

## Turn, Ugly Truth (Part 1)

“*Over hill, over dale, my love for you will never fail*”. Oh honey, that’s the sweetest! I love you.’

‘I love you too.’

‘So what’ll we do tonight?’ Kim asked.

‘I’ve kind of organised a little birthday get-together. Sort of a lost minute thing. A few people over for drinks,’ he replied.

‘Who did you invite?’ she asked.

‘Frank and Beth. Judy and Adam. Your family, and my brother,’ he listed.

‘Rick?’ Kim uttered with surprise. ‘When did you see him?’

‘He called into the office. Don’t worry, it surprised me too. He said he just got in from Amsterdam this morning,’ he explained.

‘Really? And he went straight from the airport to see you?’ Kim asked suspiciously.

‘No, he booked into a hotel first,’ her husband reassured her.

‘Oh,’ she replied.

‘Kim, it’s ok. I didn’t invite him to stay here and I haven’t given him any money.’

‘Yet,’ she said accusingly.

‘Not ever again,’ he swore. ‘I remember how much it hurt us last time and I’m not going to make that mistake again.’

‘Good,’ Kim said. ‘Now that’s enough talk about rick. I have to get ready for my birthday party!’

‘You go ahead,’ he said, ‘and I’ll set up the food and drinks.’

‘Ok,’ Kim replied. ‘And I love you.’

‘I love you too,’ her husband said with a smile.

Kim closed the door behind her as she entered the bedroom. With quick, nervous movements she climbed the wardrobe and retrieved a beaten old shoebox from the top shelf. She sat on the floor of the walk-in robe and opened the box, sifting through the contents until she withdrew a small photograph.

In the picture stood a man leaning on a shovel next to a wheelbarrow. He is tall, dark and handsome, with a muscle bound body and a cheeky smile. His eyes are hidden in the shadow of his hat. Kim was still shocked at the physical resemblance between her husband and his brother, while being worlds apart in personality.

Sitting there on the floor of the wardrobe Kim thought about her husband pottering about in the kitchen, preparing her birthday celebration. He was such a kind and generous person, and she really loved him deeply. Her greatest fear in life was losing him. And she knew, if he discovered the truth, she *would* lose him.

‘Kim!’ her husband called from the kitchen.

She quickly tossed the photograph back into the shoebox and stiffed the box back onto the shelf. She tore off her dress and rushed into the bathroom.

‘Kim?’ he called again as he entered the bedroom.

‘Yes?’ she replied as she applied mascara.

‘Aren’t you ready yet?’ he asked.

‘Sorry, I’ve been day dreaming.’

‘About what, may I ask?’ he enquired with a mischievous smile.

‘How I’d like to cancel the party and tear you to shreds in bed,’ she replied with a growl and threw her arms around his neck. He gave her a kiss and withdrew from her arms.

‘Save it, the guests are here.’

‘...happy birthday dear Ki-im, happy birthday to you! Hip-hip, hooray! Hip-hip, hooray! Hip-hip, hooray!’

‘Now blow out the candles and make a juicy wish,’ screeched Kim’s friend Judy from beneath a double vodka. Blushing, Kim blew out the candles then turned and winked lasciviously at her husband.

‘Not now,’ scolded their friend Frank jokingly. ‘You’ll have plenty of time for that after we leave.’

‘Hey, I thought your brother was supposed to be here?’ Judy’s husband asked Kim’s husband.

‘Knowing him, he’ll arrive after you’re all gone,’ Kim’s husband replied.

‘What’s he been up to for the past five years anyway?’ Adam asked.

‘Your guess is as good as mine,’ he said.

A short time later, as Kim was refilling her guests’ glasses, the doorbell chimed. Kim scanned the room for a sign of her husband, but he was nowhere in sight. The doorbell beckoned again. Kim excused herself from her guests and headed towards the front door.

The hallway shrank and stretched as Kim tried to breath. Her feet were moving too fast – she desperately tried to slow them down. The doorbell boomed at her, ricocheting off her conscience, into her memory, and landing in her swell of emotions. *It’s him!* she thought as the bile ran up and down her throat.

The suddenly she was at the front door. *It must be him,* she thought. *Who else would continually batter the doorbell? Should I peek through the peephole? After all, that’s what it’s there for, therefore why not?*

She reached out to grab the door knob, expecting an electrifying jolt through her arm which did not eventuate. She slowly masturbated the doorknob in her hand, hoping it would cum courage over her heart. She had her other hand pressed flat against the wall beside the door, feeling the heartbeat of the house. Or was that her?

‘Kim, are you going to open the door?’ called her husband from the other end of the hallway as the doorbell again reverberated through her body. So she opened it. Quickly, like tearing off a band aid. And there stood her brother-in-law.

‘Hello Kim,’ he said with a grin. ‘Happy birthday.’

‘Hello Rick,’ she said with her own, more forced, grin as they kissed.

‘And there’s my little brother!’ Rick yelled as he stomped down the hallway to embrace Kim’s husband in a big bear hug.

Kim felt light-headed. The doorknob was sticky in her palm, the all cold to her touch. She gently closed the door and turned to re-join the party, amazed by her own sense of self-control.

A throng had formed around Rick, the hero of the hours, the saviour of free living, the king of sarcasm and hypocrisy. *If only they knew the truth*, thought Kim, *but I can’t tell them. Ever.*

‘So what have you been doing for five years?’ Judy slurred from behind a triple vodka.

‘Just travelling around,’ replied the school-boy criminal, ‘picking up odd jobs when I could. You know, fruit picking, labouring, teaching English. Odds and ends. Travelling mostly in Asia but in Europe for the past three months.’

Kim looked across at her husband who was beaming with joy. He didn’t seem to notice Rick had taken over the party that was originally hers. *This isn’t a birthday party*, she thought, *it’s a fucking welcome home party!*

‘So how’s the birthday girl?’ asked Rick later as he slid into the space next to her. Leaning back on the kitchen counter.

‘Just fine,’ she replied, moving to the fridge and avoiding eye contact.

‘Don’t you want to know how I’ve been?’ he asked, leaning over Kim to get a beer from the fridge, breathing hotly on her neck.

‘Not particularly,’ Kim snapped as she extricated herself from his overbearing presence and moved to the other side of the kitchen.

‘You’re still not mad at me for that money fiasco, are you?’ Rick asked with feigned innocence.

‘Among other things,’ Kim said, taking a bowl from the cupboard without knowing why.

‘Still a cold-hearted bitch, I see,’ he smirked as he lit a cigarette. ‘Got an ashtray?’

‘We don’t allow smoking in the house,’ Kim said.

‘Why not? You allow anything else. Well you did, five years ago.’

‘I didn’t allow that,’ she hissed. ‘You took it!’

‘It takes two to tango, honey,’ Rick teased with intended malice.

‘Not for you it doesn’t.’

‘Come on, getting a bit hostile, aren’t you?’ he said, trying to gain control over Kim’s outbursts.

‘Why not? You deserve it!’

‘You enjoyed yourself as much as I did, admit it.’

‘How could I have enjoyed that?’ Kim cried, turning away from him. ‘You raped me!’

‘What?’ came a hoarse whisper of surprise from the kitchen doorway.

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