

Secrets and Shame

By Belinda Iziercich

I remember the day that I met her. I hadn't been that nervous in years, as though I was a can of soda that had been shaken up and was bursting for someone to crack me open. I remember that morning because my husband asked me if I had anything planned for that day. I answered, but I am not entirely sure what I said to him. Something that allowed me to meander off and not really answer the question.

She was prettier than I had expected her to be; however, that implies that I had expectations... She had long, red hair pulled back into a pony tail that hung at the nape of her neck. Her face was plain with the exception of bright, full red lips that looked soft, as though they tasted of sugar. Watching those lips was mesmerizing and sometimes I stopped listening to what she was saying and just watched her mouth move.

I bumped into her once when I was with my husband. We were doing the food shopping on a Sunday afternoon. I had not expected to see anyone I knew. Especially not her. Especially at such a vulnerable moment. I still blush when I think about it. I felt shocked, as though she only existed when we were together. I had expected that she would pretend like I did not exist – walk past me as though we had never met. How wrong I was. She called out my name. I would recognize that voice anywhere. She sounded like honey dripping over ice cream, so sweet and creamy. When I did not turn my head, she reached out and grabbed my arm. I tried to feign shock at seeing her. There I was. My jumbo packet of toilet paper tucked under one arm and the budget meat in the other and between us...my husband.

Well...this is my...this is Bill. Bill this is...Jill...we used to play tennis together.

She raised her eyebrow at me... At the lie that now hung in the air between us. It almost got stuck in my throat on the way out.

She gushed at him and told him how nice it was to meet him and that she will see me Wednesday...for tennis. I cringed as I watched her walk away.

On the way home I gazed out the window. Bill commented on how quiet I was. Was I really? He tried to engage me in conversation, but I felt too guilty about my lie to talk to him, so I just let words hang in the air between us in the hope that he would just stop talking so that I could be alone with my thoughts.

The waiting was really the worst part. The agony of having to wait in that tiny room before I could see her was dreadful. She questioned me about why I had not told my husband about

us? Why would you lie to your husband like that, Bethany? She never yelled at me. She just asked me questions in a steady tone of voice. I felt awful and although I know that she was being kind to me, I felt as though I was being interrogated. She was right about it all. I was weak for lying, but what could I do about it now?

When I got home I stared into the mirror. I looked really hard at myself and tried to figure out why I did feel such a sense of shame. Why I did feel the need to hide a relationship that was nothing more than the relationship between a Doctor and her patient. Doctor Jill Monroe was the best Psychiatrist in the business and I really should not feel ashamed that I need to see her. But no matter how much I tell myself that, I cannot seem to find the words to tell my husband about it or anyone else for that matter. Maybe for now I will have to continue to keep it a closely guarded secret and hope that one day Doctor Monroe can help me find the courage to not be ashamed anymore.

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