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BRUTAL BLACKMAIL

By Rax Guinness

Hauling against the resistance of the revolving office doors, you emerge and scramble to the train. The only goal is to get home in time to grab the mail as it comes. Becoming keenly aware of every stride, your feet and their awkward placement. Racing through puddles, distracted and frantic, not noticing them soaking your socks. Suddenly realizing how stupid you must look sprinting through the gritty acid rain of the city in full business attire. Rapid-fire thoughts alternating between the possibility that your ankle is going to turn in and cause you to fall, and the scenario in which a homeless man will try to accost you for change. Knowing that, for you, stopping means you will not get to your destination on time. If that happens, everything you've ever known will change.

A letter addressed to your wife is on a blazing trail to your mailbox. It contains quite a few pictures of you, nude and under bad lighting, with various things scrawled on your body. From the photographs, it is obvious that they were taken consensually. As you were directed, you leaned seductively into the camera, hands clasped together to plead and pray. A fumbling male attempt at emulating feminine sexuality, coupled with a genuine offering of yourself. The very self you worked so hard to construct as such a strong caricature of a man - wearing a small bra, with lipstick smeared hastily around your mouth. Your wife will rip through each picture, blinking away the tears from her eyes that cannot believe what she is seeing. Shaking and horrified. Somehow managing to wonder who the omnipresent deity of the camera was that saw this naked, vulnerable part of you. Who got to be there during your absolute deconstruction and subsequent sacrifice to this theophany? What sort of villainous and wicked creature delights in the documentation of such a raw, animalistic state; archiving vulgarity and fear? Most importantly... how could you do this to her? How could you hide these things?

A snap back into reality. The train conductor takes one last look out of his window to make sure the doors are clear to close. Terrified, you throw your weight onto the train, dropping several receipts out of your pocket, clutching for your wallet to make sure you can pay for the trip home. Getting kicked off the train wouldn't only embarrass you, at this point it would /ruin/ you.

All aboard, there are faces staring at you. Pondering all sorts of similar questions, looking at your clothing, puzzled. It's not every day they see a man dressed as well as you, looking so desperate. Mental illness can't be at fault, your behavior is too consistent. Drugs couldn't be the

culprit, you don't make any twitchy movements, nor do you have crusted scabs on your face or hands. It must be a girl, they concede. "Women make men crazy."

And in fact, it is a woman. Two women. Both want you for their own reasons.

One, to be her love. A man whom she trusts and has given herself to, year after year, and in return he is praised and cherished. A steadfast man full of quiet humor and love, though sometimes admittedly he may take her for granted and criticize her perceived flaws. A gentleman to love and honor her, as much as he thinks is reasonable. Strategically plans every life event.

The other, to be her toy. The worm that impales himself at the end of her hook, ready to be cast into the ocean, only until she cruelly rips it all out for a much larger return. Her fearful yet loyal sycophant, who cannot find her anything but flawless, gives every single ounce of devotion in his small body to her divinity, for as long as he can afford. Unable to contain his impulses.

In the end, he knows where the power lies.

The entire train ride was spent vacillating between hyperventilation and a panicked numbness. Through it all, you could feel your pulse coursing like small controlled explosions in your ears. When you found yourself unable to remain consumed with terror, you questioned all of the decisions made along the way. When you took the photographs, painted yourself like a dirty whore, scrawled those things -- badly -- on your body, you felt the sexual pulsations of erotic pleasure. They were the only focus. Unable to take any clear or logical actions, you simply did what you were told. And to follow those directions, being exposed and exploited, made you feel alive in ways you had not for many years. But why did you feel that way, when you knew what was at stake?

Naturally, your thoughts fall to excuses, because it's easier to justify a violation than to take responsibility. It's your wife's fault; she's so cold and critical sometimes that you just know if you told her about your desires she would reject you. The times that you dropped hints she was clearly disgusted by your hypothetical nudges. If she had just read your mind, you wouldn't have had to resort to this sort of sneaky and vile behavior. Then you consider your Domme, whom you once considered the most perfect woman alive - it's clearly her fault for enabling your behavior. She could have told you to stop. If she really cared about you, she would have never gone through the trouble of trying to ruin your life!

Nevermind that your wife has a right to know the sort of selfish and secretive scum she married. That your nudges to her were framed in a way that initiated the feigned disgust, as if you'd pity the poor schmuck who would ever do something oh so pathetic. Or that she shouldn't have to read your mind if you'd open your stupid mouth and be honest about how you truly feel,

instead of hiding in shame. Your cowardice is always the first foot you put forward. Not to mention that your Domme has a right to express any desires she would like fulfilled, without being reviled for them. After all, it is her honesty that gives her power. It is because you lack honesty that you are under her foot, squirming to death. This is what you asked for, and this is what you're getting: whether you like it or not.

The familiar feeling of "getting close to my stop" settles in your mind. Looking up, you realize that you're three stops away. Each stop takes a few minutes to disembark and board the throngs of passengers. A man in his usual pilotesque uniform (the sort you've admittedly envisioned in your forced-bi fantasies) walks uncomfortably close to you and asks through his walrus mustache, "your ticket?" Fumbling through mashed dollar bills, you hand him fare for the remaining zones. He squints, as if to size up your truth, and gives you a punched ticket. He brushes past you, close enough to make your heart race even faster. Almost home, and you're jolted back into the reality that today your life, as you know it, might end. All of your familiar fellow passengers get off at your stop; the neighbor kid who works downtown, the lady who always yells at her teenaged sons in the parking lot of the grocery store, the man who has an unplaceable accent and likely a genetic disorder that causes facial deformities, and of course, the asshole who seemingly encourages his house guests to park in front of your house. There are clear repercussions to these people seeing you in such a strong state of fear. They will treat you differently; thinking you're unhinged now. Glancing down at the ticket you've been pawing, you see zone F, for "Fucked." This is your life, and it's unraveling one moment at a time.

It hadn't occurred to you that this is the most exercise you've gotten since before the death of your favorite aunt. In some ways it had paralyzed you; that's when you quit running. Though you weren't terribly bereaved, she was the baby of your father's family, within ten years of your own age. The thought of your own mortality was the most profound experience that came from that loss. Plus, you've missed the \$50 bill that arrived in the mail on your birthday every year she was alive. It would have lessened the dent you created by sacrificing to your Goddess. Despite these pinings, you still aren't realizing how absurdly self-centered you have always been. If you ran with that thought, you'd realize that you also only care about your wife finding that material because of how it would effect you, not her. The sense of comfort and ease you experienced free from the messiness of divorce, not the tragedy wrought upon your unsuspecting wife, along with the dual heartbreak and devastation she would face as a result of your myopic egocentrism. But any woman who would voluntarily love you out of the kindness of her heart is a candidate for sainthood. Even if you don't deserve pity, let alone respect or any positive emotion associated with romantic relationships.

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