

C3

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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.

Thursday night about seven. The kitchen was clean. I prodded my laptop computer and picked up a green folder from the stack of green folders from work. Might as well get something done.

The phone rang. "This is Jim."

"Jim, I need your help."

My next-door neighbor Amy -- she sounded really upset.

"What do you need?" I asked.

"Could you come right over? Please?" She sounded as if she'd been crying.

"I'm almost out the door," I told her. I was using my cordless phone, so I put it in my pocket. I grabbed my keys from the basket by the front door and headed next door.

I'd been living in the townhouse for a year and a half. My next-door neighbors were a young couple, young as in early thirties. Let's just say I'm old enough to be getting mailings from AARP, but not feeling old enough to be willing to answer them.

Amy and her husband John had recently remodeled their place. I was partly to blame for some of the audio/video/lighting stuff they put in; I was installing a similar setup in my retirement house in Murphys, in the Gold Country of northern California. They'd also redone the kitchen, dining room, and the downstairs bath.

Amy met me at the door. She was in distress, crying, which is a shame for such an attractive young woman. Her gray eyes were tinged with red, tracks of tears on her soft, smooth almond skin. Her face suggested the best of East meets West -- her eyes and skin color suggesting Asia; her cheekbones, strong jaw, and precise lips suggesting northern Europe.

"What's the matter?" I asked as she let me in. I closed the door and she threw her arms around me and cried.

My arms fit around her shoulders, athletic but still feminine. Her gold mesh t-shirt and sports bra compressed what were for me her most attractive features. Especially in the running shorts and

sandals she was wearing, she looked like a model from an athletic ad, her trim legs, flat abdomen, and narrow waist. I was used to seeing her smiling and full of life, not crying. It upset me to see her cry.

We moved to her couch; I dropped my phone and keys on the coffee table. I held and rocked her until she settled down.

“What’s wrong, Amy? Where’s John?” I asked gently.

Wrong question -- that set her off again. When she pretty much stopped crying, I got a handful of tissues from the downstairs bathroom.

I handed her the tissues as I sat down. She wiped her face, pulling herself together again.

“Can you tell me?” I asked again.

She nodded and handed me a remote control from the coffee table.

Another of my foibles -- I’d shown them a fancy remote with a built-in liquid crystal touch-control display. John liked it for its geekness. Amy liked it because it made things easy to use. A side-effect of the accident and the subsequent settlements was that I threw out my building budget for my new house. I bought four of the remotes and three base stations, giving John and Amy two remotes and a base for Christmas, and helped to set them up.

“No, this one,” she said, swapping with a different one. “You’ve got John’s now.”

I nodded, looking at her. I put colored dots on mine, just like on my cordless phone -- John and Amy had the same model, another of my influences.

She took a breath, steeling herself. “Okay. Go to favorites,” she told me.

I brought up the favorites page on the controller. It had a grid of 16 things, plus arrows for forward and back. Each of the 16 things had an icon associated with it -- lights, music, stuff like that. I knew it could hold many pages of favorites.

“Press back,” she told me.

Strange request, but I did it. At first I thought that page was blank, but then I noticed some of the squares on the display had a single dot in them. I looked to Amy.

She nodded, grimly. “Top left.”

I pushed the one in the top left corner.

The TV came on and switched to video. The controller now showed video playback controls.

“Press play,” she told me, almost holding her breath.

“Really?” I asked, looking at her.

She moved a bit closer and put an arm around me. “Yes, please.”

I pressed play and looked to the TV.

A color shot of their bedroom upstairs with a naked woman on their bed -- not Amy -- on her stomach, facing away from the camera. Long black hair came almost to her bottom. Amy’s hair is mid-length and a gorgeous heather-brown.

The woman on the bed rolled over. She was oriental, pretty if you go for flat-chested, and mid-twenties at the oldest. “Johnny? Where are you, Johnny? Oh I need you to fuck me again! Johnny! Johnny! Where are you? I need a good hard fuck!” she called out. It sounded like she was saying “fock.”

I hit stop. I turned to Amy. She started to cry again. I held her.

I held her until she ran out of tears.

She tried to talk. I got the box of tissues. She wiped her face and blew her nose. I sat a ways from her, but she moved closer to me.

“I found that by accident -- I picked up his remote by mistake, and wasn’t looking when I hit the buttons,” she managed to tell me.

I shook my head. “What now? What can I help with?”

That started another round, with her throwing her arms around me, pressing into me, crying and babbling. I managed to make out some of the details. I knew they’d been married about five years, lived here about four. She felt they’d drifted apart the last six or seven months, but thought it was the strain of the remodel and the long hours they’d both been putting in on their jobs. John told her he was going to visit a cousin in San Louis Obispo for the weekend, but she knew that wasn’t true. She recognized the woman as someone John worked with.

I held her and did my best to comfort her. Over the last few months, I’d finally started coming out of my shell; she was a very attractive woman.

When she slowed down and we were able to sit back, I asked, “What do you want to do?”

She took a breath.

I didn’t know if it was to start another crying jag or what.

“I want a divorce. Now,” she said forcefully.

I nodded. She knew I'd been working with attorneys because of the accident. "I understand," I told her. "Why don't you go clean up while I make some phone calls."

"Okay," she said with a snuffle. She held out her arms.

I stood and helped her to her feet. She gave me a strong hug, then headed upstairs.

I picked up my cordless phone. One of the side-effects of the accident was to put me in contact with a very good attorney who handled family and civil matters.

I heard an incoherent scream from upstairs and the sound of something impacting a wall.

I looked at the phone handset to be sure it was mine. I punched a speed-dial number.

"Paul, this is Jim. I've got a mess on my hands, and I need help, now," I told my friend when he answered the phone. I gave him the run-down, suggesting that Nancy from his law firm could help. Would he give me her home number? He'd do better than that -- he'd call her himself and tell her to get right over. I thanked him. I gave him the address and phone number.

I shook my head. I shouldn't be surprised he was so responsive. After all, he and his small firm were getting ten percent of my nine plus million dollar settlement from the accident, and without a lot of work. He owed me, big time.

Nancy called shortly thereafter. I gave her directions. She was already on the way.

I decided to leave Amy upstairs.

Ten minutes later, a knock on the door. I let Nancy in and gave her the rundown. We watched the video with the sound turned down low. There were two more -- one with the Asian gal pleasuring herself with a vibrator while moaning for John, and the third with her giving John a blowjob. It looked like a good one; she had him flopping around like a fish. It even got me hard, something that hadn't happened in a while.

Nancy and I looked at each other, shaking our heads. I told her Amy was upstairs. I gave her more background on John and Amy. I'd never seen Amy this emotional; usually she was sharp as a tack. Nancy nodded and headed upstairs, calling to Amy as she went.

I watched John's home videos again. I couldn't understand what he saw in that chick. My daughter had been twelve when she died in the accident, and she had a more-developed chest than this gal. The blowjob one surprised me, and I finally figured out why; John wasn't that well hung. Still, the chick did him with gusto, hanging him out on the edge a few times before finishing him off.

I'd calmed down by the time they came downstairs about a half hour later. Amy looked more with it, and like the proverbial woman scorned -- mad as hell. Nancy had a grim smile on her face. I'd worked with Nancy. She was talented, and a fighter.

“Let’s move to the dining room table,” Nancy suggested.

We moved. I got water for the three of us. I rubbed Amy’s back before sitting down.

Nancy filled Amy in on the next steps. Right off the bat she told Amy there was a five thousand dollar retainer to take things through filing and through the court-mandated settlement conferences. If the matter went to trial, that would cost more.

Amy started coming unglued. I caught references to refinancing to pay off construction debt, plus John’s new car in amongst the sobs.

“I’ll cover it,” I heard myself saying as I sat next to Amy, an arm around her again. Hell, it was practically funny money to me. The law firm had recently received the big settlement check from the accident, but were holding most of the funds as we worked out trusts and sheltering arrangements.

My offer surprised Amy, but didn’t bother Nancy. Nancy did a good job of explaining that Amy was the client in this matter and Amy called the shots, even if I was paying the bill.

As Amy and I signed retainer forms, Nancy outlined the battle plan: tonight she’d gather information. If Amy wanted, they could file divorce papers with the court tomorrow morning. Nancy would help Amy set up separate bank accounts. They could get locks changed. If she wanted to throw John out, she could. Someone needed to serve him with the divorce papers as soon as possible.

Guess who volunteered for that.

Still quite emotional, Amy told us she found a note about a hotel in Tahoe. She’d called the hotel -- John was there. We could serve him there, or when he got back Sunday.

Nancy told her that Sunday would be fine, and would give Amy more time to plan.

I asked if that was all for me for now. Nancy wanted to know if I could find the videos on the computer and move them to something like a CD. I was pretty sure I could.

What a nasty business. I headed next door and picked up my tools disks and some blank media. John worked in the finance group of a local company. I’d configured his computer to do the audio/video serving. I probably still had administrator privileges on the machine. Hmmm...

“Counsel, a word, please?” I asked her before I headed upstairs to the small bedroom Amy and John used as their office.

Amy was looking better, if looking like you want to kill someone is better. She always impressed me as a smart gal; she worked for a semiconductor equipment manufacturer. She had to be good -- they’d laid off a lot of people, but kept her.

Nancy and I had a short discussion about privacy, and her requesting me to retrieve materials from the computer. I told her about setting things up for John. She took notes. My administrator login

still worked. I searched for the videos, telling her what I was doing as I went. I found a pair of directories, one with the videos we'd seen, and another with about a dozen videos. I told her she'd have disks in a few minutes. She went back downstairs.

I dropped off the disks and told them I'd be at my place if they needed anything else. Nancy and I shook hands. Amy popped out of her chair and gave me a hug.

I gathered keys and phone, and went back home.

Almost nine said the clock on the mantle. I shook my head. I wasn't getting to sleep any time soon, not with after an emotional roller-coaster ride like that. I still had pills, but I didn't like using them. Friday was a "work from home" day for me. My laptop was on the table, along with a pile of green folders. I'd planned on spending the next week working from my place in Murphys -- I get a lot more work done without interruptions. I'd planned on driving up tomorrow or Saturday, but it looks like I'm leaving Sunday. I sat down, prodded my laptop, opened the top folder, and got back to work.

A knock on the door -- almost ten o'clock. "Just a minute," I called out.

"Can I come in?" Amy asked. She looked grim, but better. She was wearing sweat pants and her gold mesh top.

"Of course," I told her. Luckily, I keep the place pretty clean.

"I need to talk," she sighed.

I could see and hear her need. "How did things go with Nancy?" I asked as we sat on the couch.

She told me what they'd gone over, about all the decisions she had to make in the next few days, looking down and wringing her hands as she spoke. She was troubled; I could tell. Shit -- what did I expect? After the accident, I'd been a basket case for months.

Finally, the other shoe dropped. "Jim, I can't sleep over there, not in that bed, not after what they did. Can I sleep here? Please?"

The couch we were sitting on was a sofa bed, moved from the old house before I sold it. "Of course," I told her.

That took a tremendous weight off her, if her sigh was any indication.

But then her tears returned. He'd gotten so cold, so distant, not holding her, not kissing her, getting mad, yelling at her and calling her names. She felt ugly.

I held her and told her she was an extremely attractive young woman. The way she was holding me, pressing into me, my body recognized that as well.

"Do you really think so?" she asked, leaning back on the couch.

“Yes, I do,” I said, holding her hands. She was so pretty. Why would anyone hurt her? Why would anyone leave her for a flat-chested ...

She started crying again. “He said I was fat. He called me ... a ... cow,” she sobbed.

That hurt her. It hurt me, too. My wife had been well-endowed. Amy wasn’t as full, but still looked delicious. Oh how I missed being held, going to sleep in someone’s arms.

I hugged Amy, my arms sliding around her, pulling her to me, pressing her bosom to my chest. “No, Amy, no,” I whispered, my eyes closed, filling with tears. I moved, and my head was between her soft breasts. She held me with surprising ferocity.

As we separated, I knew my heart was racing, and so was hers. I looked at her, leaned back on the couch, her eyes closed, tears running down her face.

I waited for her to open her eyes. She looked at me and sighed.

“You don’t think I’m too ... big?” she asked.

I shook my head, wiping the tears from my own eyes. “Amy, if I went to sleep sucking on you, I’d be in heaven.” I felt myself turning red, but it was too late -- I’d said it.

Such a complex wash of expressions over her face! She moved to sit up; I backed up a bit, to give her room, and out of embarrassment. She reached behind her back with both hands. Then with a smile, she reached for me with one hand as she pulled up her top with the other.

I followed her down on the couch, closing my eyes. When my mouth found her nipple, I moaned, and she gasped, “Oh God!” As I wrapped my arms around her, she turned, pushing me on my back into the couch with her partially on top of me.

Heaven. Her bounty made it hard for me to breathe, and I loved it. Her nipple was so warm and tasty, tightening in my mouth as I sucked. My nose was filled with the softness of the day’s perfume combined with the tang of her sweat. She pushed me deeper into the cushions, our legs intertwining.

I started out so aroused, but after she slid a hand behind my head, it was so comforting, so relaxing. I wasn’t asleep, but I wasn’t wide awake, drifting on a cloud.

She pulled away, propping herself up on her arms. When I managed to open my eyes, I saw lust looming above me.

“Make love to me,” she said softly but firmly.

I managed to sit up. I hadn’t discussed this with Nancy. “Amy, are you sure?”

She lowered a little, her breasts brushing my face. She sat up, pulling me with her.

She looked me in the eye. "I need you. I want you. I can't sleep alone tonight. At least let me hold you."

Oh, the turmoil she awakened in me! I nodded. "Is there anything you need from next door?"

She took on a look of grim determination. "Come with me -- I can't be there alone."

"I understand," I told her.

We stood up. I thought she was going to straighten herself out, but instead she slipped off her bra and tossed it on my couch.

We went next door, and upstairs. I saw a gouge in the wall where she'd thrown something, but couldn't identify the projectile.

She handed me a pillow from their bed. She grabbed an overnight bag from the closet and heaped stuff in it, from her dresser, closet, and bathroom.

Standing there in the bedroom, I had to ask. "Amy, are you sure there's no chance for reconciliation?" I expected Nancy had asked her more or less the same question.

The look she gave me -- shock, surprise, anger -- then sadness. Tears returning, she pointed to the nightstand by the side of the bed. "See that?" she demanded.

"What, Amy?" I said gently, stepping closer.

She shook her head, breathing sobs. "The wallpaper!" she pointed.

I nodded. The walls had wallpaper on them.

She sobbed again, her sadness turning into anger. "I did the wallpaper a year ago! It wasn't in the video!"

I nodded and stepped closer, holding her again. "I'm sorry, Amy," was all I could say. Had she seen all the videos? She hadn't seen all the ones on the computer.

She rested her head on my chest, then turned and kissed me, hard, hungrily.

"Let's get out of here," she whispered, she insisted.

On the way out she grabbed her purse and cordless phone.

I made sure she had her keys and her door was locked. I locked my door once we were inside. She headed upstairs, and I followed, turning off downstairs lights.

She and John had a queen sized bed. I still had my king. As she put her bag on the bed, I choked up.

Since the accident that took my family almost two years ago, I'd slept alone in that bed, alone except for one night, a night that came under the heading of "mercy fuck." What was this? Revenge?

"Amy, are you sure you want to do this?" I asked, surprisingly choked up.

She looked at me. I couldn't read the look on her face. She took me by the hand and sat me on the edge of the bed. She stood in front of me and pulled up her top. Putting a hand behind my head, she brought us together at a nipple again.

My arms went around her waist as her arms went around my head. I couldn't get enough of her. When she slid me off, nestling my head between her breasts, it was my turn to cry. It was her turn to hold, comfort, and protect.

When I ran out of tears, she moved me to the other nipple. I was less anxious, and much more content to just be there.

"Let's get ready for bed," she whispered.

Not only was she unabashed about undressing in front of me, I realized she was undressing for me, making a show of it, or at least as much of a show as she could, with what she was wearing.

Then she helped me undress, slowly, sensuously, teasing me.

At the time of the accident, I was overweight. I was fat, lazy, and happy. For months, I basically didn't eat, and dropped a lot of weight. When I started going to a therapist, she convinced me to take better care of myself, and to move out of the old house -- it just had too many memories.

Amy had never known the old, overweight me. She'd only known the person who rode a bike to work, exercised regularly, and enjoyed the simple things, such as helping neighbors.

Simple things like feeling a woman's touch as she unbuttoned my shirt. Simple things like the tingle running through me as she ran her fingers over my chest taking my shirt off, and the electricity of her nipples brushing my chest.

"God, you're gorgeous," she said as she pulled my pants and shorts down. I almost fell over when she ran her fingers down my belly to my cock and balls. I was so hot and hard in her hands.

I almost lost it when she took me briefly in her mouth. I ended up on the bed, with her pulling off my socks, then my pants and shorts.

She slid up my body, teasing me with her mouth and breasts. She paused to suck and nip at my nipples, sending sparks shooting through me.

We kissed, and she rolled us so I was on top.

We slid together. I was inside her all the way in a few glorious strokes. She spread her legs and tucked her hips, urging me into her deeper by pressing on my low back.

Hot, wet, tight -- she felt so good. I pulled in as far as I could and held still, savoring as we kissed.

She rocked her hips, moving me with her hips, legs, and hands. My body started moving and I held on, enjoying the ride, enjoying the way her head arched back, the smile on her face.

Oh so quick, oh so strong -- closer, closer, and I was pumping into her. She moaned and squeezed me, moving slowly and sensuously.

After a while I tried to prop myself up on my arms, only succeeding in falling to one side.

Amy rolled closer. "Oh, that was so good," she said as we kissed.

I was in no condition to argue. I sighed and held her.

"I need to get up," I told her a while later. I needed to go to the bathroom before I fell asleep.

She had my underwear tucked between her legs, and a smile on her face. We hugged again as we got up and walked to the bathroom holding on to each other.

I watched her jiggle as she brushed her teeth. I put a hand on her back, I guess to make sure she was there. The combination of her hips and her narrow waist was so feminine, so attractive. She was there -- warm and soft.

She brought a hand towel back to bed with us, smiling as we got back into bed.

That sent more pangs through me, remembering the little scraps of cloth my wife kept folded in her nightstand, how I'd cried when I'd come across those as I cleaned things out. I turned off the lights, but the memories were still there, bright and clear.

"It's okay, Jim -- I'll hold you," she whispered.

We found each other in the dark. My eyes were filling with tears again as she brought me to a nipple. She held me, whispering to me. I went to sleep in her arms.

When I woke in the middle of the night, I startled initially. But there she was, breathing softly, so warm.

I visited the can and returned to bed. As I settled in, she moved, then startled, her breath catching. I reached out and touched her side. "It's okay," I whispered.

She moved closer, and I slid closer to her on my back. Putting an arm around her, I held her to my side, her head on my shoulder. She started crying again. "I've got you," I whispered. The only thing I could do was hold her. I hoped that was enough.

It was getting light out when I awoke. I was still on my back, with her at my side. I needed to move, to pee, but I didn't want to disturb her. Oh hell -- after a few minutes, I knew that as much as I didn't want to disturb her, I needed to. I hugged her gently and kissed her on the head. She moved a little, giving me a chance to slide out of bed.

I revisited the loo. Not even six in the morning. When I got back into bed, she surprised me by rolling out and going to the bathroom.

When she crawled back into bed she whispered, "My turn" and pulled me closer.

Skin on skin, softness, warmth -- I took a ragged breath through my nose and let go.

Drifting in pleasure, half asleep, suckling, being held -- then awareness stabbing like a knife, clutching her as memories returned and filled me with pain and tears.

"It's okay. I've got you," she whispered softly, holding and comforting.

Some time later her cooing changed, hands wandered over my body. I took deeper breaths, exploring her. She rolled me to my back, straddling me. I held on, my hands at her delicious waist as we rocked together. I moaned as I got close, and her motion shifted, slower and more intense, holding my head to her breast, rocking, rocking, rocking as I spasmed into her.

As I started to slip out of her, she rearranged us, still holding me close.

The alarm was loud and we were quiet as we got up.

"Mind if I shower?" she asked in the bathroom.

"Be my guest -- the red towel is clean," I told her.

She got in the shower. I brushed my teeth, and got "dressed" -- sweat pants and a t-shirt. I headed downstairs to make coffee.

I shook my head -- what a pisser, to have her life torn up like that. Oh really? I made a noise. I knew something about having your life torn up in an instant. Another disgusted noise -- what did I know? Why had I been in a tailspin for six or seven months? Well, sometimes I'm a slow learner.

I was part way through a cup of coffee, setting up for my conference call when she came downstairs, talking on her cordless phone.

"Okay, thanks. I'll see you Monday, or call," she said as she got to the bottom of the stairs. She looked at me and shook her head. Her head drooped down, her shoulders down.

I met her while she was still on the stairs. She held out her arms. I put mine around her. She stood about five foot eight, but on the stairs she was at the perfect height, my head a little above her breasts and my arms around her luscious narrow waist.

I took a deep breath, holding her. But this was about her -- I needed to protect and comfort her.

“What can I do to help?” I asked, stepping back but holding her hands.

We sat at the table sipping coffee. She’d called her boss, explaining she would be out today. She caught her breath, then said she’d explained why. Her boss understood.

I gave her the benefit of my painfully-acquired wisdom. “Amy, don’t hold the feelings back -- talk to someone -- me, Nancy, a pillow, but talk it out. And don’t look back -- don’t waste time on ‘what if’ or ‘why’ questions -- look forward.”

Was that the wrong thing to say? I don’t know. I don’t think so. We ended up on the couch again. I leaned back with her partially on top of me. I held her to my chest, letting her vent and cry.

She sounded as if she was focused forward, talking out problems -- money, where to live, all the usual things. She couldn’t live there anymore, she was sure of that. She didn’t know what she was going to do.

I put my foot in it again, telling her she could stay with me.

She brightened at that. Really?

Yes, really. I remembered part of what had turned me around after the accident, finally going to the building site in Murphys, getting away for a while.

I told her I was going to Murphys for the week, and she was welcome to come with me. It would give her a chance to think about things from a distance.

She looked up from my chest and gave me an incredible smile.

Shit, what had I done now?

She moved up, more on top of me, and kissed me.

I held her, my eyes closed, feeling the pain and the pleasure of her, pleasure from her being so close, and pain from the memories that contact rekindled.

Saved by the bell -- the phone rang. It took me a while to catch on. I’ve got a cordless downstairs and a regular phone upstairs. I only heard the cordless ringing. “It must be yours,” I managed to say.

Amy moved off me quickly. “Hello?” I heard her say from the dining room.

“Oh, okay...” Sounds of a chair moving. “Yes... Yes... Ah, October 11, 1973...”

I shook my head as I sat up on the couch. I knew her birthday was in October. She was only thirty -- I was twenty one years older, old enough to be her father.

My eyes clouded up again. Except that we’d started our family late. Our kids had been ten and twelve when they died along with my wife in the accident.

“Okay, I’ll be ready. Oh, I’m next door at Jim’s place. Bye.”

I took a breath and stood up, wiping my face quickly before heading into the dining room and kitchen.

Amy was still sitting at the table.

“That was Nancy,” she told me. “She’s on her way to have me sign things. We’re going to the courthouse, and then to the bank.” She stood up and took a step closer to me.

I met her halfway and we hugged again.

“Oh Jim... I’m sorry to be such a pain. I don’t know what I’d do without you.”

She felt soft and warm, so vulnerable. I held her.

“I need to get ready,” she whispered.

I gave her one more squeeze. She stepped away with a smile, then stepped closer, pulling me to a kiss.

I sat down and watched her going up the stairs, her trim legs, swaying bottom, and narrow waist.

Nancy arrived a few minutes later.

“Amy is upstairs getting ready,” I told her. “Want some coffee?”

“Yes, please. I brought your final trust documents for review and signature.”

“Nancy is here,” I called upstairs before going to the kitchen.

Nancy was smiling when I put down her coffee and took a seat. She handed me a stack of papers with the usual yellow “sign here” tags.

Amy came downstairs. She was dressed as I usually saw her when she was headed off to work. She even managed a slight smile.

Nancy took another stack of papers out of her valise.

“Want me to move?” I asked.

Amy put a hand on my shoulder as she went by me. “No, that’s okay.”

I reviewed my stack while Nancy reviewed things with Amy. The majority of mine resembled language we’d used in the settlement agreement, minimizing tax consequences. Finally, after almost two years, it would be over.

I couldn’t help but overhear the other discussion. Amy sounded as if she was making decisions in an analytical, forward-looking manner. Her car was old, in her name only, and paid off. His car was a year old, in both their names. That brought a grim smile to my face -- kiss that one goodbye, John. They’d kept separate credit cards and bank accounts, setting up one joint account they put money into for the townhouse and such. Oh, he was a few months behind in his contributions to that account, and Amy wanted to know where the money had been going. Nancy told her they’d find out. Amy wanted her half of the community property, no support. It sounded clean. Well, except for the townhouse debt - he’d have to sell, or buy her out. No way could he afford the place on his own.

I signed my stack. Amy signed hers. Nancy was going to drive, and said they’d be a couple of hours. I wasn’t going anywhere.

I had my ten o’clock phone call. It went well, but I needed to pick up some stuff at work.

I decided to hold off on lunch until Amy returned. Back to work.

Amy got back around a quarter to twelve.

“How did things go?” I asked, waving to Nancy as she drove off. Amy looked resolved, more like the confident woman I knew.

“As well as could be expected,” she said, looking me steadily in the eye.

I closed the door and she pushed me against the back of it, kissing me and running her hands over me. After a few moments surprise, I started running my hands over her.

She slid a hand down the front of my sweatpants; her touch buckled my knees.

We made it upstairs, undressing as we went.

Oh, the feeling of skin against skin! She pushed me to my back and straddled me. I held her waist and reached my mouth for a nipple. She rocked her hips and I shifted mine, suddenly pushing up against her inner gate. She clamped my head in place as she swirled her hips.

“Oh my GOD!” she called out, trembling and spasming around me soon afterwards. I wasn’t far behind, pumping into her.

She pulled a pillow under my head, relaxing on to the bed. I turned my head, my left ear against her chest, feeling and hearing her heart beating rapidly.

I was just about asleep when she propped herself up on an elbow.

“I talked to Nancy,” she started out.

I nodded, holding her, enjoying the contact. Her waist was a place my hand just needed to be. I knew I needed to listen, to hear her out, as much as I just wanted to hold her.

“I’m moving out. I want to go with you ... for the week. Nancy agreed it would be a great way to get my head straightened out. I already called work. Can you help me pack?”

“Of course,” I told her.

She sighed and kissed me. She moved up on the bed a bit and held my head between her breasts again. “Thank you. I want to be all moved out by Sunday.”

The gears in my head started turning. I moved a little, starting to get up. “We need to get going then.”

She held me in place, moving to put more of her delicious weight on top of me. “In a while,” she whispered.

“We’ve got a lot to do,” I told her when we got out of bed.

She nodded her head, frowning a bit. “I know, I know.”

I smiled. “Okay. Lunch, swing by my office, pick up boxes, start packing.”

“Sounds right,” she said.

“Where are we moving things to?” I asked as we left my office.

That took the air and life out of her. “I don’t know yet,” she said, barely audibly.

“Suggestion?”

“Please,” she said, a bit stronger.

“Pack things for next week, and for a few days after that. That goes in your car. Put the rest in boxes. I have a mostly-empty storage locker -- things should fit. That sound reasonable?”

She put a hand on my thigh. “Yes, thank you.”

Another thing crossed my mind. “What about the big computer? Need anything from that?” I knew she had a Powerbook as well.

She sighed and shook her head. “I don’t know where to start with that.”

“Okay -- we’ll take care of it.”

Picking up storage boxes, I asked her, “How much hanging stuff do you have?”

“About half the closet.”

My closet was about a third full. “We can move that into my closet for now.”

She smiled and gave me a hug.

I started the computer backup; she started in the bathroom.

The bathroom went well, as did the dresser. We separated out stuff for the next week and a half as I’d suggested.

Skeletons are always in the closet, right? I came back upstairs from moving boxes to see her standing there crying, holding a cream-colored heavy silk blouse. I took it from her and held her in my arms.

When she slowed down a bit, I asked, “Too many memories?” I knew how that worked.

I felt her nodding as I held her.

“Well, you can keep it, give it to Good Will ... or leave it here.” I surprised myself -- that last choice had a vindictive edge to it.

She pulled away a little and looked at me. The look on her face changed to a cold smile.

She picked up the blouse from where I’d dropped it on the bed and took it to the closet, hanging it on John’s side. I could sense the catharsis and resolution in her movement. It had only taken me six or seven months to learn the value of separation rituals.

We filled a few boxes for Good Will. She occasionally muttered, “Why have I kept this?” as we filled those boxes.

We took armloads of clothing to hang in my closet.

I wasn’t sure what was going on with the last load. She walked taller, more resolutely, and with an interesting look on her face.

I hung the last of her things in my closet and turned to her. She stood there holding a short cabernet-red dress. I could almost envision her in it, seeing how the slight V-neck and narrow waist would emphasize her curves. I could see her with seamed stockings and four inch heels, her head high, her eyes and smile sparkling.

“We need to take a break,” she said, pushing me on to my bed, still holding the dress.

I welcomed the break. I welcomed her attention. We kissed, rolling around on the bed. We started shedding our clothes.

Oh how she surprised me! The soft coolness of that dress came between us as we rolled around, kissing and feeling. She moved up, pressing a nipple to my mouth, holding me to her with one hand while she teased me with the other. She started teasing me with that cool, smooth fabric, sheathing it around my cock and balls, draping it on my belly. She started pumping my cock, wrapped up in that sensuous fabric, as she held my head.

And she didn’t stop, pumping, stroking, and finally draining me into it.

As I lay there twitching, she moved more on top of me, switching me to the other side. She’s not that heavy, but when she’s on top of me, I melt under her.

Some time later, she moved down and we kissed. She sat up, carefully cleaning me up with the dress.

The look on her face was something to see. I had the feeling that dress was something special. She snarled as she wadded up the dress and started to toss it over her shoulder on to the floor.

I took it from her. “My turn,” I whispered, pushing her to her back.

I slid down her body and started kissing my way up the insides of her thighs. She was wet and hot, and I wanted so much to taste her, to devour her.

The noises she made as I kissed the insides of her thighs told me she wouldn’t mind if I dived right in.

I tried to take my time, but I couldn’t wait that long. As I approached her core, she threw her legs open, welcoming me. She was delicious -- sweet and savory. I urged her legs closer to my head and she complied wondrously, squeezing me between her trim, muscular thighs. I moved the wadded-up dress under her to catch the overflow of her sweet juices.

So many things drove me on -- the way she tasted and felt, the sounds she made, the way she squeezed me and bucked on the bed -- those and my own haunting memories.

Her cries brought my tears and pushed me on, devouring her. Each orgasm I brought her to freed something in me.

Her legs released me. I moved, resting my head on her mound. I pulled my arms from under her, where I'd been holding her bottom and her waist.

Pushing myself up, I wiped my face with the dress, then wiped her down. We were both covered with a fine layer of sweat. Her eyes were closed, a wonderful relaxed smile filling her face.

I kissed my way up her body, pausing at her nipples. But as I kissed her neck, she moved, grabbing me and kissing me, rolling us over.

"You're welcome," I told her when she pushed herself up on her arms. "Shower with me?"

"Oh yes," she panted.

Another of life's simple pleasures that I hadn't experienced in too long -- showering together. I guess mutual grooming is a source of pleasure in most primates.

"How about ribs at Chili's?" I suggested as we dressed.

"With a big, cold, margarita," she added.

After dinner, we spent a while finishing the upstairs. I had her show me around the downstairs, going through what we needed to pack and move. It looked like five or six hours of work.

As I locked my front door behind us, I heard Amy sigh.

I turned and saw someone who was once more exhausted, physically and emotionally. Her shoulders were hunched. Her gray eyes, usually sparkling and full of life, looked dull.

I held out my arms. She came to me, putting her arms around my neck. My hands went to her waist, holding her. Why would anyone hurt such a wonderful, beautiful woman?

Had I said that out loud? I wasn't sure. It didn't matter. I held her and she held me.

She took a deep breath, moving in my arms. She shifted her weight, putting more of her weight on my neck -- and pulled up her legs, wrapping them around me.

I interlaced my fingers, supporting her lower back. She was leaning back now, smiling, looking me in the eyes. She started moving her hips rhythmically and squeezing me with her legs, sending shivers through me.

"I have to put you down so we can go upstairs," I told her.

She pouted, pushing out her lower lip. "Meanie."

I turned to push her against the wall, kissing her, pressing into her. She moaned in my mouth. She moved her hips and I pressed into her, matching her rhythm. I could feel myself getting hard, and feel not only her hips, but also heaven, where I'd be, and soon.

We unhooked long enough to get up the stairs and shed our clothes.

She was on the bed, arms and legs open and inviting, hungry. I was hungry for her as well.

I kneeled at the edge of the bed, grasping her ankles and pulling her to me.

"Oh! What?" she cried.

"Enjoy," I said, putting her legs over my shoulders and diving into her.

She spread her legs, inviting me in, then held my head with her hands as her legs clamped me in place.

I loved where I was, surrounded by her, my arms under her bottom and my hands around her waist, hearing her cries both amplified and muffled by hot thighs.

She crashed through one orgasm quickly. Her grip wasn't as tight as I eased and teased her to the edge again, but I didn't carry her over. I backed away from her button, trying to find out how far into her I could stick my tongue. As I teased, bringing her to the edge again and backing off, she threw her legs open, pulling my head closer with her hands.

I quickly turned her face-down on the edge of the bed, her legs hanging off the side. I moved up and slid into her.

My thighs trapped hers against the bed; my hands held her waist as I thrust into her. I slammed into her twice, then held her, moving from side to side, pushing in as deep as I could, enjoying the feel of her bottom. I glanced up her back to see her gripping the bedspread, moaning with closed eyes, her face contorted with pleasure.

A few slow strokes, a few hard ones, and she pressed her bottom against me. I held her, swirling in her again, hypnotized by the undulation of her hips.

Something in our position changed, and I was pressing against her inner gate. As she started moaning and spasming around me, I felt my orgasm build incredibly from within me. I held her waist, pulling in deeper, feeling. She pulled her knees together and my stomach muscles contracted more, going so deep into her as I came, rocking my hips, feeling her bottom pressed against me.

I collapsed on top of her, my eyes closing as I kissed her back. We started slipping off the bed, and the only thing I could do was hold on to her. We slipped off, comforter and all, ending in a heap on the floor. We laughed a bit, still trying to catch our breath, and I held on, still deep in her. She flipped part of the comforter back over me as we lay together on the floor.

As we untangled, she had the dress again, tucked between her legs. She sat on the floor next to me. I moved to my back, looking up at her. Her eyes were sparkling again. Her lips were pink. She had a wonderful glow. I reached up to cup a breast. She put a hand on my side.

“That was incredible,” she said, digging fingernails into me lightly.

“I could eat you for hours,” I told her.

She smiled, then put a hand over mine, squeezing her breast.

“I could suck on you for hours,” I added softly.

“Mmm... We’ll have to try that,” she said, moving her fingers to help me feel her breast.

She shook her head, sighing, then looked up. “Is it too early to go to bed?”

“And hold you? Not at all.”

We got up and moved together for another kiss.

“Did you know you have a waist that needs to be held,” I told her as I kissed her shoulder.

She sighed again. I felt her breath catching, and moved a hand to hold her head against my chest. I held her gently, rocking a bit. “It’s okay, Amy -- I’ve got you.”

She was still subdued in the bathroom. I watched in awe as she brushed her teeth. Her legs were so trim, her stomach flat, with that sexy curve down near her curls, her tantalizing breasts jiggling as she leaned over the sink brushing her teeth.

She caught me -- she turned her head and saw me. She smiled, chuckled a bit, and rinsed her mouth. “What is it?” she said as she stepped closer to me, touching my waist.

“You are so beautiful,” I told her.

She chuckled softly as she ran her hands from my waist up my chest and to my shoulders.

“You’re biased.”

“You bet,” I said, putting her hands around my neck again, wrapping my arms around her, and giving her a kiss.

She looked up into my eyes. “Please hold me?” she whispered.

I kissed her forehead. “As long as you want.”

On my back in bed, she curled up at my side, her head on my chest. I held her. Why did he do it? I don't know. So many things I don't know -- but I knew I had a warm, soft woman next to me.

I woke a little before seven. I visited the loo and returned to bed, snuggling up to her. I was about asleep when she got out of bed, returning quickly. We snuggled together like spoons.

Her bottom felt so nice, so inviting. I snuggled closer and my hips started moving on their own. She moved a hand and started stroking my hip and thigh, occasionally sliding down to the front of my hip. I buried my head in her hair, kissing and biting her neck.

As she moved her hand, I opened my hips to give her access. Her fingers touched my hard cock, sending a thrill through me. I moaned appreciatively in her ear.

She moved to her back, lifting her leg closest to me and pulling me closer. I moved to slide into her as she continued to tease me with her hands.

As I slid in, she turned, rolling to her side and then to her stomach. I followed, enjoying her bottom. I lifted a bit as she pulled her knees up a little, moving underneath me. I fit against her bottom so nicely. I pushed in and she wiggled. She must have had a hand between her legs; she touched my balls and my stomach muscles contracted even more, pulling me into her.

We moved together; she rocked her bottom as I slid in and out, holding myself up a bit on my elbows, kissing and biting the back of her neck, moving to her ear as she turned her head.

She started moaning, moving more vigorously. My lips sought her ear as my hips moved on their own.

“Oh... Oh... Oh yes!” she moaned.

I growled and tried to devour her left earlobe as she cried out.

Her bottom released to the bed, her knees going together. I propped myself up on my arms more, my legs outside hers as I rode her bottom, getting closer, closer, pumping into her and collapsing on top of her.

I rolled us to our sides, still holding on, still inside her, still kissing the back of her neck through her hair.

I dozed off holding her, waking to her wiping me off with the dress. I wrapped my arms around her, pulling her close, taking a nipple in my mouth and holding her to me. She held me, moaning appreciatively.

“And I thought I was the cuddleslut!” she whispered later on.

I moved my head between her breasts, content to hear the beating of her heart.

But eventually we got up, got dressed, and got to work.

As expected, I did the heavy lifting. But Amy worked hard as well, as painful as it must have been. I loaded boxes of her books from the garage into the back of my Grand Cherokee; we'd take them to the storage locker. The three of us had been playing with plans for built-in bookcases in the small upstairs bedrooms of our units. Not going to happen.

"Amy?" I called out. I needed guidance on what to move next.

"Up here," she called from upstairs.

I found her in the office/small bedroom. She was sitting at the computer, one of the remotes in the programming cradle.

She frowned at the screen, then looked at me. "Just in time -- where are those movies?"

I looked over her shoulder; she was running the interface builder for the remote.

"Sure you want to know?" I asked her.

She gave me a cold smile. "Yes. I want every button on this thing to bring up one of them."

I nodded and put my hand over hers on the mouse. With a few clicks, I brought up the directories.

My hand still over hers, she moved the mouse to point to the "raw" directory.

"What the hell is this?" she asked.

I shrugged my shoulders in response.

She opened the folder. I started to leave, but she said, "Please -- sit with me."

I pulled up a chair and sat, putting a hand on her back for emotional support.

John had saved the raw video. Not only that, but the first few seconds of each recording showed the time and date it was made. The oldest was fourteen months ago, the newest, of her riding him, was less than a month old. I also had the feeling from the last one that she was putting on a show for the camera.

"Amy, I'm sorry," was all I could say.

Her hands were a little shaky, but she started connecting the remote's on-screen buttons to movies.

"Want to see a trick?" I offered. Hell, I was in this over my head already.

“Sure,” she said, her voice surprisingly strong.

“I use this one up at the house,” I told her as I pulled up a chunk of sample code.

“This randomly plays something from the directory you point it at,” I explained.

“Cool,” she said with a wicked grin.

She made short work of pasting that into each button, and reprogrammed his remote.

She stood up with a fierce smile. “Did you pack mine?” she asked me.

I nodded. “Already packed. I’ve moved all the boxes. What next?”

“Hold me,” she said softly, hurt and vulnerable again.

I held her and rocked her. She cried, and so did I.

We didn’t finish until after five. “Shower with me?” I asked her after downing a glass of cold water in the kitchen.

She nodded.

We went upstairs and stripped. “I’m going to do laundry later tonight,” I told her. “Put your things in with mine.”

“Already did,” she called from the bathroom.

The shower felt grand, and having someone to wash, and to wash me, felt even better.

“Ooh, dinner may have to wait,” she said as she lathered up my cock and balls. I was hard in her hands, and holding her shoulders as I leaned against the tiled wall.

“Not if you keep that up,” I managed to tell her.

“Really?” she said, becoming more energetic.

My reply was incoherent.

She stepped to the side, turning me a little, and rinsed me. My head started to clear. That had been intense.

She pushed me back against the tile wall and squatted down in front of me, quickly taking me in her mouth. I moaned again.

She worked me with her mouth and her hands, surprising me with a finger slipping in my back door as I got to the edge. She sucked and swallowed, draining me. I held on to her shoulders as my knees started to buckle. She stood up and held me. We rinsed and dried.

I tried to push her to her back on the bed and return the favor, but she resisted. "Later," she told me with a smile.

We went out to dinner. She insisted on driving, and buying. We ended up at Black Angus for red meat. Afterwards, we browsed a bookstore, looking but not buying.

I thought she was holding up well. I was wrong. We pulled into the driveway and she broke down. She sat there, holding the steering wheel, crying. I finally put the car into park, got out, and helped her out of the car and into my place. I left her sitting on the couch while I parked her car.

She was still crying when I came back in, although not as much. I walked her upstairs. We got ready for bed. I held her close, and went to sleep still holding her.

We made slow, gentle love Sunday morning. We worked slowly, not talking a lot, but touching, sighing, holding.

As we packed the cars, I deliberately put enough in mine so that we'd need hers as well. I could see both sides, or at least imagine both sides -- her needing, wanting to be protected, dependent; but I also wanted her to be able to do what she wanted, not relying on me, forcing her to consider her own independence and what she needed to do.

I don't know if she'd brightened as the morning passed, but she was standing up straighter, and seemed to have more energy and determination.

Upstairs in my place, she picked up the dress we'd been using as a towel for our lovemaking. "One last thing," she said, a determined grin on her face. She led me next door.

She sighed and shook her head as we looked around in her old place -- she'd kissed it goodbye. John's booby-trapped remote sat on the coffee table. She nodded and took me upstairs.

"Strip," she told me, pointing to the bed.

I started unbuttoning my shirt. She stepped into their closet, throwing the dress on the floor on John's side, a look of disgust and resolve on her face. She rummaged in his side of the closet, pulling out a shirt.

It was long-sleeved, black, raw silk or something similar. She took it off the hanger and tossed it to the bed.

I was somewhat apprehensive. The look on her face told me she was quite determined, and her eyes held mine as she took off her clothes.

My apprehension faded quite quickly with her touch. Her skin was so soft and warm, her hands so warm and exciting.

"I want to sit up on you," she whispered in my ear as our hands ran over each other.

She positioned us on the bed, sitting on top of the shirt. She moved to my lap and we kissed, fanning the flames. Both of us were soon ready -- with a wiggle and a sigh, we were together again. Her legs wrapped around me, kissing her and pulling on her shoulders again, so good.

I felt myself getting close. I wanted to curl up in her, hold her, but she pushed back, leaning me back but holding me up at the same time.

I opened my eyes and found her staring at me. She acknowledged my gaze and her smile changed, became more intense.

Holding me in her eyes, she did something with her hips. I moaned.

She held me in her eyes, driving me crazy with the motion of her hips, pursing her lips.

Wham -- she did something else and I moaned again, a few glorious strokes away from the edge. I needed her; I wanted her -- I needed to satisfy my mouth with her warmth and softness.

A few more strokes and I was there -- she slowed down, prolonging it, deliberately drawing it out, then pulling me to her and kissing me as I pulsed into her, my arms holding her as best I could.

She held me up, rocking her hips and kissing me hungrily. Finally she let me lean back. We separated with a slurp; I felt the shirt under me being pulled up as she moved to give me a nipple.

She wiped us off so gently. I had to chuckle, looking at her sitting next to me on the bed, sitting on that shirt, wiggling her bottom in defiance, then leaning over to kiss me so softly.

We got up and dressed. She tossed the shirt in the closet with a smile, and a sound of disgust and finality. I understood better -- as she'd been making love with me, she'd been fucking John...

Sunday noon -- both our cars packed, we drove to the law firm. Nancy drove me to the townhouse, bringing along Mark, an off-duty cop. We parked in one of the townhouse guest spots, went into Amy's place, and waited. Mark offered to do the deed, but I said I'd told Amy I'd do it.

We got there around one thirty. John was due around two thirty.

I looked around the place. It had empty places in it, things missing here and there, where we'd taken out what Amy wanted. Everything we could take out was either in the cars or in my storage locker. I sighed and shook my head as I looked around. Nancy gave me an interesting look, but didn't probe. We sat and waited in silence.

John arrived about a quarter to three.

He recognized me, but not the other two. "Jim -- where's Amy? Who are these people?"

I stood up and handed him the papers. "John, Amy has filed for a divorce."

I thought that was that.

Wrong.

Not only didn't I have time to duck, I didn't even have time to quack. He hit me twice in the face, knocking me down. Mark tackled him and held him.

The local cops arrived a few minutes later. My nose was still bleeding.

Evidently Nancy and Mark had given the cops some warning. The cops cuffed John and hauled him off. Nancy drove us to the local emergency room. While we were waiting, a cop took my statement. Was I willing to press charges? You betcha!

We left about an hour and a half later. My nose wasn't broken, just bent. Maybe a mild concussion, definitely a black eye.

When we got to the law office, Amy ran up to me, hugging me. "It's okay," I told her. "Don't start crying, please."

Paul and Nancy sent us off. They had the phone number for the house.

Amy followed me. My head hurt, and my vision was a little blurred. At that time on a Sunday night, the traffic was all going the other way.

We made a stop for groceries and a fast-food dinner, pulling up to the house a little after eight. I got out to unlock the gate. She stopped behind me.

I walked to her car, enjoying standing and stretching. She rolled down her window.

"Hello beautiful," I told her, then leaned over for a quick kiss. My nose brushed her cheek, and hurt like hell.

"Follow me up about fifty feet, and I'll close the gate behind us."

"I can do that," she told me.

"Okay -- don't worry about locking it though. There's a particular way to lock 'em -- I'll show you tomorrow."

She smiled. "Okay."

After closing the gate, we proceeded up the hill. My property is along a ridgeline to the south of the road. It doesn't look like much as you drive up, and that's quite deliberate. The view is to the south, with most of the house hidden from view. It's single level, about three thousand square feet, a mix of small and large spaces. It started out as where we were going to live when we retired. The project stalled for a while after the accident. It took off again the last year as the minor settlements came in and we hammered out the major settlement. Now I was building for me, for my retirement, and I didn't have to worry about a budget.

I chuckled as we came to the ridge top -- I wish I could see the look on her face. From the top all you see is an old single-wide mobile home. It was going to be moved; its days had been over for seven or so months. I headed down the side path to the house proper. With a south exposure, a wide overhang covers the run of the front. Most of the house is built into the hill, with many feet of earth covering it. Underneath the overhang is a lot of glass. The automation systems I'd installed seemed to be working -- lights were on dim in the house.

I got out of my car and stretched. It was good to be back.

I felt arms going around my waist. I put an arm around Amy's shoulder.

"It's so quiet here!" she whispered.

"Yup," I told her. "During the day, you can hear the bees fart."

She laughed -- the first time I'd heard her laugh in a few days.

"And at night the sky is filled with stars."

She put her arms around my waist. "I'll bet."

"Give you the tour?"

She sighed and gave me a squeeze. "Sure."

I unlocked and opened the front door. "You need to close doors securely, or the place tends to accumulate vermin -- mice and lizards, mostly."

She nodded.

Good -- that didn't freak her out. Some of my colleagues from work freaked out over the sight of mice. I shook my head -- lucky they hadn't seen the snakes.

Remembering snakes hit me hard. I coughed to get my voice back, then picked up my remote and started music playing through the house. I showed her the two small bedrooms and the office at one end of the house, then the master suite at the other end.

"This is fantastic!" she said, looking around the bedroom. She put her arms around my neck, wiggling her bottom suggestively.

"Let's get things unloaded first." Guess I don't need to worry about the guest room.

Her lower lip came out in a pout.

"Please --then we can relax."

She pouted more, but that changed to a smile. "Okay."

She started to let go of my neck. I sat on the bed and held her to me, pressing my head into her bosom. "Amy, you are beautiful and delicious, and I want to spend as much time in your arms as you can stand."

"Oh, yes," she said, holding my head.

But when she did, that tweaked my nose, and it hurt like hell. I had to push back.

She looked at me questioningly.

"Sorry, my nose still hurts," I told her.

She muttered, "That bastard," with her jaw set grimly.

We unloaded the cars. By the time we were done, it was almost nine.

With a smile, I took her hand. We walked outside, up the path to the upper level.

"Were you scared, when you saw the trailer?" I asked her, my arm around her waist.

She managed a chuckle. "Yes, a little."

We were on level ground again. She faced me, arms around my waist, our hips together. "But I knew you'd been working on the house, so I was willing to take the risk."

"Thank you," I told her. I didn't look at my watch -- I looked up at the sky. "It takes a while for your eyes to adapt," I whispered.

"It's beautiful," she whispered in return.

"So are you," I told her.

We hugged, then kissed. I had to be careful about my nose.

We made our way back to the house. I told her the trailer was being moved to a neighbor's place on Friday.

"Bed time," Amy whispered.

My nose hurt like hell, and the right side of my face felt funky as well. We found a comfortable position in bed with me at her side, relaxing to a nipple and the feel of skin against skin.

I started to doze off, but turned my head a little -- ooch! Pain from my nose made me alert again -- alert to the tightness of her nipple, and the scent of her arousal.

I moved my hand to her thatch, moving through slowly. She sighed appreciatively, moving her legs apart a bit. I teased her gently, in time to the attention I gave her nipple.

I paused momentarily, then matched the motion of her hips. In response to hungry sounding noises, I slipped a finger into her, then another. I curled them back, gently urging her closer, closer. As she got closer to the edge, I tried to take more of her into my mouth, and slid my thumb up to entice her button. She squeezed my head to her as she moaned and shook, finally panting, "Stop, please."

I rested my hand on her curly thatch and my head on her chest, listening to her racing heart.

But I didn't listen for long. She teased me and pushed me to my back. The warm glow of satisfaction I had from pleasing her was quickly replaced by intense pleasure as she took me in her mouth briefly, teasing me, then moving on top of me, taking me deep inside her. I reached for her waist but she grabbed my wrists and pushed them above my shoulders as she ground on me with her hips.

Our ride was brief but intense. "Oh, that's nice," she murmured as I pumped into her.

She cleaned us up and we snuggled together again. This time my heart was racing.

I woke up alone in the morning. I visited the bathroom -- the right side of my face was starting to show some color. I put on my sweats. Music was playing in the main part of the house; not surprising, since I'd set up Amy and John's remotes using the templates I'd put together. Getting closer to the kitchen, I smelled bacon.

"Good morning," I called out.

Amy was standing at the stovetop, wearing a t-shirt and sweatpants. She turned, smiling.

"Did you sleep well?" I asked.

She gave me a big hug. "Yes, I did. I woke up early and went for a walk. What are the little birds running around, the ones that have something hanging from their heads?"

"Quail -- tasty, but I think we've already caught all the dumb ones."

She smirked. "And I thought I saw a cat, but it looked kind of big."

"No tail?" I asked.

She nodded.

"Bobcat -- we have a few around here. They like quail as well."

"He was pretty. How do you like your eggs?"

"Two over easy?"

"Coming right up."

"Plans for today?" I asked her as we ate breakfast.

"I thought I'd make some phone calls."

I nodded. "No problem -- I've got a wide-coverage plan."

"I wanted to get some more groceries, and, um, I looked in the trailer this morning. I want to spend some time cleaning it."

"Okay, the keys are hanging in the little case by the door. I made a pass over it when I moved down here, about oh, six or seven months ago."

She smiled. "That's okay -- I want to do it."

"There's always afternoon naps," I suggested.

She leaned her head forward a bit. "Oh?"

I shrugged. "Another option for you to consider."

She put her hand on mine. "I'll consider it."

We cleaned the kitchen together. I gave her the trailer keys, and showed her around the garage. Eventually it will be a three car garage, but it still had construction materials in it. I showed her the side door and unlocked it, telling her that the same vermin rules applied. She found the vacuum cleaner.

I went to my office and got to work. I think she spent about an hour on the phone. I heard doors opening and closing.

I took a break a little before noon and walked up to the trailer. I heard her singing to herself.

But when I stuck my head inside, she turned her head a little to the side and sighed.

“Take a break for lunch?” I suggested. What was I in trouble for?

She nodded, managing a smile.

“I went through there when I moved into the house,” I told her as we walked down the hill together.

She put her arm around my waist. “And that was quite a while ago. You did a good job taking things out, but it still needs to be cleaned.”

I’d been married long enough to recognize faint praise. My best bet was to stay quiet.

We had sandwiches for lunch. “Want me to help clean?” I offered.

She smiled and shook her head. “No; actually, I’m having fun. I wish there was a phone up there though.”

“Take the cordless -- there’s a base station up there, I just have to turn it on.”

She gave me a hug. “That would be great.”

She headed back to cleaning, cordless phone in hand. Something told me we weren’t going to get a nap today.

She popped into the office around two thirty. She gave me an interesting look, then smiled. “I’m going for groceries. Any requests?”

I pulled her closer and nuzzled her through her top. She held me long enough for me to sigh and start to melt in her arms. “I’ll be back,” she whispered, kissing me on the head.

I sat with my eyes closed for a while, enjoying the afterglow from being held, my head still full of her scent.

Amy got back around four in the afternoon. As I helped her unload groceries, I told her, “Nancy called -- she wants you to call.”

“Oh? What did she have to say?” she asked as we hugged.

“Didn’t ask, and she wouldn’t tell me,” I replied.

She called as I was putting things away.

“Oh really,” she said, surprised and amused. “No, never -- I would have called the cops! ... Nope, not interested. ... Okay, call me later in the week. Bye.”

She put down the phone and gave me a big hug.

“Well?” I asked.

She shook her head, smiling. “Guess who had a small bag of weed fall out of his pocket when he was booked at the police station?”

I frowned. “No shit?”

She nodded. “And I haven’t done any since about halfway through college -- certainly not since I’ve been married and working. Like I told Nancy, if I’d found out, I would have called the cops -- something like that could cost me my job!”

I nodded, relieved. “What’s happening now?”

She sighed. “The cops didn’t keep him overnight. The message he left on Nancy’s voicemail last night was really nasty. But he called her today and his story was a lot different. He wanted to know what to do -- she told him he needed to talk to a lawyer. He wanted to talk to me, and I told her I’m not interested, at least not now.”

My arms were around her waist. “Are you sure?”

She frowned. “Jim, he’s been screwing that little bitch for almost a year and a half! It’s over -- it was over months ago. It just took me a while to figure it out.”

I held her.

“Walk up to the trailer with me?” she asked, her head still on my chest.

“Sure.”

“It’s so quiet up here, and so pretty!” she told me as we walked the path.

“You have to think so, if you live out here,” I agreed. Late September -- cooling down quite a bit in the evenings. “In another month, it will be cold and windy. We get some good storms during the winter, too.”

“Does it snow?”

“It doesn’t stick -- you need to go over to Arnold.”

“Remind me to check the air in the tires,” I told her as we got to the trailer.

“This is wonderful,” I told her as we stepped inside. “This looks better than when we bought it!” Everything sparkled.

The look on her face changed. "I wanted to ask you about something," she said softly.

"Okay," I answered.

She took me by the hand to the bedroom and sat me on the bed. She opened the closet and took out a framed picture. My stomach did a flip-flop -- so that's where it went -- I didn't need to see it to know what it was.

She sat next to me and showed me the picture. It was an 8 by 10 print of the four of us.

I took a breath, feeling my throat fill with emotion.

"This was taken about two and a half years ago. That's me, plus about 50 pounds, my wife, our daughter, and son." The kids were standing in front of us, each holding one end of a snake. Our daughter had the head, and was sticking her tongue out at it. "The snake greeted us when we opened the trailer. It was non-poisonous, but still a surprise. A friend took the picture."

I was surprised I'd been able to say all of that. I guess I'd hidden that picture the first time I came up after the accident; I hadn't seen it for a long time.

I took another breath. "About six months after that picture was taken, the three of them were killed by an idiot running a red light," I told her.

I felt my eyes filling with tears. She held me as I cried.

I insisted on taking the picture with us when we walked back to the house. I put it on one side of the fireplace mantle. The four of us looked so happy. This was something I should remember, how happy we were.

Amy fixed fajitas for dinner. I fixed strong tequila sunrises as an accompaniment.

We cleaned the kitchen, then took a walk, holding hands, silently watching the sun set. The wind picked up again, gusty and cold. We headed back to the house.

The phone rang. I answered it -- a gal named Andrea calling for Amy. I checked with Amy; she took the call. I wandered back to my office to give her privacy.

Looking out at the sun setting over the valley, I thought about how quickly our lives could change. Yet the memories remained. I smiled, remembering our daughter flicking her tongue out at the snake. Our son wanted to make it into a belt, but we convinced him we were better off having it eat mice. The first night we'd spent on the property over four years ago, sleeping on an air mattress in our tent; getting the trailer; digging the foundations. So many memories. I could keep all the good in those memories.

And Amy? How about her? How many of her memories were now poisoned?

A while later I noticed the light on the phone was out. I stood up.

I stopped in the hallway; I could hear her crying.

Leaning against the wall, wondering what to do -- try to help, or leave her alone?

I remembered all those who tried to help me, and somehow knew that for every attempt I remembered, there were undoubtedly just as many I'd ignored. I took a breath and walked into the room.

She was sitting on the couch, only crying a little now. I sat arm's length from her and put a hand on her shoulder. She didn't look up.

"Amy, I don't know what to do. It hurts to see you cry. Can I do anything to help?"

She took a sobbing breath and managed to raise her head, forcing a slight smile. "Thanks, Jim -- you're doing a lot."

I started to get up, but she pulled me back to the couch. As I sat down, she put her arms around me, putting her head on my chest. I leaned back and held her as she cried some more.

"I need to make another call," she told me after a while.

"Okay."

She looked in my eyes. "Don't wait up for me."

"I'll hold you, if that's what you need."

She nodded. "I will..."

We hugged again. With a sigh, she picked up the phone.

I cleaned up and went to bed. I don't know what time she came to bed, but she curled up next to me and I held her.

When we made love Tuesday morning, she had energy, determination again. She smiled as we showered together, but I felt something else.

When we went into the kitchen, I had a better idea, observing how she looked around.

She offered to clean up, so I could get to work. I thanked her.

I glanced up from my writing -- she was on the phone again. Good; working things out.

She came into the office around eleven. I could see determination and fire in her eyes. She pulled up her top, turned my chair around, grabbed my head, and pulled me to a nipple.

We made it to the bedroom, shedding clothes along the way.. She squeezed me until I melted in her arms, then slid a pillow under me and moved on top.

One of the benefits of age, I guess -- having her on top of me felt so glorious, and I knew I wasn't going to come any time soon. I held her waist, pulling us together, rocking my hips, meeting her motion, helping her along.

I could feel her getting close. Her nipples bouncing in front of me looked so tasty, and I was so hungry for them. I slid my hands up her waist, pulling myself up to meet them.

She moaned as I took a nipple in my mouth. I took her nipple between my teeth, biting gently, rolling it between my teeth. I felt her motion change, and her grip on my cock increase.

"Other side," she panted, helping me switch to the other side. "Oh God!" she cried as I tasted and teased the other nipple. "Now suck, honey, suck!" she commanded.

I sucked on her, taking as much of her breast in my mouth as I could, feeling her quiver and press down on me. Soon it was my turn to start moaning as I got close.

She ground her hips, growling, "Oh yeah, oh nice..." as I came inside her.

We collapsed together and curled up.

I was awake again, holding her. She sighed and turned in my arms to face me. I held her.

"Jim," she said.

I closed my eyes. The tone of her voice told me all I needed to know.

"What, sweetie?" I asked, expecting the form, not knowing the exact substance.

She sighed again. "I'm moving in with Andrea at work."

"Okay," I replied. "How can I help?"

"I ... I'm driving back tonight, so I can be at work tomorrow. Are you still driving back Saturday?"

I felt the tears on my face. I held her gently, but I wanted to hug her fiercely, not let her go. "Yes," I whispered.

She sighed again, moving slightly. "I'll give you her phone and address. Call when we can come over and pick up things?"

“I’ll be glad to help, Amy,” I managed to whisper.

She started to say something, but broke into tears. I held her, crying quietly myself.

We packed her car. We walked around the property, holding hands. They needed her at work, she told me. My heart cried out that I needed her too, but my voice remained silent. Andrea needed a roomie, was close to work, and John didn’t know her or where she lived.

“This place is so quiet, so peaceful,” she said, looking out over the valley.

I held her once more. “It’s here any time. All you have to do is call.”

She held me.

“I’ve got to go. I can get the gate,” she told me.

One last hug. I closed her car door. “Please, call me when you get there,” I asked, barely able to speak.

I saw her chin wobble, tears coming down from behind her sunglasses as she nodded.

I forced a smile, waving to her as she drove away.

Tuesday night, about seven o’clock. The kitchen was clean. I prodded my laptop computer and picked up a green folder from the top of the stack of green folders from work. Might as well get something done.

A tear rolled down my cheek.

Fin
09/01/2004

C3

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