

# Insecurities and Insincerities

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The off white porcelain bounced the droplets onto Gerald as he washed the daily grime off his body. The muck was invisible, but after a full shift working, stocking shelves, he could not get in the shower quick enough. Every bit of desire in his body was centered on scrubbing the gunk off of himself. He pressed the washcloth against his skin rubbing it pink in the process. He tried not to touch the yellowish tile that stood next to him, his disgust of the rented wall made him shiver. There were times when the yellowed tile made him feel dirty while bathing, no matter how hard he scrubbed the shower itself looked perpetually dirty. But that was just one the sacrifices for living inside the city.

He had always wanted to move to the distant suburbs once he finished college, but his wife, Gillian whom he just recently married, would have nothing of the sort. She had always dreamt of living in Los Angeles or Manhattan, Houston was neither of those places, but she was doing the best with the cards she had been dealt.

Gerald leaned back, the water streaming through his thick black hair, massaging his scalp as it soaked his head. The water dripped in heavy droplets down to his heels which stood just in front of the drain. As he reached back for the shampoo he pondered about how great it was that he had found someone as beautiful and wonderful as Gillian. To find the woman of your dreams was an unlikely task, but to find her in college when you are both at such a young age, was unbelievable. He just knew they were going to have a perfect life together even if he was not living his fantasies six months into marriage. His childhood aspirations of becoming a stage actor were quickly withering away.

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Some of his fondest memories were of his parents taking him and his brother to the theatre to see plays. They did not go see movies or attend amusement parks, but once a month or so they would get dressed up and go see a play. Some of the greatest shows had helped form his youth. Phantom of the Opera was the background for his first foray into music. The Who's Tommy marked the month when his braces came off. And of course, Les Miserables was the first time he, well, he thought he felt true love that night. It may not have been true love, but for the lengthy high school romance of three months, he thought he felt it. But those memories were just that now, memories. He would be a good worker bee and work the grocery management until he could store up enough money to retire into acting.

He leaned back letting the water do its job working the shampoo through his hair leaving the relaxing scent of Mystic Falls or so it said on the bottle. As his shoulders hit the cold tile, recoiling from the chill as well as the possible germs, his mind opened up and overtook his sight. The bathroom faded and he could see the back of a woman standing near a kitchen with her right hand placed on the counter and her other hand up by her head as if she were scratching her ear. The woman was obviously his wife, he could recognize her thin frame and platinum waist length hair anywhere. As the vision came full frame for Gerald, he could hear a pounding in the distance. The woman looked around a corner at the front door and the hinge flew open. A man in a ski mask barreled through the doorframe shouting nonsensical phrases at the image of his wife. She ran towards the back door, but the man caught her before she could get away, holding her wrists and

dragging her to the ground. The image was horrific and painful as he watched the man strip her clothes off while striking the back of her skull.

Gerald gasped for breath when the vision had become too much for him to handle, the air rushing into his lungs along with the fine mist that escaped the perfect streams of water coming out of the showerhead. Coming back to the real world, Gerald heard banging coming from the floor below him. Still in the shower, he was suddenly in a panic that his wife may be endangered by the ski mask laden intruder. The thuds continued as Gerald flung the shower curtain open, nearly losing his balance as he leapt from the tub to the rug in the middle of the floor. With the water still rushing out of the faucet, splashing the unsecured floor with its tiny bits of excess flow, Gerald ran out of the bathroom and down the stairs in a valiant attempt to protect his new wife.

His strides were long and fast, only six steps to reach the bottom of the twenty-four step staircase. He hit the carpet at the bottom leading him into the small apartment living room pushing his feet against the flooring he looked for his wife in fear that she had already come into contact with the attacker. She was nowhere in sight he moved full speed around the small corner into the kitchen where he collided with Constance, his wife's good friend who always seemed to be around.

His sopping naked body pressed against hers dampening her thin blouse and khaki shorts. They both tumbled to the ground landing on the faux wood flooring with a splat both from their bodies as well as the water. Constance held the back of her head which had just smacked the ground leaving a painful reminder inside her skull in the form of an instant headache.

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She looked down at Gerald's terrified face understanding what had just happened and let a smile erupt from her stunned façade.

Gerald consumed by both a diminishing fear for his wife's safety and a mounting humiliation for his own self, pushed off his hands to get back to his feet. Still soaked he slid a bit as he caught his balance in an upright fashion. He tried to explain himself to his wife who was hammering the new cabinet doors onto the cabinets. "I thought you were hurt so I..." His voice trailed as the puzzle pieces fell into place. Seeing his wife holding a hammer made the image of the man breaking down the door vanish, to be replaced by a twenty three year old moron standing naked in his kitchen in front of his wife and her friend.

Gillian tried to purse her lips together and keep a stone face, but her breath escaped the tight prison and let out a burst of laughter. Gerald's body flushed with embarrassment, the blood rushing through turned his face and chest bright red and did other things to his lower extremities.

Constance had crawled away after Gerald got to his feet and quickly fumbled in her purse for her phone. Gerald turned and back saw her frantically hitting buttons with both hands as she held it like the hilt of a sword. He felt his social life flash before his eyes as he sprinted around the corner towards the stairs. The water still clinging to the soles of his feet sent him sliding into the wall, causing a detour to his trip by two feet.

Constance finally got the camera application pulled up and snapped a picture just as Gerald had hit the first stair. She barely caught any of his naked behind, but just the fact that she knew it was him would bring her humor for years to come.

Upon returning to the bathroom Gerald sat on the toilet in embarrassment, but he had done what he knew was necessary. It was not an overreaction to his vision, he had them every now and then and they had always turned out to be prophetic.

He had avoided a huge collision at an intersection thanks to his divine daydreaming. When he was very young he saved a friend from climbing on a bee infested tree. He had even alerted a bus driver to a major mechanical problem which may have slid his entire bus into a large ditch in the area. So, he knew that he did what was needed regardless of how debasing it may have turned out.

He turned off the shower and cleaned up the bathroom before he prepared himself to face the women who would surely become his social tormentors.

Downstairs Constance and Gillian had raucous laugh over Gerald's odd exposure. Constance had admired Gerald from afar for quite some time. She always watched him during classes they shared, enjoyed his intelligent company in the few moments they shared alone, but he had married her friend and that was the end of that. Constance was not someone who most people would consider an amazing example of modern morality, but she was not going to euthanize a friend's marriage over childish infatuation, she felt she was better than that.

The shutting of the bathroom door echoed down the stairwell. Gillian and Constance gathered together at the foot of the stairs to greet the flasher with applause. Gillian was not the type of person to be embarrassed by her husband's humiliations, in fact she reveled in the stories she collected about

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his moments of mortification. She carried a backlog of funny instances, where her now-husband had made a fool of himself somehow, saved for the occasion of a lull in a party or an awkward silence in a conversation.

Gerald slowly trudged down the steps trying to stall the confrontation he was about to enter. The last two steps were the ones of shame as the staircase curved and exposed him from the behind the wall the upper stairs hid him behind.

“What a show, what a show!” Constance shouted as if she just witnessed a Tony award winning performance. Her comment was meant in playful jest, but under her condescending behavior the comment was genuine. Having seen Gerald for years as a possible object of lust, she had wondered more than a few times what lie beneath the clothes, now she had the mental image even if she had not captured it on film.

The two women clapped with vigor as their target of torture presented himself before them. Gillian quickly came to the conclusion that her husband felt more exposed now than he did when he was naked. He probably would have spent the rest of the evening upstairs hiding in their bedroom if he could avoid her scolding him for it.

“You can be as embarrassed as you want, but it’s your own fault, we didn’t make you come down here all naked.” Gillian tried to enforce his manners over his self respect. She was planning on having dinner with her best friend and her husband and he was not going to ruin her plans.

The rest of the evening was as normal as it got with some light conversation, the television on in the background, and a delicious dinner. The

humiliation subsided with Gerald as the night went on, only a few jabs came his way and those were tired after a couple of hours.

Constance spent the majority of the dinner quieter than normal as she tried to stop picturing her friend's man naked. She was tickled with the idea that she instantly flashed to a vision of him in the buff when she looked at him, but she was determined to move on, she just was not that kind of girl.

Nearing midnight, the threesome had decided to retire. Pleasantries were exchanged as Constance returned to her townhome. As soon as she was out the door Gerald started to unleash a barrage of excuses on his wife as to why he ended up on top of another woman without a stitch of clothing on. "I saw another vision. It was you and you were being raped." He voice cracked a bit at the violent word. "Then I heard the pounding from downstairs and I thought he was breaking in and I had to save you." His words were so rapid that the spacing between them was nonexistent in most of his speech.

"It is ok honey. I am fine maybe it was just daydream, you know didn't mean anything." Gillian never believed his visions were more than coincidence.

"I've told you they are always true." He defended.

"Are you sure it was me?"

"I saw you from the back, but who else looks like you? I've never met anyone else with the white hair you have."

"Well, where was I and what was I doing? I will just avoid the activity and it won't happen." She was insulting him without realizing it.

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“Well, you weren’t here. It was a different apartment, but I swore you were down here in trouble, I would’ve never come down here like that if...”

She put her finger to his lips, the soft touch enough to quiet him down. “It wasn’t here, it didn’t happen, I am fine, it was nothing.” She tried to comfort him as she dismissed his worry in her mind and walked up the stairs to their bedroom. She did not realize it, but she had just done the same thing she had been doing since they were married. She thought his idea was unrealistic, so she pretended to console him then dismissed it altogether as she continued on her own path.

That night he lie in their bed curious about his vision. He never had an incorrect one, at least not one that came on that strongly. Could his gift be waning? He came to terms with his sixth sense years prior, as a message from God, as a way to tell him when he had fallen off track, but if this one was wrong he did not know what to do.

A few days later Gerald found himself stocking shelves at work. He hated his work at the grocery store, but he agreed with Gillian that he needed to make a steady income, so he was on the fast track to grocery management. As a trainee he performed all of the jobs in the store from stocking to cutting meat, none of it really tickled his fancy, but it was a job.

Hours of opening boxes and putting its contents on the shelves left him tired and weak, he wanted nothing more than a few minutes of rest which was why he felt put out when Constance walked into the sliding glass doors. Gerald was making his way to the lunchroom for his break, he had no

obligation to spend time with her, but he did not like to be rude. So, he greeted her, took off his nametag and they walked the store as she shopped.

Constance was in the grocery store nearly every day. She may have grown up in Southeast Texas, but her parents were from Europe. As former Europeans, they strived to hold onto their old country identity by not giving in to the unnecessary American luxuries, this included the large American style refrigerator. Instead, they went to the store on a daily basis purchasing fresh foods for each day's meals. Constance initially not knowing it was abnormal in the United States followed her parent's example and purchased her produce and meats daily.

As the two leisurely walked across the prison that was Gerald's place of employment Constance questioned why he had come streaking down the stairs that one evening.

This question was one Gerald had tried to avoid. He did not let people know about his visions, it brought on looks of questioning sanity. He would rather be considered odd as opposed to insane, but on that day; with his fatigue, with his relationship with Constance now at an uncomfortable position, with his frustration of his life in general he decided to come clean. He bared more of himself to that woman than he had almost anyone else. He told her of his visions, of his fears, and of course of the possibility of his wife getting sexually assaulted. The admission was freeing, but he mentally brought up his defenses in anticipation of her demoralizing response. She was very understanding and sympathetic towards him, which caught him off guard. The only other person who knew about his abilities was his wife, who still reacted to them with disbelief and patronizing tones.

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Gerald left her perusing the store when his break ended, but the connection he made with her brought new light to why his wife was so fond of her. He had always liked her, but never understood the intellectual connection between the two. He thought he might have just seen a glimpse of that connection.

Time went on with Gerald growing distaste for his life and his wife joyously oblivious to her husband's plight. One night the two lay in bed, the man holding his companion, arm draped over hers and cupping her breast as her bare back pressed against his nude front. He thought for a moment that he knew what heaven was like, holding something he cherished as much as her, but she destroyed the whole concept when she spoke.

"I stopped taking my birth control." She stated this as if he had no part in the decision or at least he had no right to know until now, moments after a two time ride of the flesh.

"What?" He was stunned. Could he have just made a baby? He could not believe she did not tell him earlier. "Why didn't you tell me? I mean, couldn't I have found out before we did it?" His voice was rising beyond the acceptable level for the bedroom and his arm had retreated from the touch of his lover.

"Maybe I should have, but it doesn't matter. I was going to get what I wanted anyway." She tried to be playful, but before she could finish her sentence Gerald was clothed and out the door.

It was a long night. Gerald spent hours on end in his old beat up truck driving up and down the flat roads of his metropolis. He felt violated, he felt betrayed, but more than anything else he felt his love for his wife faltering.

He had nowhere to turn, but to his own mind which raced up and down the lines of reason tempting the possibilities of revenge.

At five o'clock in the morning he was dozing at the wheel forcing him to pull over into a pancake restaurant's parking lot. Out of delirium he dialed Constance's number and asked her to join him for breakfast. The girl was groggy from the unexpected call, but knowing how often Gerald had turned to her before, she assumed it was an emergency.

He was placed in a small booth, one built for two, but barely wide enough for a normal sized adult. As she walked into the dining room of the old worn down restaurant Gerald saw a beauty he had never noticed in her before. Her long brown hair swayed as she walked, waving ever so gently in the harsh blow of the a/c vents. Her thin structure allowed her to glide into the booth as if she belonged in the tiny seat, her scrawny tanned arms appearing to have more elbow room than Gerald thought possible. It was a strange contrast, the dirty pancake joint filled with the grotesquely sweet scents of burning sugar placed around the angelic beauty of Constance.

She suppressed the feeling that she was being disloyal to her friend and focused on the idea that Gerald needed someone. "What happened?" She chose her words carefully as not to lend any credence to her deception of Gillian.

There was a long silence. He slid his hand across the commonly sticky table to hers. Gerald acted against his normal nature and did not speak, he just held Constance's hand for the majority of the meal. He stared at the brown gloss of the table, his left hand stretched across it holding onto

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Constance while his right manipulated the forks and spoons to satisfy his hunger.

Constance did not understand Gerald's need to touch her, she feared it may be sexual, but it was not. He needed to feel the humanity of someone who he thought understood him. So, he held her hand and ate. Eventually he told her what had happened trying to make it sound as impartial as possible, but he could not accomplish it. He was somewhat demeaning to his wife no matter his intentions. The worst of his actions that morning were not his snide insults, but the impression he forced upon Constance. She would never again trust Gillian with her emotions and she lost a lot of respect for the woman as well. But that was the extent of their morning, nothing else happened other than expressed gratitude for Constance's willingness to be there for him.

Months passed with more of the same. Gerald dwelled in a pit of depression that began to feel like home. He hated his apartment, he hated his job, he refused to acknowledge the idea, but he hated his wife. That feeling was swelling and it would not take too long before it demanded attention. His job had picked up as the winter season was upon them. He was required to work a sixth day every week forcing him to spend less and less time trying to find enjoyment.

Gerald had refused sex for some time now, he was not in the market for a child and was not going to be forced into it. At night he would lay on his side of the bed wearing his pajama pants to keep the temptation down, no possibility of skin to skin contact below the waist. Normally he pouted silently as he regretted most of his decisions over the past year or so. But that specific

night as he lay in the comforting darkness of his bed, light penetrated his eyes. Sounds of banging came echoing into his ears as the vision of his wife's back filled his field of vision.

There she stood, phone in her hand in a place that definitely was not theirs. Again, her long platinum hair dangled as the door down the hall flew open from the impact of the intruder. She tried to run, but the large man donning a ski mask had grabbed her wrists and forced her to the ground. He one handedly pulled her shorts down and ripped her blouse off her body revealing her prominent tan lines from her bikini top.

Gerald forced himself out of his vision and ran to the toilet to vomit. The image was too much for him to handle, but it served as a brutal reminder that he did still love his wife. Although he resented her while awake, in his vision he was madly in love.

The next day Gillian again told Gerald to ignore the vision. It was not their apartment and she was safe. While he was at work toiling away to bring back enough money for them to get by, Gillian worried about her husband. The sights he was seeing were disturbing in every sense of the word, she thought he might be losing his grasp on reality. Looking in the checkbook she searched for a way to afford him a few psychologist appointments. She did not want to sacrifice anything in their budding life together, but she thought he needed the mental help.

She cut a couple expenses from the budget leaving them with no internet connection, but it was worth it for her lover to get better. She headed out for the grocery store, where she could let him know of his soon to made appointment.

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The distance to the grocery store was short, but she still drove it. There was no purpose, in her mind, to spend time in the cool air of winter when she could be sitting in front of the blaring heater. The brisk sixty degree weather of the Texas gulf in December made her walk from the car to the store a little faster than her normal. She should not have been chilled, but her refusal to wear anything as unflattering as a jacket in public forced her to dismiss her comfort if just for a few moments or for hours on end. She located her husband putting fresh produce out and she approached him with her great news.

“Hey honey.” She looked endearingly into his eyes as he grunted his opinion of her being there. “I am making you an appointment to see a psychologist.”

Gerald abruptly looked up in anger. Why would she force herself into the safety of his thoughts? He could bare the fact that his wife forced him live in the city, that she would not let him fight for his dream job, and he might be able to accept having children, but to invade the sanctity of his sanity, that was too much.

“I see you’re mad, but you need to do this. You are having a problem and I can’t think of anyone else who could help you.” She truly did have the purest of intentions, but intentions are not always what counts. She walked off before he had a chance to respond.

Gerald was left standing in the store with the awe splattered across his face. There was nothing going through his mind, no words, no images, he was just there. Standing lonely in the produce aisle of the grocery store his emotions erupted. He threw a watermelon across the floor, letting it break

into a few large chunks as its guts spewed forth from its hard green skin. He launched a peach into the wall, crushing the small sweet fruit. His emotions took over as he demolished hundreds of dollars worth of produce. Customer fled the area letting the man have his temper tantrum until the store manager came by.

Gerald's boss calmly walked into the aisle sized salad, his head swimming in the sweet aroma of destroyed fruit. He felt bad for Gerald as there were obvious problems at home or in his head, but he had no choice, but to let Gerald go. Gerald was unemployed.

He walked out the door of the grocery store with the remnants of his fruiticide dribbling down his pants, heading home, frozen on the sidewalk he diverted his route away from his apartment. He did not want to confront his wife just yet, he needed to think. He walked down the busy street letting the comforting cool breeze refresh his face. Out of habit he picked up his cell phone to call his wife. He usually talked to her whenever he was bored, but he had no desire for that. Staring at the colored lights of the phone display he scrolled down to Constance.

She met him at a fast food restaurant thinking she was going to cheer him up, but she knew inside what he wanted. She knew why he called and she was not the kind of girl she thought she was.

They went down the street to a cheap by the hour motel and let their animalistic sides loose. They indulged in pleasures of the flesh while in the process destroying a marriage. It seemed appropriate to both of them, that their disgusting act of betrayal be committed in such a repulsive atmosphere.

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Funk of hundreds of nights of unwashed sheets tickled their noses as their eyes caught the occasional glimpse of a fleeing rat.

The next day after he explained how he lost his job, Gillian refused to speak to him. It was a relief to Thomas as he did not know how to treat her. He needed to hide his blossoming love for Constance and hide his maturing loathing of Gillian herself.

He sat in their bed watching his wife disrobe. She felt his gaze bearing down on her and for the first time since they were together, she felt violated, as if her husband was peeping in and forcing her to strip for his perverse pleasures. His intent was not as such, he was blindly watching as his wife did her nightly activities as if there were no problems. He felt their relationship rumple on the metaphoric floor just as her dress fell off her solidly tanned back and onto the carpet.

For the following days and weeks Gerald became disturbingly distant to Gillian. They only spoke in argument, his performance at the grocery had become her favorite topic of conversation. He attempted to honor her as much as he still could by not raising his voice, but his view of her opinions would not allow him to remain silent. They shook the walls during their fights, never a physical altercation, but words that could invoke suicide.

He had finally made a turn in his marriage, he no longer remained silent and gave in to his wife's will, but they were still not compromising. He had adopted Gillian's view of their relationship and assumed everything he thought was correct. Even if he could end his affair, their marriage could not have survived.

One night their discussion finalized with a bout of tears. They both lie in bed sobbing over their failed relationship and their refusal to cooperate. Their wails morphed into moans as they turned to each other in a moment of carnal aggression. They explored each other's bodies for the last time, whether they knew it or not, it was a goodbye.

Christmas passed, the New Year approached and they were in danger of losing their apartment as they had no income and the savings that Gillian had forced upon her husband was quickly draining. There was no end in sight as Gerald was not looking for work, he spent his days in the arms of his mistress daydreaming about the life he should be leading.

One afternoon he sat naked on the motel bed watching the object of his passion caress her skin inches from his body. He delved into his sin as he let her natural scent envelope his entire soul. While looking deep into her, the vision of Gillian suddenly returned.

It was the same sight. He saw her khaki shorts, the light jacket in her hand ready to walk out the door. She was on the phone when the man broke in. She was telling someone she was heading out before she turned to panic. Her deeply contrasting tan lines shone from underneath her white hair. As her phone hit the ground, the attacker punched her in the skull, all the while disrobing. It was February, fourteenth, Valentine's Day, he could see the date on the phone as it bounced off the floor.

He forced the image out of his head and collapsed forward onto his lover's naked body. She stroked his hair as he searched for the reasons he still felt for his wife. At first they talked that day instead of making love. They

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spoke of their passions and desires, finding common ground on almost every subject.

They both wanted to leave town and go out to where morality had not been squashed by the big cities. They both wanted to pursue unlikely dreams where there was no guarantee. He let a few tears fall as he looked into the eyes of the woman he should have married in the first place. He brushed her brown hair away from her body revealing her soft breasts, smooth stomach, and nervous upper thigh. It was a vision of pure heaven which he knew he had drug to the sins of hell. He cried. She comforted. And they made love.

Again weeks passed with Gerald and Gillian going through the motions of being a couple. They shared a bed, shared meals, and occasionally participated in a mechanical peck on the lips. However, they did not speak of love or happiness anymore, there were no dreams left for them, just the misery waiting to formally end their connection to each other.

Finally one day Gerald looked at his wife who was making breakfast for herself and announced his infidelity. "I am not in love with you anymore. I have been sleeping with Constance." There was no remorse in his voice, no caution for Gillian's feelings, just unabashed statements.

Gillian crumbled onto the kitchen floor, splattering eggs across the counter as she dropped her spatula. Her newly cut hair swung wildly about her face as it was above her shoulders now. The moment had been coming and she knew it. Her tears were not necessarily for her pain, but for an end to a time that did not go the way she planned. There were loud gasps of breath and howls of dejection as she curled up on the floor of their kitchen.

She looked through her watery sight and cried to him, "I was going to try to work it out. I wanted us to be happy again." She was on her hands and knees, placed by an inability to stand. Gerald wanted to tell her they were never happy and that he should have taken a better look at her when he proposed, but he did not. He spared some of her feelings. She continued, "I found out last night that I am pregnant! You asshole, I wanted to surprise you today. It was going to be your Valentine's Day present!" Her words hung among the odor of burning eggs.

The fact that his wife was pregnant should have struck a chord with Gerald, but his immortal grasp on his youth just dismissed the information. What caught his ear was the day, it was February fourteenth. He looked at his destroyed wife on the floor, no longer resembling the woman in his visions. She had short hair, her frame had slowly gotten thicker, and she bore a solidly tanned body. It was not her in the visions.

As his phone rang, terror consumed his body. He shook as he brought the phone to his ear. "Constance?" He knew what was coming.

"Hey babe. I did something for you for Valentine's Day. I think you may like it." She tried to tease her lover, but he was frozen from the realization of what was happening. Constance kept talking hoping she did not upset him. "Ok, ok, I bleached my hair, it is like completely white. I can't wait to kneel down on you with my hair covering your..." She stopped speaking as a huge booming sound came from her front door. She screamed as the man in the ski mask forced the door open.

Disconnected.

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Gerald looked at the phone in disbelief. He pressed 911 as he ran for the door.

“If you leave, you will never hear from me again!” It was all Gillian could say, not knowing what was happening to Constance, but she may have felt the same, even if she knew.

As Gerald slammed the door shut ignoring what Gillian had screamed at him, she sat in the floor still crying over her wasted life, her wasted marriage, and her wasted friendship. “Go to your whore then.” She meant it too.

Years down the line Gerald had learned from his mistakes. The weeks he spent at Constance’s side at the hospital plagued his brain forever. He never truly forgave himself for not piecing the puzzle together. The sight of her strapped to a gurney, lying naked and ravaged should have been the worst, but his guilt super ceded it. She got through it though, they moved out of the city, way up north to a small community in Nebraska. He acted in a small theatre company while Constance painted. They rarely had the money to get by, but it did not bother them.

Gerald took his second marriage from a different perspective, he made sure that he was always compromising with his new wife, not just giving in. He refused to relive the mistakes he made with Gillian. It was a pointless exercise because his new marriage would survive no matter how unyielding or submissive either of them had been. He dreamed about his child every now and then, but his dedication to his own dreams allowed him to ignore those responsibilities. That was alright in his mind.

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Gillian stayed in the city marrying a wealthy man who took good care of her. She married for money and security which was fine because she had met the man of her dreams, her son. After his birth Gillian focused every inch of her soul on raising the child, she did not learn the compromise lesson that Gerald had, but she did not need it. If she had maybe she would have introduced Gerald to his son, but that was just another relationship that Gerald would have destroyed. In her mind she was still completely in the right, seeing the half of the story that completed her.