

Newly Weds

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Kristy and Derek followed Sara into the apartment. Derek brushed past Sara. He tried to make a show of examining the place. Like he knew what to look for. He didn't. Just married, this would be the first time they lived together. Kristy didn't want to move so far away from friends and family but Derek had gotten a good job.

"This unit hasn't had any tenants yet. Everything should be in tip top shape."

Sara said.

"Did the suicide happen here?" Derek said.

"Suicide?"

"Derek!" Kristy said.

Derek didn't acknowledge Kristy.

"The guy who built the building or whatever? I heard he committed suicide in one of the apartments."

Kristy could tell Sara was annoyed. She admired the woman's ability to stay firm.

"Richard. He didn't hang himself here."

Derek looked disappointed.

"Is his apartment available?"

Kristy stepped towards Derek. He still didn't acknowledge her. Only continued to look at Sara.

"I'm sorry. He has this thing about wanting to live in a haunted place. This apartment is perfect. I don't want to live somewhere where someone hung themselves."

Kristy said.

Derek finally acknowledged Kristy. He turned to look at her.

"It'd be great! Wake up in the middle of the night and see some ghost hanging from our ceiling."

Derek pretended like he had a noose around his neck, lifting his arm up to mimic hanging himself.

“Stop!” Kristy said.

Kristy stepped towards Sara.

“We’ll take it. Won’t we?”

Kristy shot a glance back towards Derek.

“Yeah.” Derek said.

Kristy was glad that was over with. She just wanted to settle in. Derek could be brash but since graduation and the wedding it seemed worse. Kristy thought it might just be the stress of transitioning. She hoped settling into their new life would calm him down a bit.

When Kristy entered the apartment she saw Derek was home. He sat on the couch, just staring at the TV. He was covered in dirt. Some of it covered the floor and couch. He would probably expect her to clean it up.

“TV not working?”

“Isn’t hooked up. Where have you been?”

“Running.”

Kristy headed toward the bathroom.

“Aren’t you going to hook it up?”

“I’m taking a shower.”

Kristy entered the bathroom and removed her top. Derek came up behind her and started to fondle her tits. He pressed her against the sink. Rubbing himself against her. She tried to push back. Her hand slipped a little bit on the counter.

“I just want to take a shower.”

“You owe me something.”

Kristy looked at herself in the mirror. She saw the streaks of dirt his hands left on her body. He would keep pestering her if she didn’t give in. He didn’t wait for answer and started to remove her running shorts. She winced as she felt the tip of his penis.

She looked back up at the mirror. She jumped. She thought she saw someone walking through their apartment. But looking again no one was there. No one was in their apartment.

“Damn it!”

Kristy avoided looking directly at Derek.

“My legs are sore. Can we do missionary?”

“Fine.”

Derek grabbed her arm and led her to the bedroom. He thrust her onto the bed.

“Lube?” she said.

Derek huffed, went to the nightstand, and rummaged through the drawer. He drizzled some lube onto his dick and climbed onto the bed. Derek didn't look at her. He seemed lost in his own mind. No focus on her. Each thrust was just another tick until it was over. Derek let out a heavy sigh as he came. Kristy felt the pulsating warmth of his dick as it filled her up. It disgusted her. He left her on the bed without a word.

Kristy returned to the bathroom. She looked at herself in the mirror. Her body was covered in more of the dirt. Cum dripped along her inner thigh. She pulled out some candles from under the sink and arranged them on the sides of the bathtub. After lighting the candles she locked the door and ran hot bath water.

The water cleansed Kristy's body. The dirt and cum washed away. After Kristy scrubbed away everything she drained the tub and ran fresh water. She leaned back and thought about how alone she felt. She hadn't made any friends since moving. She just had Derek. They didn't have the same interests. And while he made her feel good most of the time he could make her feel like she didn't exist. Kristy drifted off to sleep as she tried to remember better days with Derek.

It was her apartment but it wasn't. It was like seeing one image superimposed over another. She stood in the kitchen. The counters were bare. A rickety table sat in

the center. Kristy was startled by a woman coming up behind her. The woman didn't acknowledge Kristy. Kristy turned and saw a little boy playing in the living room. Kristy turned back and the woman was inches from her. The woman grabbed Kristy's arm. Kristy tried to pull away. The woman's voice was muffled.

"We are better without them."

Kirsty tried to speak but her words came out as silence.

Tick.

Tick.

Tick.

The woman let go of Kristy's arm. The woman ran to her son. She kissed his forehead. She was saying something but Kristy couldn't hear. A clock ticked somewhere and it was getting louder. It began to echo. There was a banging at the door. Kristy moved closer to the woman. The room shifted. Flames engulfed everything. Kristy was left standing in the charred ruins of the apartment. Only the bones of the woman and her son remained.

The ticking grew quite. Kristy turned her head slowly. A figure stood there. It was hard to focus on him but she saw the pocket watch dangling from his wrist. She felt his smile as he moved closer. Kristy wanted to run. She felt something hard wrap around her wrist.

The water was cold. Most of the candles had burned out. There was a banging on the door.

"Sorry. I feel asleep." Kristy said.

"I've got to fucking go."

Kristy got out of the bathtub and wrapped a towel around herself. She unlocked the door and let Derek in.

"Why do women take so long?"

"I fell asleep."

Derek ignored her and pushed her out of the bathroom.

Sitting outside, Kristy watched the maintenance crew mow the lawn. Kristy rubbed her wrist. She couldn't shake the dream. She had never experienced anything so intense. She tried returning to her textbook but had trouble focusing.

Kristy looked up to see Sara with a shovel over her shoulder. Her clothes were covered in dirt. Light brown slivers streaked through her black hair.

"What're you studying?"

"Just some stuff for my online courses. Trying to get a Masters in history."

Sara tried to brush off some of the dirt from her suit jacket.

"I went to school for history," Sara tapped the ground with the shovel, "Focused on the history of this city. Some interesting stuff."

Kristy looked down at her textbook. She wondered if she should tell Sara about her dream.

"How do you guys like the apartment?"

"Nice. Still getting used to having a place of our own."

"First time living together?"

"Yeah. We got married over the summer. I didn't think..."

Kristy didn't want to say that she didn't think it would be so hard to live with Derek. She didn't think she would feel like a stranger in her own home. Something to just be used.

Sara looked at her watch.

"I've been through plenty of partners. Sometimes you just need to get out."

"I love him."

"You can love him. Doesn't mean you should be with him. Be careful. You never know what might try to take advantage of you."

When Kristy entered the apartment she found Derek pacing. He was ripping open drawers and cupboards.

“Saw someone.”

“Are you sure?”

Kristy thought about what she thought she saw before.

“She was real! You hear stories about some old hag hiding under your kitchen sink. It’s something like that. People find ways of hiding in your walls.”

Kristy tried to kiss Derek. She wanted to calm him down.

“Sit down.”

Derek pushed her back knocking her into the side of the counter.

“I know what I saw! And can’t you hear that?!”

“Hear what?”

“That laughing. Fucking kids.”

Kristy left Derek in the kitchen and went to the bathroom. She examined her side. It looked like it was bruised. She hissed as she pressed down on her skin. She looked under the sink for pain meds but fell back on the floor.

There was a translucent boy crouched in the cupboard. He smiled at her and put a finger to his lips. He looked familiar. The boy from the dream. She reached out to touch him. But he turned away from her and vanished into the back of the cupboard.

Kristy rubbed her belly as she thought about the possibility of having kids. Would Derek stay if she got pregnant? She wasn’t sure anymore. There was a knock on the door.

“I’m going to go grab some tools. Stay out of the kitchen. Just stay in the bedroom.”

After Kristy heard Derek leave the apartment she walked out into the kitchen. Everything had been strewn across the floor. What was wrong with him? She reached

down to start picking stuff up but stopped. She didn't want to agitate Derek. Kristy grabbed her textbook and laptop and went to the bedroom.

The smell of alcohol hit Kristy in the face. Derek was on top of her. Kissing her neck. He tried to reach down her sweatpants.

"Stop!"

He didn't say anything. He tried to pull her sweatpants off. She pushed him off.

"What are you doing?"

Kristy looked at the clock and saw it was three in morning.

"You've been bitchy. Just need some cock. Let me loosen you up."

Derek tried to get back on top of her but she pushed him back and got out of bed.

"Get away!"

Derek moved towards Kristy. She backed up against the wall. She didn't know what to do. He placed both palms against the wall and leaned into her, smelling her hair.

"You've always been a tease. You made me wait so long. But now I get to fuck you whenever I want."

Derek unzipped his pants and started to stroke himself. Kristy kned him in the crotch. She pushed him across the room and out the door. Kristy locked the door.

Derek pounded on the door. Kristy sat in the corner with her hands over her ears. What was she supposed to do? Derek stopped pounding on the door and she started to hear noises from the kitchen. She wasn't sure what he was up to.

Kristy looked down at her phone. She wanted to call someone. But who would she call? She was so far away from everyone that cared about her. She was alone. Would they listen? Would they even believe her? Derek is nice. Was nice. He had always been pushy. But she just thought that's how guys were. Sex. Horny. They couldn't help themselves.

Kristy started to cry.

A chance look in European History. He bought her coffee every morning. A nice gesture. Her friends pushed her to go out with him. He's trying so hard they would say. Soon they were a thing. They never lived together before graduation. After graduating they married and moved. He changed. He didn't change. It became easier to see who he was. This was the man she married.

Kristy crawled into the bed. She loved him and she thought love meant looking past all his faults. She thought he would mellow. She thought she could make him better. She loved the man she wanted him to become more than the man he was. Kristy fell asleep staring at the ceiling.

Kristy woke up to silence. She walked out into the living room. Turning to look at the kitchen she saw it had been completely dismantled. Derek lay on the couch. A woman stood over him. Her hand phased into his head. Derek convulsed.

"What are you doing?"

The woman didn't speak. Kristy heard, felt what the woman thought.

*You don't need him. We don't need them.*

"Stop!"

The woman retracted her hand. Derek stopped convulsing.

"I don't need him. He's not the kind of person I thought he was. Wanted him to be. But I do love him. I don't want him dead."

*If he tries to hurt you I will...*

"He won't be around."

The woman stepped away from the couch and faded away. Derek started to wake up. He looked at Kristy.

"I'm sorry about last night. You know how I can get."

Kristy removed her wedding ring. She walked to the coffee table and dropped it down in front of Derek. Derek glared at her.

"I'm done." she said.

"Don't be a bitch."

"Last night was unacceptable."

"Come on. You're overreacting."

Derek got up from the couch and moved towards Kristy. She backed up against the wall.

"You're just a little pent up. Just need a good fucking."

Kristy shivered as she felt the wall grow cold. Derek stopped moving. For the first time Kristy saw fear on Derek's face. She felt something above her but she didn't look up. Whatever it was it was meant for Derek's eyes.

"I want you out."

Derek looked away from whatever he saw and nodded his head. He backed away towards the door and left. The air around Kristy warmed. She looked around and saw she was alone.

Sara finished drinking her tea. Kristy looked out the window as the rain drops streaked down. She wondered what would become of Derek. They hadn't spoken. She sent him the divorce papers and he returned them. It was official. She tightened the blanket around herself.

"Doing okay?"

"Yeah. Just adjusting."

Derek had been supporting her while she continued her education. She managed to find a nice office job after Derek left. For the first time she had to survive on her own. She had thought about moving back. But she wanted to grow stronger. She didn't want

another Derek in her life. If she moved back she felt like she would fall for another one. Here, on her own she would be forced to grow.

“Thanks for letting me stay here.”

“Wasn’t really your fault. After what he did to the kitchen I was glad to kick him off the lease.”

Sara gathered up the paper work on the table and placed it in her bag.

“Let me know if you need anything.”

“Thank you.”

“Remember what I said. You never know what will try to take advantage of you. You got rid of Derek but be careful.”

Sara left and Kristy sat alone at her table. She thought she heard a boy’s laughter. She looked and saw the outlines of a boy and his mother playing in the living room.