

## A Listening Ear

Isha

I walked into the café where I used to work. I waved at Kevin, who was my old boss and the owner of the café.

I saw Savvy already had our drinks and I walked over to her. I dropped my bag on the ground and sat across from her. She handed me my cup.

“Spill. I texted Jack to let him know that I was with you so he wouldn’t freak out when I wasn’t home in an hour. He and Mac get worried if I take a minute too long without texting one of them. It took me forever to get them to stop following me everywhere.”

I laughed, “They love you.”

“Yeah they do. Now talk. I can see something is wrong.”

“Well, maybe you can give me some advice. Since I know your history.”

She got a sympathetic look in her eye and I sighed.

“I think Jason is cheating on me. Now I don’t really have any real proof. It’s not like when you caught your husband kissing another woman and then later saw video evidence. But it is kind of like the neglect Brian put you through.”

“He’s helping a female neighbor too much? Getting attached?”

“No. He works late, staying out until midnight or later. There’s a lot of texting going on during his days off. He claims it was because of this big billionaire tech guy he was trying to land who wanted twenty acres of land. He hasn’t touched me in months. And then yesterday he texted me that he had nally got the billionaire to sign his land and housing contract, and to not wait up. I used to go to all his dinner meetings to help him schmooze the clients, and then when they signed I would celebrate with them. But last night he came home real late. He stripped and took a shower. I picked up his suit and found red lacy panties in a pocket. I had a reaction and ran to the hall bathroom to puke. When I came back, he was staring at the panties. He said it wasn’t what I thought and explained that this billionaire guy was a quote, “man’s man,” end quote, whatever that is supposed to mean. He took him to a strip club in Denver and a dancer must have shoved her panties in his pocket. It’s a plausible excuse, don’t you think?” I asked her desperately.

“It is. But what was his excuse for not bringing you to the dinners?” Savvy asked.

“Basically the same thing, that the billionaire was old-fashioned, and it wasn’t the rst time they had ended up in a club. But this morning I met Mr. Montgomery’s daughter. That’s the billionaire, and she let me know that she knew my husband. They had met at client dinners.”

“Oh,” she said, shocked.

“Yeah, oh.” I said dejectedly. “She’s gorgeous, Savvy. Blonde, tall and slim. Everything is perky from her b-cup br\*asts to her pert little a\*s.”

“Hey, you’re gorgeous. Your body is to die for. Mac made a comment once that you had a nice a\*s. I agree with him. You do have a delicious a\*s Isha.”

I blushed. “Thank you.”

“Look, I’ll admit him not wanting s\*x for months and some of the other things do sound sus, but that man loves you. I’ve seen the way he looks at you.”

“Yeah, I would have thought that too. But he hasn’t looked at me in like six months. He says he’s exhausted. Okay ne, that could be an excuse for why there hasn’t been any s\*x. But Savvy, he doesn’t look at me. I think this morning was the rst time he had in a long time because he knew he f\*cked up.”

“How about this? Mac and Jack can take the kids tonight. You and I can have a girls’ night out. We’ll take an Uber to Denver, we’ll drink and dance. I’ll invite Louise and Erica. That way, Mac and Jack won’t have a conniption that we’re alone in the big bad city. And with the size of six foot Erica and all her two hundred pounds of pure muscle, that will ease their minds too,” she said, rolling her eyes.

I giggled. That sounded like fun. I hadn’t been out in ages and I loved Erica and Louise. They were married and owned Lou’s ower and bookshop called Sensation. Erica was a competitive bodybuilder. They were good people.

“I’d like that. What time?”

“How about seven o’clock, meet at my place? We can eat at a restaurant and then go clubbing?”

“Sounds great.” We chatted for a little while longer. She wanted to go shopping for a new outt and I said I’d accompany her.

We had a blast trying on clothes. I settled on a really cute red halter shirt with a teardrop cutout that showed the girls well, and a pair of black tight skinny jeans. I had some boots that would go well with the outt at home. Savvy got a pink mini-strapless dress that she said would drive Mac and Jack wild knowing what she was wearing at the club.

I said goodbye to her two hours later. It had been forever since I had so much fun shopping with a girlfriend.

I waved her off before I turned to my car to put my bags in. Something made me look down the street and I froze. Two blocks down, I saw Jason hugging Madiilyn Montgomery. When they pulled back, he kissed her on the forehead. She turned from his embrace and walked the opposite way than me. I watched Jason as he watched her walk away. I pulled out my phone and dialed his number.

“Hey babe, I was just thinking about you.”

“Uh, huh, what are you up to?”

“Oh, I just had lunch with a client. She’s looking for her own place. She’s a little picky, so I might have to look a little farther out than town, but she wants to be close. So I have some bad news. I probably won’t make it home tonight. I have a lot of listings to slog through. This one might be tougher than Mr. Montgomery.”

“Right,” I said.

“Babe, please don’t be mad. I promise to be home by ten at the latest.”

“No, don’t worry. I won’t be home anyway. I’m going out tonight,” I said. I watched him jerk his head and a frown crossed his face.

“What? With who? Where?”

“Savvy, Erica and Louise. We’re going to Denver tonight to have a good time. We’re eating and then going clubbing. I don’t know when I’ll be home.”

“I don’t know if I want you doing that,” he said.

“I don’t care. You’re not going to be home anyway, right? I haven’t seen Savvy in a while. I need to go out.”

I saw him pinch the bridge of his nose.

“Fine. Just don’t get sh\*t faced drunk. And don’t take any drinks from strangers. And if you’ve put your drink down and come back to it, don’t drink it, just order a new one.”

“No need to sound so concerned.”

“I am, you’re my wife. You’re beautiful, and I know how men are.”

“Mhmm. I just bet you do.”

“What is that supposed to mean?”

“Whatever you want it to mean. I’ll see you when I get home, if you’ll be there.”

“Of course, I’ll be there. What’s gotten into you?”

“Nothing. I have to go.”

“Okay, I lo…”

I hung up on him. I watched him look at his phone like he couldn’t believe I had just done that. Then he smiled and started texting right away. I had a suspicious feeling I knew who he was texting.

I got in my car and drove home. When I pulled up into the driveway, I had no memory of the journey. One minute I was getting in my car the next I was pulling up the driveway. That was dangerous.

Did I just witness my husband cheat? Why would he hug and then kiss Madiilyn on the forehead like that? Or even at all?

I walked into my house and dropped my bags in my room. My heart was beating hard and fast. I suddenly couldn’t breathe. I frantically looked at the bedside clock and saw it was 2 in the afternoon. I think I was having a panic attack. I grabbed my throat because it felt like I was choking. I broke out in a sweat. I slowly slid to the oor and laid down. As I gasped for breath and my vision darkened, all I could think was, he’s cheating.