

Cindy

Cindy

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A work of fiction, meant for adults. Read something else if you are not an adult, or are offended by stories with sexual content. Then again, if all you're looking for is in-out, in-out, in-out, you should probably read something else. I welcome constructive comments. Enjoy.

The phone rang Saturday morning just as I was about to go grocery shopping.

"Hello?"

"Bob, this is Cindy."

Holy shit -- the bottom fell out of my stomach. I hadn't spoken to her for six or seven months, not since she moved out on me.

"Yeah?"

She sighed. "Bob, I need your help."

I felt like saying, "So fucking what?" but I didn't. I settled for, "What?"

"Bob, my computer is acting up. I need help."

Must be the computer Doug got for her. "So have Doug fix it," I told her flatly.

She sighed again. I recognized the way she sounded -- after living together for two and a half years, I knew she was on the verge of tears. Tough.

"Bob," she said emotionally, "I... I broke up with Doug. He ... he was fooling around with someone else."

What goes around, I thought with a slight smile, like me returning from a business trip to find she'd moved out. The only explanation I got was that she'd found someone else.

I heard stories, even saw them a few times. I learned she'd been screwing him for a month or more while we were living together. He was big, a big asshole as far as I could tell. Big, loud, more money than sense. Our friends, still my friends, didn't understand it. Most of them thought he was a loudmouthed jerk, but one with a lot of money to spend. Nobody was quite sure how he made it, but he spent it, and evidently spent a lot on Cindy.

"Bob? I ... need ... your help."

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“What?” I asked.

“You’ll help me?” enthusiastic again.

“I’m not sure if I can. What’s wrong?” I asked

“It’s really, really slow some times, but okay others. Some times I can’t even print.”

“Okay, what kind of computer is it?”

“A white one.”

What did I expect? That was Cindy. “Tell me more about it,” I prodded.

“It’s white, and thin, and the apple on the lid lights up pretty.”

Ah, the clues I needed -- at least it was a Mac, an iBook. I prodded for more information. She had a G4, with old software. Okay, what kind of Internet connection?

I figured it was wireless, “a pretty white cone with an apple” connected to “a phone thing and another box that whirs.” Sounds like DSL, and something with a fan?

“Okay,” I told her, “I can take a look at it.”

“You can! When? This afternoon?”

I glanced at the clock -- almost two. “Three,” I told her; I should get there around three thirty or so, payback for all those times she made me wait.

“Oh thank you! I ... I’m looking forward to seeing you again, Bob.”

“Where do you live?” She never told me where she’d moved to.

“Oh...” She gave me her address, and directions.

“See you at three,” I told her.

*

Why the fuck was I doing this? It was almost four when I parked in a guest spot near her place. I grabbed my iBook and my bag of tricks and walked to her apartment.

After all that time -- with her, then without her. No, think of it as another tech call.

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Bullshit. This was the only woman I'd ever told, "I love you." I was going to ask her to marry me, but she moved out before I got the chance. And she'd been fooling around for a month or more. Was I lucky? I don't fucking know.

Like a friend told me, it takes two to grow a relationship, but only one to end it.

I knocked on her door.

She opened the door. Her smile faded quickly. "Thanks for coming over," she mumbled.

I could tell she'd been crying. She still looked good. God don't get started on that, all that time in her arms...

I followed her in. She showed me her laptop, sitting closed in the living room. She showed me the rest, an Airport Extreme base station, printer, and a network storage drive, all connected to a DSL modem.

"Is your laptop running?" I asked as we went back to the living room.

We walked by a large bedroom, with a big bed and nice new furniture. All the furniture looked new. Thoughts of making love with her, snuggling with her.

"It's turned off," she told me.

I nodded. The activity lights on her wireless base station and the storage box had been flashing like crazy -- her link had been hijacked, or at least was being "shared."

I pulled out my iBook and opened it. "Okay, it will take me a while."

She nodded, then left the room, head down.

It hurt to be here. It hurt to be in the same room with her. Part of me wanted to grab her, hold her, kiss away her tears. Another part was still in shock, returning home and instead of finding her, finding that note. Now here, surrounded by new furniture, even a big plasma HDTV on the wall -- what had I given her? Love?

I brought up iStumbler and watched it scan. Fuck, will people never learn? Six unsecured access points and one secured. Which one of the unsecured ones was hers? A bunch were still named "Linksys," the out-of-the-box default. Hmmm -- I'd guess hers was the one named "mel0ns." Signal strengths were too close for me to tell which was hers. I'd need to hardwire into it to change the configuration anyway.

I picked up my iBook and my bag of tricks. Got a short Ethernet cable from the bag and cabled into her setup. Yup, hers was "mel0ns" but not for very long. My first stop on the web was hotbits, for a bag of fresh, random bits for a new name and long WEP key. Fired up the Airport Extreme admin program, and right off the bat it wanted to upgrade the firmware. That's

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going to break connections, but I don't really care -- do it. Two minutes later, mel0ns disappeared, replaced with a closed, secured, network. How I loved being in her arms, those weekend mornings in bed snuggling together.

I disconnected from things and tried the new wireless connection. Fine. The lights weren't flashing as much. Time to update her laptop.

"Cindy, I need you to start up your laptop for me," I called out, moving back to the living room.

"You've fixed things?" she asked.

"About halfway there," I told her.

She met me in the living room. She'd changed clothes, or at least her top. She was wearing the stretch velvet top that she'd made my favorite. It looked like she'd changed bras as well, wearing the one with the soft fabric cups. It wasn't as comfortable for her, but I liked it.

The combination was like a knife in my chest.

The last time she'd worn that combination (for me at least, another sharp pang) had been on my birthday. She'd held me and teased me, holding me to perfumed cloth, burying my face in her bounty, finally pulling off her top and bra and suckling me, driving me crazy, mounting and riding me on the floor. That had been an incredible weekend for both of us. Or so I thought.

She probably saw the pain in my face; she sighed and turned to her laptop. She opened it and hit the power button.

I pulled up a chair; she sat next to me.

Her laptop powered up and went right into the Finder -- no password. I shook my head and reconfigured the wireless network, then started applying a slew of software updates.

Now Cindy is no dummy -- she's intelligent, articulate, talented. But computers aren't her thing. If she's so intelligent, articulate, talented, what the hell did she see in Doug? What did he have that I didn't? Other than money?

I explained what had happened. If she thought of her wireless link as a car, she'd been leaving it with the keys in the ignition and the engine running, and people had been driving it around. That was over. When the updates were done, I convinced her to at least put a password on her machine. I quizzed her on what software she used, looked at what was installed, and set the firewall accordingly.

"Cindy, you're too good to be taken advantage of," I told her as I saved the last of the changes.

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She broke down. I didn't know what to do. That dilemma again -- hold her, or laugh. No, I couldn't laugh. She'd hurt me, hurt me worse than I'd ever been hurt in my life. It still hurt. With a sigh I moved closer and held her.

I held her as she babbled. Strange, the more I held her as she babbled, the less I felt. Holding her head on my chest I could smell the hair stuff she used, so many memories in that -- but they seemed far away.

She babbled about feeling bad, leaving me was a mistake, how he used her (Doug, I guess), how he never showed his feelings. I remembered holding her in bed, telling her how she made me feel, the amazing things she did to me, giving myself to her.

She babbled more, about how he never held her. I remembered snuggling with her in the morning. When they had sex (her words), he either got up right away or rolled over and went to sleep. Snuggling with her, holding her after making love was almost the best part.

Each memory she rekindled flared briefly, searing another spot on my soul, then faded.

I held her in silence after she ran out of steam. I felt burned out.

She looked up at me; I wiped her eyes. I remembered doing that after the first time I told her I loved her; she broke into tears and I held her.

"Can you stay?" she asked.

When I hadn't answered after a while, she added, "For dinner?"

I shook my head. "Not tonight."

She looked at me -- with longing. "What can I do?"

I held her hands. "I don't know."

She nodded. "Do you still love me?"

I sighed, my breath ragged. "I don't know," I whispered.

"I know I've hurt you. I'm sorry. Can you love me again?"

Now I was almost in tears. "I don't know."

She smiled. "If I try, will you try with me?"

Oh God, I wanted to. "Yes."

She kissed my hands. "When you're ready."

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She helped me gather my things, and showed me to the door.

We hugged briefly. I turned and walked to my car.

And sat there, tears rolling down my face. I wanted to love her. I wanted to be in her arms again. So why did I walk away from what I wanted and needed so much?

I wiped my face and started the car. One more thing I didn't understand.

Fin
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