and closed his eyes behind the blindfold as the abused rear felt a rubber point press against his ring.

“No, please mistress. Anything but that.”

Katie giggled. “Then utter the safe word,” she taunted him and not hearing the name “Stonehenge” come out of Gareth's mouth, pushed the rubber tip further into the rear of her husband who squealed and gave a satisfied moan.

Katie gently pushed and pulled the small plug in and out of her husbands rear, grinning as she did before burying it up to the hilt and slapping his cheeks as hard as she could.

Katie turned her husband over, leaving the butt-plug in his ass and then retied him, noting his burgeoning erection: she had started playing with him as a “top” very apprehensively but could see the effect that she was having on him, and with the wonderful reactions he was having was starting to appreciate the appeal of being a dominant.

Gareth trusted her implicitly, not to really hurt him or subject him to anything was beyond his limits. He willingly submitted himself to her, allowing her to lovingly assume a role controlling him. She bit her lip and swung her hips over the bed, she suddenly felt the urge to have his manhood inside her.

It took Katie a further hour to be “finished” with Gareth, eagerly riding him to an orgasm, and then “forcing” her husband to eat her semen-covered slit to another

climax, before allowing his tongue to run along her slit to her back passage.

For Katie to orgasm during their sexual games was unusual, she normally found it impossible to climax, but in controlling their sex suddenly had the urge to, and found it possible to orgasm twice; she could quite enjoy this!

Gareth could certainly have Dominatrix Katie again, but just not every time, once a week was perfect, for both of them.

* * * * *

“Mr Styles and Miss Grainger please,” came the voice over the tannoy and Matthew entered Courtroom number four. It was not how he imagined, there was no wooden panelling or exquisite décor, just a balding man in front of a desk, and a few rows of benches.

Victoria scowled as he entered the room and he sat down at the microphone as the judge directed them. Victoria looked around, her friend sat on the bench next to her and Matthew rubbed his hands with his file.

The judge, a Mr Stephen Hawkins, introduced himself and then told the claimant and respondent that the proceedings were being recorded and that they could apply for a transcript before summarising the case as he saw it from the initial submissions.

“The case, is that Mr Styles and Miss Grainger entered into a joint tenancy for a flat, for six hundred and twenty pounds a month, and that two months into the tenancy, Miss Grainger moved out. Correct?”

Matthew and Victoria nodded and the judge continued.

“So Mr Styles is claiming three thousand one hundred pounds, plus some money for the water rates and council tax, is this right?”

“Yes,” Matthew summarised, his heart beating quickly. He had spent five hundred pounds just to take the case to court and the judge asked him to justify the additional money.

“Well, the single persons council tax discount is 25% but we would have split it 50-50 if we both lived there, so for the ten months, I want the 25% extra I have had to pay,” he replied and the judge nodded and glanced at the water rates claim. Matthew justified this with the assertion that as there was no water meter in the flat, he had to pay the same amount regardless of how many people lived there, and as such, this should be paid in part by the respondent.

The judge asked to see the tenancy agreement which Matthew took from the file and passed over to him. Victoria twitched nervously, there was no way she could afford to give her ex-boyfriend nearly four thousand pounds, especially as she had just paid for her annual skiing trip with her friends.

The judge turned to her and she wiped her nose. She tried to tell him that she didn't owe Matthew any money as she had left due to his unreasonable behaviour and that it had been "going on for months," at which point the judge enquired as to why she had agreed to move in with him two months prior to them splitting up.

Victoria hummed, and suggested. "Well as I didn't live there, I can't be responsible for it. I moved out."

The judge glanced at her friend who patted her on the arm and nodded, before adding. "He was a proper cock to her, she dain't owe him feck all." The judge barked angrily and threw her out of his courtroom before glancing at the papers and then the two people in front of him.

"While I appreciate that his is a difficult situation, I would like to ask Mr Styles why he did not move out if the property was an excessive financial burden as he suggested in the statement?"

Matthew bit his lip and clenched his fists to stop his hands from shaking. "I tried. I asked the landlord if we could terminate the tenancy but he refused. He said that the rent was still owing, we were both jointly liable, so I had to pay." Matthew hesitated and took a deep breath. "There was no cancellation clause in the tenancy agreement."

"Yeah, but he is still living there," Victoria shouted and the judge warned her as to her conduct, before looking back at Matthew.

"I've had a promotion and a pay rise," he said, not elaborating on the change of employment. "So it is affordable for me now. And I also have someone living with me. But I had to use my savings when Miss Grainger left."

The judge cleared his throat. "Well it is a difficult situation but it is clear that Miss Grainger had responsibilities to pay half and there was no agreement between you two what would happen if one of you did want to leave, and so I would uphold Mr Styles's claim against Miss Grainger."

Victoria swore and threw her arms down. "You bastard," she hissed. "I have to pay for a flat, I ain't lived in?" She was given a final warning and Matthew listened to the summing up of the judge. He asked for interest to be added (it was), twenty hours preparation time at a statutory £9.25/hour (he got ten hours) and the hearing and court costs, which amounted to a final bill of over four thousand pounds.

Victoria was visibly shocked and left the courtroom almost trance-like as the full implications of the County Court Judgement against her hit her, she had been sued, successfully sued, for thousands of pounds she did not have.

"You lost?" Her friend asked as Victoria burst into tears in the lobby. She put her arms around her and cuddled the distraught ex-girlfriend before turning to face

Matthew emerging from the courtroom. “What the fuck did you do that for?”

Matthew shrugged. “Because she owes me,” he said firmly, although he knew there was a macabre, vengeful enjoyment he got from the court victory that went beyond a normal financial recompense. “And it felt good.”

“I can't afford all that,” Victoria wailed and Matthew bit his lip.

“I know. And if I am not paid, I will instruct bailiffs,” he said with a malevolent smile. “To remove, I don't know, designer handbags, and jewellery and stuff like that.” Victoria wailed and her friend stared at him open mouthed. “I'll be in touch,” Matthew said with a grin.

* * * * *

“I want a divorce,” Charlotte shouted over the angry voice of her husband. They had spent the last two weeks fighting and arguing, she had had enough. She blamed him for his infidelity, but had erroneously admitted that her unwanted liaison with Ethan had led to her having an STD afterwards that required treatment and that she had passed onto Joseph.

The rowing continued, Charlotte blamed Joseph for Lewis's attempted marriage to Anna, and then his drugs, then Katherine getting pregnant and finally of allowing Paul to steal hundreds of thousands of pounds from the company.

“Have a divorce,” Joseph shouted. “You fucking lied to me over the last year.”

“You lied to me. You were fucking that tart,” Charlotte spat back and leant against a chair, waving her finger towards her husband. “She was more important to you than this family.”

Joseph puffed and glanced at her. He stretched his arm out in front of him. “Yeah, she didn't lie to me. You did. Fucking Paul did. Everyone did, but she didn't.”

Charlotte scowled. “Get out. Get out of my house.”

“My house,” Joseph corrected her. “I paid for it.”

Charlotte wiped her nose and sniffed. “Get out. I don't to be in the same house as you.”

Joseph looked at her and strode past Charlotte, stopping to pick up his mobile phone, dialling the second number on speed dial. “Hey love,” he said the moment Sarah answered. “Can I come and stay with you for awhile.” Charlotte huffed and yelled at her husband that he ignored and went upstairs to pack.

He would be gone before Katherine or Lewis returned home.

* * * * *

“Get on the floor,” the voice shouted and Paul scrambled out of the bed and

looked out of the window. “Get on the floor, Paul Mason.”

Paul threw his trousers over his legs and peered out of his bedroom. He could hear footprints on the stairs and he closed the door locking it. He looked at the naked thirteen year-old servant in his bed and swore. “What is eet Paul.”

“Some people from Britain don't like me,” he warned. “They think I took some money.”

The girl twisted her hair around her finger as Paul threw open the window and slid onto the roof. “Paul,” she shouted and there was a crash at the door.

A heavily armed man burst into the room and yelled downstairs, just as Paul dropped onto the ground into the arms of Guv who threw him onto the ground. “Take a look at this,” he said with a grin. “It's daylight. You aren't seeing this again.”

Epilogue

“Pardon?” Katherine said and looked at Matthew holding the sleeping child. The naming ceremony had drained their daughter and as such she was happily sleeping in the arms of her father.

“Move in.” There was silence and then Matthew confided. “Look I know not as partners but I have a big flat, I'd love to see our daughter every day and I can't be worse than a council house, can I? There is plenty of space.”

Katherine hummed. “I'm nowhere near a council house yet, I am not a priority. But I dunno Matt. It'll be a big move, I mean, I'm cool with you now but I still feel a bit ... well worried. Uncomfortable.”

Matthew took a deep breath. “Look, I know I was a bastard for not telling you, for taking advantage, but I was scared. Now I know that is no excuse but I am still responsible for Evie and I owe you.” He looked down at the baby asleep in his arms and then back at its mother. “Think about it, your parents sell this house in a couple of weeks.”

“Yeah, well Dad and Sarah are off to Scotland, Mum and Lewis are getting a tiny house, so at the moment I have a couch and that's it, so I might need to.”

Matthew smiled at his child and then glanced up. “Well I would want you to want to, not have to, but I would like you to move in anyhow. I'll look after you, and Evie.”

Katherine cocked her head and grinned at Evie stirring. “I'll think about it,” she promised. “And thank you for offering but I dunno, it is a big step.”

Matthew bit his lip. “I'd really want you to, but it's up to you.”

* * * * *

Paul was thrown into the small windowless room that reeked of stale tobacco and a young black guy pushed him down in a chair at a table. “You can't do this,” Paul moaned. “I am a British citizen and I have rights.”

The door flew open and the large frame of Curtis filled the room. “Guv,” the young man nodded and watched as his boss strode into the room with a file and sat down at the table, clicking a box in the corner.

“Paul Mason,” he said in a firm voice. “Shut the fuck up.” Paul scowled and went to speak when the file came down on the table and he opened it. Paul was sweating, his palms were clammy and he could feel his heart beat. “You were arrested for child molestation, sexual assault and rape.” Paul gasped.

“You what?”

The Policeman smiled at him. “Oh, and some fellows from London want to talk to you about a fraud. We've been watching you for some time.” Curtis pulled out half-a-dozen photographs and slid them across the table to the widening eyes of Paul. “They are both fifteen,” he told the Englishman who grunted and shrugged.

“Well what is it to you? And I want to see the British Consul.”

Curtis's smile flickered and he rubbed his hands together. “The British Consul is not available until tomorrow. I can put you back in the cell or you can see what we are going to charge you with. You see you come from Birmingham like me, but I came over here twenty years ago to build a better life, not mess with kids.”

Paul sniffed, and ran his hand through his face. “Well I didn't know they were under age,” Paul countered and Curtis took out a cigarette and lit it, pulling out a small Dictaphone, pressing play on it.

The voice of Dwayne, slightly muffled and Paul came through the speaker, with Paul clearly asking for under age girls and the rotund businessman went white.

“Yeah, but, what, it, no,” he spluttered and shook his head. “It's entrapment.”

Curtis withdrew another piece of paper from the file, puffing on the cigarette in his hand. “It's the testimony from the thirteen year old in your bed. You, you are going down for a very long time.”

Paul bit his lip, looking at the young policeman standing next to him and the large detective on the other side of the table. He took a deep breath and swung his arms back wildly, catching the junior man in the waist, before jumping up and pushing the table back into the chest of Curtis.

“Fuck you,” Paul shouted and bolted to the door, opening it and running straight into a fist from Oli, knocking him back into the room.

“Interview terminated at sixteen nineteen,” Curtis said with a smile. “When the defendant attempts to flee.” The recorder clicked off and Curtis nodded towards the young constable who had straightened himself out of pride, his stomach hurting. “Take him away,” Curtis bellowed to his two subordinates, pointing to the prostrate gentleman. “I don't want to see him.”

* * * * *

Anna giggled as Lewis wrapped his arms around her, he had pulled her against the wall outside the auditorium and kissed her lightly on the cheek. “Eet, eet nice film,” Anna told him and Lewis nodded, moving in to kiss her on the lips. Anna returned the embrace and they locked their lips together.

It was not their first kiss together, nor their first date, but it was their first “French kiss” and their tongues explored and caressed. Lewis and Anna looked coyly at each other, her hands gripping the buttocks of her partner.

“Oi,” came the voice of a cinema employee, pointing towards the amorous couple. “Not in here, get a room.”

Lewis whispered in Anna's ear and as the employee walked towards them, they broke their embrace and strode confidently towards the exit, hand-in-hand. They were scarcely less loving on the bus back to the small suburb and, expecting there to be near silence in the house, opened the door.

“Anna,” called the voice of Maria, the “lady of the house,” and they both groaned. “Hi. Lewis, he here. OK?” Anna asked as she poked her head around the door to the lounge and Maria nodded, beckoning them both in.

Anna was a little perplexed, Maria said she was going out with her husband to a new restaurant and Maria took a deep breath looking at her. “I came back early because I didn't feel well,” she admitted, “and I took a pregnancy test.” There was a small silence until Maria smiled and her hands shook. “I'm having another baby.”

Lewis and Anna both gasped and congratulated the woman who wiped her eyes. “I haven't told Adam yet, but we've tried.” Maria smiled at the two in front of her and nodded gently. “You two go upstairs, I know you want to.”

Lewis blushed at the inference, but Anna looked into Maria's gleaming eyes and grabbed the arm of Lewis, almost dragging him out of the room.

“Thank ooo,” called the voice down the stairs as Anna guided her boyfriend into her room and closed the door. Anna had every intention of taking Lewis's virginity; they had spent enough time cuddling and kissing, she was going to make Lewis a man.

* * * * *

There was a tyre squeal and Kelly Bachmann slammed the stolen car into first gear. She had never had a driving lesson in her life and it was her father's car but she knew what she was doing, having waited at the end of the road for over an hour. The car took off, and Kelly kept her foot on the accelerator, changing into second gear with a grating of the gearbox, she was a little late with the clutch.

She reached 45mph and pushed harder, the car engine was squealing and crying out as Kelly mounted the kerb and drove the car into the back of the running figure of Ethan Salisbury who disappeared under the vehicle with a jolt. Kelly broke hard, and turned the car around at the mini-roundabout two hundred yards up the road, catching a couple of parked vehicles and snapping off the wing mirror. She accelerated fast, beeping on her horn as a couple of local residents hurried down their path to the prostrate man lay at the bottom of their garden.

They paused and Kelly mounted the kerb again, the 23-year old powering the

vehicle over the seriously injured man killing him instantly, braking hard and ramming the car into a tree. She leapt out of the battered wreck and ran down the road, tears streaming down her face.

She launched a violent kick at the body of her money lender screaming obscenities and abuse at the dead man. There was a siren in the background as the local residents debated about trying to restrain the killer who pounded the corpse with venomous screams and ferocious kicks.

The Police arrived within thirty seconds and bundled Kelly Bachmann into their vehicle, attaching a pair of handcuffs to her. They charged her with murder a few hours later but Kelly showed little remorse during questioning. Once the officers had heard her story they could understand why she acted as she did but she had committed cold-blooded, pre-meditated murder and she would be going to jail for a long time.

Kelly had borrowed some money from Ethan when the Benefits Office had made a mistake and not paid her correctly when she had left work to care for her terminally ill father. They needed to eat, and her initial loan of £50 was just to tide them over. Ethan's repeated and unmet demands for money, often with spurious and extortionate amounts being added, had culminated in her being kidnapped and imprisoned in her house, being beaten and raped repeatedly. Her father had fallen down the stairs when he heard her screams and died; Kelly was unrepentant about her revenge, Ethan simply had to die.

* * * * *

“Locks,” Matthew boasted as he carried the last box into the second bedroom. “Both your and Evie's bedrooms have locks on them, and I don't have a key.”

Katherine spluttered in surprise. “You what?”

“Well you said you were worried and I know I broke your trust so this is how you can stay without getting worried. When you are in your room, I can't see you, be with you or anything.”

Katherine smiled and put her hand on Matthew's arm. “It's not that sort of worry,” she told him and kissed him on the cheek. “I know you wouldn't hurt me or little Evie, I am just not sure I want to get too close that is all.”

Matthew grunted. “Oh. Well it seemed like a good idea. Are you OK with pasta for tea,” he asked. “I have a bolognese sauce. Oh and white wine.”

Katherine looked at him with a sly look. “You better not be trying to get me drunk Matty because you did that before and it caused all sorts of trouble.”

Matthew responded in horror. “No, it's not. It's just,” he stammered and Katherine giggled.

“You are so easy to wind up. Bolognese would be lovely.”

“Right,” Matthew replied quietly and got up to prepare dinner. Evie was too young to eat their dinner so he prepared some mashed banana and avocado for her as the meat sizzled in the pan and he added the tomato sauce. Katherine smiled as she fed Evie and then sat down to eat her food, complimenting her companion on his culinary abilities; their dinner was nice.

Matthew and Katherine bathed Evie together, the baby happily splashing her father with the soapy water until she went wrinkly and was then put in her cot.

“So what are we then?” Katherine asked as she returned to the lounge and took the glass of wine Matthew passed to her.

“What do you mean?”

“Are we partners, flat mates?”

“Would I be wrong to call you my friend?” Matthew asked and Katherine gave a raffish smile.

“No, no you wouldn't. But aren't we more than that?”

Matthew hummed, he did like Katherine and he would not have invited her to stay if he didn't, but wasn't going to scare her off. “Parents?”

“Co-habitees?”

Katherine giggled and looked at the small pile of boxes in the lounge, the remnants of her “stuff” that needed moving into her room and sorting out. She was tired, she had moved everything into Matthew's flat that day and needed to just relax.

She yawned and looked at the television playing a re-run of a sci-fi film and then at Matthew. “I'm going to go to bed,” she announced. “I've had a long day and I'm shattered.”

Matthew smiled and bade her goodnight awkwardly, watching as the teenager left the room. He reflected on her behaviour, she seemed curiously happy and relieved to be living with him, and there was little reticence to her at all; she almost seemed to relish the idea.

Although she had little choice, her father had run off with Sarah and was currently house-hunting in Edinburgh (he rationalised that the lower cost of salaries made it an attractive place to write software) and her mother had been reduced to a small two-bedroom house on the outskirts of the town.

Matthew had seen the state Charlotte had descended into, even Lewis barely spent much time at “home,” and her gambling addiction was fuelling alcoholic binges. In short, Katherine had little choice, but she seemed happy.

He wondered why, Katherine wasn't his partner, or even a close friend – although he had to agree that they had got a lot closer since she had found out the true parentage of little Evie and certainly since they had arranged Evie's naming ceremony. Even Joseph and Charlotte were civil to him and his new colleagues cooed over the baby, Katherine and him got on well, and not a cross word was said all day.

Matthew was certainly happier, he would get to see his child every day and while Katherine had said told him before she moved in that she would want to live in her own house eventually, he was determined to savour the time he did have with her and his daughter.

This also gave Matthew another problem, he wanted to treat Katherine to make her feel at home, and he wanted to get her something nice, but didn't want to send the “wrong” signals. He liked the young girl, he liked her a lot, but she was completely out of his league and certainly didn't want to scare her off. He had wondered whether he would see her go out on dates or be babysitting while she went out with her boyfriend, but this was something he would have to be happy with. He wanted Evie and his friend to stay with him and to live with him. They weren't there to be with him, as much as he might have wanted it; Katherine simply didn't find him attractive.

Matthew flicked off the television, he was at work the following morning and it would not have been good to sit down until midnight dreaming about Katherine and her motives. He wearily cleaned his teeth and shut his bedroom door. He threw off his clothing, he was used to wandering around his house half-naked but had remained clothed all evening because of Katherine, who he did not feel would appreciate it. He turned his light off and climbed into his bed, turning over and feeling the warmth of someone else.

Matthew shrieked and Katherine put her arms around him. “I thought you'd never come to bed,” she whispered and kissed him on the cheek. “You watch way too much telly.”

“What are you doing here?”

Katherine snorted. “Because I want a cuddle before I go to sleep,” she told him. “And I like you.” Matthew tensed and Katherine slid her hands up his chest. “It's OK,” she cooed.

“I thought ...” Matthew whispered and then trailed off.

“I think, for little Evie, that it would be good if her parents could try and be together,” Katherine told him. “I mean, I do like you and I think you like me.”

Matthew felt his mouth go dry. “Very much,” he whispered hoarsely and Katherine smiled in the dark.

“No promises,” she told him. “But it would be good to try, yes?”

“Yeah,” Matthew replied breathlessly. “Yes it would. I'd love to.”

Katherine ran her hands over him again and licked her lips. “And unlike your other dates, I promise I am not going to turn into a leather-clad dominatrix,” she teased in a low voice and kissed him again.

Feedback

So you reached the end, congratulations.

I would like to know what you thought of it. Did it work as a stop/start book, or was everything too disjointed? Were the characters believable? Did you find it easy or hard to read? Were there any spelling or grammatical errors?

But most of all, did you enjoy it?

Many thanks and kind regards,

John

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