

“...I got something to tell you...”

Why shouldn't I worry? This probably changes things. No. It *definitely* changes things! *Every* thing. I had sex with Bart, a married man. Get it, you rash brain. I'm a married woman who just had sex with another woman's husband. And not simply another woman, but one of my friends. What was I thinking? Obviously, I wasn't.

I glanced over at Robbie, driving us home, tapping on the steering wheel and belting out the words to Billie Joel's *Only the Good Die Young* coming over the radio. “You Catholic girls start much too late...”

The irony of it all. I was one of them: a graduate eight years ago of St. Margaret's Academy, an all girls' high school run by the Sisters of Notre Dame. In my four years there, I had had negligible experience with boys--just a handful of dances in the gym at the neighboring Catholic boys' school. I never had a boyfriend. I was never even confident enough in myself to flirt, for I never found the girl looking back at me in the mirror to be anything but plain.

In college, no one had even asked me out until my junior year when Robbie did. I was so flummoxed, so flattered, so sure it must be a charity act that I spent the next two years at Macalester in perpetual gratitude, satisfying his every need. And right after graduation, with a BFA in painting, Miss flat chested and shy, but virgin no more Mary Johnson married Mister handsome, self-assured, going places Robbie Dwyer.

“I'd rather laugh with the sinners than cry with the saints...” he sang, glancing over at me, suggestively.

Did *he* do it, too? Did he have sex with Robyn in the hot tub after Bart and I got out? It was entirely possible. In the four years since we were married, he had confessed to at least a half dozen women who turned him on. The Swedish lab tech at work with the impossibly long lashes. The buxom Australian hostess at the Sunshine Factory, our Friday night watering hole. The neighbor from Kenya with the wide hips and muscular buttocks bulging out her short shorts as she dragged the sprinkler across the lawn. The Vietnamese manicurist, where I got my nails done, with the alluring-demurring smile on her face. My God, he had a fantasy girl from almost every continent. At least he was ecumenical.

But had he ever acted on any of these urges...other than acting them out in our bedroom? For whatever reason, his fantasies turned me on. They were so absurd, and far from making me suspicious, when he brought them up in bed at night, I wanted to play along. I became the big-bosomed Aussie who smothered him with her tits, or the wide assed African who yanked on his hose. We would start assuming these roles in all seriousness, but soon be laughing so hard that Robbie would get massive, I would become sopping wet, and we'd fuck fast and furious until we came in great gasps. Then we would kiss and hug, saying all those wonderful words of love to each other, before falling asleep entwined.

You know, it's amazing when you find yourself. All my scholarly life I had struggled with reading, writing essays, taking multiple-choice tests. But one thing I loved to do--and was good at--was rendering landscapes in pastel: layering wheat fields with raw sienna, coating barns and silos in brilliant cad red and alizarin crimson, foliating giant cottonwoods with varying shades of sap green, and stretching cobalt shadows

across lawns and patios, bending them up walls of grand white farmhouses.

I guess, in retrospect, it was how I sublimated my sexuality as a teenager. Years later, post art school--and after having given up on Catholicism--I discovered the co-existence of the creative impulse and drive for sexual gratification. It was then that my artistic successes began. People seemed to respond passionately to my new work. Collectors bought four, five, or six of my pieces. Each new series--the Dakotas, the Mississippi--won me acclaim at venues in Minneapolis, Santa Fe, Denver, and Chicago. I almost couldn't make enough for all the enthusiastic gallery owners. The result was gaining a measure of confidence, not only in art, but in love, which I had formerly never known, and which seemed so natural for others, like Robbie, Bart, and Robyn.

Oh my God, I forgot about Robyn, the red-haired nurse-midwife whose house we were just leaving. Robbie fantasized the most about that little spitfire--at least, she's the one who seemed to augment his cock the greatest. I remember his last "Robyn dream," a mere week ago: he and she were wrestling at the pond's edge after they emerged from a skinny dip on a sultry afternoon. They had started slinging playful insults at one another, until one literally slung a handful of mud, at which point the real fun began. Soon they were coated with a burnt sienna glaze and needing to go back into the water to wash each other off.

It made sense, that fanciful notion of his. Water was their thing. Robyn got covered in amniotic fluid when her patient's "water" broke, and Robbie worked as a field biologist with lake flora and fauna. Two science types, always with liquid things to talk about. We had left them in their element, soaking in the hot tub, when Bart and I got out to look at one of his new pastel paintings--*our element*.

Robbie drummed on the steering wheel. "You know that only the good die young...Tell you baby...Only the good die young..."

I was feeling really clammy now. What if he and Robyn did fuck in the hot tub? Would that be better--for me? After all, if *he* did it, why couldn't I? Or... did it spell the end of our marriage? Were we going to become one of those pairs of swinging couples whose relationship divided along fault lines? Little things that once seemed endearing qualities--my need to have everything in its place at home--would become an annoyance to him and an excuse for fleeing to Robyn. Or his insistence in correcting my retelling of a mutual experience--that I formerly had allowed with amusement--would become the hurt driving me to Bart and the consolation of his touch.

Jesus, what have I done? What have *we* done? We? Maybe *we* didn't do anything. Maybe only *I* did? And Robbie's trust in me will be shattered forever.

I reached over to touch his head, to pull my fingers through his dark, dark amber hair, with waves as luscious as my grassy prairies at sunset. He looked over and smiled, his gaze penetrating my eyes briefly before it returned to the road. "I love when you do that, Georgia," he teased, using the name of the artist, Georgia O'Keeffe, whom I had been the most influenced by in college.

He hadn't fucked Robyn after all. Great. Now I'm the fucker.

"I love doing that," I replied. "You know how much I crave your textures!"

Did I sound like the same me? Could he tell anything from the dampness of my fingers?

“We’ll be home in ten minutes,” he proclaimed. “Can’t wait to be in bed with you.”

Suddenly feeling queasy, I replied, “Are you wide awake? I’m so tired, I think I’m going to close my eyes for a bit.”

“I’m fine. Another good song!” And he was off, singing in perfect pitch, “But you gotta keep your head up, ohh-oh, and you can let your hair down, eh-hh-eh-...”

Maybe he’s too exuberant? I bet he *did* do it?

Do it.

Do it.

Did I really do it?

Did we? Bart and I? Do it?

Oh, Father Duffy, it’s times like these when I miss those confession sessions....

...Bart and I had dried off in front of his fireplace. The bromine from the hot tub was so strong we had taken turns rinsing off in the shower. With towels wrapped around us, we ascended the stairs to his studio and his magnificent nudes. If I relished the feel of textures through my fingers, my eyes delighted in the virtual touch of the skin tones in his paintings: strokes of raw sienna melding into caput mortuum, Indian red into purple violet and Thalo blue. His pastels had been blended with infinite patience, layer upon layer of pigment to create arm, chest, torso, groin, giving the effect of a radiance emanating from within.

For someone not in possession of the endowment, he painted the most sensuous breasts--with thick areolas and erect nipples--seemingly emerging from the paper, begging to be sucked.

I touched his arm to point out, on a nearby easel, the pair of lovers he was finishing, a man standing behind a woman, their hands holding five passion fruits against her chest. Excitedly, I inquired as to how he got her skin to glow with such warmth of golden ochre and crimson. He nestled my elbow in his palm as he eased me toward the painting and explained his artistic process.

It was fun having another artist to talk with, to puzzle out problems of color and value, to compare favorite painters and art philosophies. In college, I had been so head over heels involved with Robbie, that I did my course work, rushed back to the dorm to be with him, and didn’t give myself the time to make friends, let alone hang out with established teacher-artists in the art department. My BFA degree had landed me a graphic arts job with *Minnesota Life*, a glossy recreation magazine, and I spent over a year doing computer artwork, but again, no real artist contacts--and no art opportunities. When my school loans were nearly repaid, and Robbie was making enough for both of us to live on, I went back to painting with pastels. Within two years, I was showing in the Twin Cities; then, six months later, in three other major metropolitan areas. That experience brought me into contact with other artisans, most of them women, all of us doing different subjects. We exhibited together on occasion, got together for group-show receptions, but I never really developed an artistic kinship with any painter--until I met Bart.

He leaned into me as we conversed, and I maintained our inertia by pressing back. He took my left hand in his, and slipped his right arm around my back, supporting me as we talked about his lovers’ faces; the aura of contemplation; the mysteries of connection, communion, and commitment.

I told him how much I liked the piece, and he hugged me with appreciation. And

that's when we should have stopped. I could have inquired about the adjacent painting, the woman with the large guava facing the viewer and the man turning away with his smaller one. But I didn't. His hug felt so good. As did the wine, our soak in the hot tub, my newly-found confidence.

We rotated toward each other. He brought his lips to mine, and, rather than turn to accept his kiss on my cheek, I met him full on with my own. As our embrace progressed, intoxicatingly, I encircled his lanky waist and felt our towels drop away. With his manliness expanding against my belly and his hand raising tingles up my spine, I devoured his lower lip, squeaking a little in excitement when I felt his tongue enter my mouth.

With both hands he lifted up my tiny breasts, his fingers running over my nipples, as ripe as his painted ones, then pulled each with gentle traction, making them ache all the more. I moved off his mouth, and began kissing his chest, lightly brushing the russet hairs with my lips in an ever-expanding oval. Initially passing over his nipples, I returned to suck each to hardness and heard him groan as I bit down on them tenderly.

His finger pads moved down my spine to buttocks, backs of thigh, up to hipbones, and, twisting his hands around, his finger nails grazed across to my pussy tuft and up my abdomen to my back again, in a repeating hypnotic loop of arousal. When my tongue repaid his kindness, creating a saliva trail down his midline, my cheek butted into his erection. I turned deftly toward the large head, now deeply violet and glowing as hot as his figures' skin tones.

Clumsily, we maneuvered our entangled selves to his model stand, and found our way to sitting upon the shag carpet remnant atop the platform, my mouth locked around him, my juices oozing into the rug. His hand found my slot, and as I drew my teeth up and over his rim, I felt his fingers close around my clit, pinching it rhythmically to our breathing. My shrieks of pleasure were stifled by taking more of his cock deeper in my throat, and, as I rocked onto his hand, he began thrusting into my mouth.

"I'm gonna come," he whispered, urgently.

Having climaxed once already, and about to scream again, I was fully prepared to grant him his pleasure. Within seconds a hot bolus shot into my mouth, and this time I gurgled with delight as his flood of warmth quieted my cries.

One hand circled my head, his fingers pushing through my perspiring hair. The other, perfumed by my cunt-flower, was rubbed against cheek, neck, and shoulder, all the while he praised my beauty in muffled tones. I regained my resting breathing tempo, but all I could mumble was, "Wonderful, wonderful," as his cock slowly deflated in my mouth.

"You guys up there?" Robbie had hollered from the bottom of the stairs.

"Just gazing at some nudes," Bart had called back, so nonchalantly, I thought that perhaps I had been dreaming all the while. But of course I wasn't.

Bart and I had hurriedly wrapped our towels around us. He went ahead of me down the stairs, as I ducked into their bathroom to do a bidet-cleansing of my mouth, then joined everyone below to get dressed and prepare for our departure.

"We're home," announced Robbie. "Let's get right to bed. I love it when you're brominated."

I awoke from one nightmare to go back into what I feared was another. What

Robbie pronounced was true. Being brominated meant that by soaking in the hot tub, I was disinfected everywhere, and his tongue could explore my private place with relatively impunity. Any other time, his suggestion would have made me forgo my nightly mouth care, but this evening, I delayed our entry into bed by flossing and brushing--with lots of toothpaste. That would cover up any telltale tastes, but I didn't know if the delay would allow my brain to become re-engaged in love making.

Robbie and I have been very honest with each other. Well, I felt *I* have been completely honest, and I trusted full revelations would have been forthcoming from him. So as we pulled the sheets over our nakednesses, I wondered if I should bare all? "Do I tell him," I asked myself? Did I want him to tell me--if there was anything to tell?

What I knew more than anything was that I needed to have Robbie inside me right now. I had made a terrible mistake, but I needed to be loved by him for who I was--his imperfect wife. The one he comes home to. The one he treasures. The one to him, for all her faults, is the most important woman in the whole world. That's the way I felt about *him*, after all.

My decision was made by default. He began to kiss me on my mouth, his hands roaming over my breasts, his warmth surrounding me, making me forget all about the tryst of two hours prior. I felt wholly consumed by this man, desired in a way I hadn't felt before. He was possessed it seemed, and he ravaged me with his mouth, his tongue, his teeth, gnawing on my neck muscles, biting my nipples, tonguing deeply into my belly button as his fingers poked into my buttocks, scraped down my outer thighs and stroked back up the fronts.

His rigidity pressed against me, but I wasn't about to let this end too quickly. I kissed him back. Roughly. Biting his lip, his chin, then along jaw bone to ear lobe. He writhed with the discomfort, but moaned in pleasure, calling out, "Mary Johnson, I love you, *love* you."

In a trice he was upon me, kissing me with abandon. I carved my nails down his backside, and his tempo accelerated. "Fuck me, Robbie! Fuck me hard!!" I urged.

As I gripped his flanks, he pounded me, rocking our bed, the headboard cracking like a sledgehammer against the wall. In a voice an octave higher, I began to whine, inhaling sharply to fill my chest, about to explode into an earsplitting orgasm, when Robbie stopped. Pulled out. Rolled me over.

"What the...?"

"I need you completely tonight, M.J. All of you."

And he separated my ass cheeks and began nibbling that tender flesh around my anus, which drove me into the pre-ecstasy shudders. I knew what was coming next: his tongue would dive deeply into me, and I would light up our room with carmine, magenta, and cerulean lightning bolts, before flooding the bedsheets with a cloudburst from my womb.

And he did. And so did I. I screamed and screamed. When I was sated and the bed soaked, he turned me over and had his way with me, and I came for a fifth or sixth time--but who's counting when your man is shouting into your ear and filling your vaginal cup with the most exquisite of liqueurs.

As we lay aside each other in the warm puddle of us, both sweating from the physical effort, he professed just how much he cared for me. I knew exactly what he meant: I couldn't imagine loving another being more.

Well, yes I could.

With his hand moving over my hair, and warm exhalations against my cheek, he offered, “M.J., I got something to tell you.”

Sighing in relief, I answered, “And I got something to tell *you*, too.”