

Hurt And Confused

Isha

I sat and ate my dinner, reecting on my marriage. Jason swept me off of my feet. We had a whirlwind romance a year and a half ago. We met at the coffee shop that I worked at part-time. He came in every morning and every afternoon for a black coffee and a pan-seared blueberry mun for years. He ate and then went to wherever he worked. Most of our conversations were, hi and how are you, but that was about it.

One day he came in looking a little stressed. I asked if everything was okay. He had been coming there long enough that we were on a rst-name basis. He told me he had a big client that he had to meet, but he didn't have a date, and the meeting was in three hours. So, I volunteered. I only had an hour left until my shift ended. I gave him my phone number and address and told him I'd be ready.

Since I knew it was a business meeting, I didn't go all out. I picked a below-the-knee-length black dress that stretched across my size fourteen body. It had thick straps and I had a little red half jacket that went with the dress. I was big-chested with a size D and the jacket helped hide the cleavage that the dress emphasized. I put on black heels to help my 5'3" stature get to 5'8", and put up my long black hair in a ringlet bun with some hair coming down from the temples to frame my face. I kept my makeup with neutral tones to compliment my rounded face and light brown almond-shaped eyes, but wore a bold, dark red wine lip stain.

When Jason picked me up, his eyes admired me in the dress, and he told me I looked beautiful. When we got to the restaurant, he introduced me to his client. An older gentleman who was looking for oce space. That's when I realized Jason was a real estate agent. Conversation owed. I had charmed the older man, and he signed with Jason. When his client left, Jason was excited and he thanked me. After that, he called me for every client meeting. Then we progressed from there into real friendship and then became romantically involved. That all happened in three months. He asked me to marry him. I said yes and we eloped.

My mother and Nana were all I had. My father died when I was fteen, and he was forty in a car accident with my grandfather. Our family was devastated.

My mom and Nana live in Las Vegas, and I was in Yearling, Colorado living my so-called independent life. The pressure my Nana was putting on me when I was eighteen to get married and start a family right away, made me beg my mother to let me have ve years to myself. So when I turned twenty, and graduated with my associates in business, I was granted those ve years. I was twenty-three when I married Jason. They hated him. My mom and Nana wanted a grand wedding. Jason said he didn't want to wait. They had only met over face time, because Jason was too busy to travel and mom said traveling wasn't good for my Nana's health. They were very mad that we eloped. I felt guilty at the time, but I was in love.

For the last year everything was grand. I was happy, I had a loving husband who spoiled me in and out of bed. He wanted me to quit the café because, in his words, he could provide for his wife with anything I needed. So, again, being in love, I agreed. But in the last six months he's become distant. He blamed it on this new client of his. A tech billionaire that wanted twenty acres in Yearling, Colorado population seven thousand. Our town was picturesque. The buildings were big and old with lots of charm. The stores from the grocery store, hardware store, and clothing were all owned by people around town. Same with our local mechanics. The town wasn't corrupted by big box stores or franchises. We didn't have fast food in our town. We had family-owned restaurants, bakeries and cafés.

So it was big news that a billionaire was settling here. Jason, being one of three real estate agents in town, was ghting hard to get this person as a client. I, unfortunately, was not invited to meet this billionaire. He said he didn't need me to help close this deal. So he went to dinner meetings by himself over the months. He had texted me earlier today to boast that he had signed the billionaire, but I was not invited to the celebratory dinner and to not wait up for him.

So, here I was eating dinner alone. I was hurt, his distance was tearing me apart inside. It wasn't just not being invited to the dinners or his late nights at work, but it was also the constant texts at all hours of the day on his days off. He hadn't even taken me out on a date in the last six months. Not since our rst anniversary as a married couple. The next day, he met with the billionaire and that was the rst night he came home late. Over the next couple of months, I felt ignored and neglected. Right before our anniversary, he said he wanted to start a family, and I was excited. We made love constantly but it didn't happen. I was disappointed when I got my periods. I tried to initiate s*x the other night, but he rebuffed me, telling me he was exhausted. I tried to be sympathetic because he had been working so hard pulling twelve to sixteen-hour shifts. I just didn't know what to do anymore.

I sighed, picking up my plate and washing it. I looked at my phone. No texts or calls since he told me he signed his big client. It was only eight, but he told me that three hours ago. Were they still celebrating?

I decided to take a shower and climbed into bed with my laptop when I was done. Unbeknownst to Jason, I had been writing spicy stories for a website that paid authors for their imagination. I had been bored one evening reading on my phone and the website I had been reading on had an ad that said they were looking for authors with an exciting imagination. I wrote a lot of short stories in high school. I took a creative writing course online when I was twenty and twenty-one. So I took a chance and it paid off. I am now an exclusive writer for the site and have been for the last four months. I wanted to tell Jason about it, but I hardly ever saw him, and being a little pissed about how he'd been treating me, I decided to keep it to myself. I opened my own bank account under my mother's name at her insistence. Her reasoning was that a girl should have her own money. I had rolled my eyes at her at the time. But I did as she insisted. In the last four months, I've made quite a little nest egg.

I heard the front door shut, and I looked at the time on my laptop. I had been writing for four hours. The time got away from me. I shut my laptop down and set it aside just as Jason walked through our bedroom door.

"Hey, I told you not to wait up," he slurred.

My brows furrowed.

"Did you drive home drunk?"

"No, I got dropped off by Mr. Montgomery's driver, left my car at the oce. Mr. Montgomery insisted on it."

"Okay. Well, congratulations," I said.

"Thanks babe, I'm going to jump in the shower," he said as he stripped, and left his clothes on the oor, and walked into the bathroom stark naked. I sighed when I heard the water turn on. The d*mn hamper was in the bathroom. Why didn't he take his suit in there?

I got out of bed and picked up his suit. I went through his jacket pockets and took out his wallet, car keys and phone and set them on our dresser. I shed through his pants pocket and felt a weird material in his left one. I took it out and inhaled sharply. I dropped the item to the oor. Lying there, at my feet, was a pair of red lacy underwear. Those were denitely not mine. Why would he have some woman's underwear in his pocket? My body started to sweat, and I felt nausea roll through me. No, no way has Jason cheated on me. I dropped his jacket and pants and sprinted out of our room to the hall bathroom. I luckily made it to the toilet and threw up my dinner.

My mind was reeling. There was no way my loving husband had cheated on me. But thinking about the distance the last six months, something in my mind said it could be possible. I stood to my feet. I rinsed my mouth out with water and washed my hands. I found some mouthwash under the sink and I swished the burning liquid around my mouth. Tears sprang to my eyes. I blamed it on the mouthwash.

I went back into the room and Jason was standing there with his suit in his hand, staring at the panties on the oor. When I stepped in, his eyes shot to mine.

"Don't freak out, it's not what you think," he said.

"So you haven't been having an affair?"

"God, no baby," he said, dropping his suit on the bed.

He came towards me, hands outstretched to cup my face, but I dodged him and scooted by him to the other side of the bed, putting it between us.

He sighed and dropped his hands to his side.

"Look, Mr. Montgomery is an old-fashioned man. I've been taking him to Denver to eat in fancy restaurants, and sometimes we end up at a strip club or two. That's where I was tonight. Those must be from a stripper. I don't know how they got into my pocket."

"So, you took your billionaire client to a strip club, and have been while you schmoozed him. That's why I was never invited out with you? I've helped you schmooze other clients before, Jason?"

"Yeah, I know honey, but Mr. Montgomery is single, he's older, and I was trying to be a man's man. And to do that, I needed to cater to his needs. That's how I landed him."

I nodded, it seemed plausible. I stared at him looking for a lie, but I just couldn't see it. He looked remorseful.

"Baby, I would never cheat on you. I love you. Please believe me. I'm sorry for keeping this from you. You are my life. It won't happen again, I promise."

"Okay," I whispered. He visibly relaxed. He ran his hand through his hair. I climbed back into bed. "Please get rid of those panties." I laid on my side, turning away from him. My heart still ached, but I believed him. I hope I wasn't being naive and st*pid.