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## Guilty of Suspicion

Where is he? Laura hastily took off her earrings, feeling her heart pounding. She needed to get a handle on herself. She had seen how the women at the registers looked at him. Just like so many times before. Was he oblivious? His eyes searching the palm of his hand for the correct change. It wouldn't be so bad, except that he was so naive, and innocently friendly. She was confident that given the right spark of chemistry with woman like these, he would desert her.

She moved quickly toward the window at every car sound. Peering out into the night through the fogged glass. Rubbing out the moisture in front of her eyes with her sleeve. Her heart sank at every passing car. She had been resisting the urge to call him, afraid of who knows what? Pacing and agitated, she ripped her hair out of its ponytail, slipped into her night clothes, and tried to relax. His dinner sat on the stove, covered, but barely warm. It was getting late.

She closed her eyes tight while sighing and decided to call him. Every ring seemed to take an eternity. The fourth ring cut short. Was this voicemail or had he answered? She listened intently, and finally heard a muffled hello. Relieved but surprised she forgot what to say and choked. Her brain forced out hesitated questions that sounded all wrong. She paused, sighed again, and asked where he was. He answered, but she still wasn't sure. He said he would be a while yet.

Racked with curiosity, she couldn't stop herself. Jumping back into her jeans, she snatched the keys, and drove to where he said he was. When she arrived she paused, as if it were a dream, her legs taking her forward with a determination not of her free will. This was crazy! She was acting the spy. But she had to know. Looking up to the night sky she pondered the predicament. She really shouldn't have come here, yet the lure of knowing was too great.

Creeping as best she could in smacking flip flops, she crouched near. The giant glass windows were like looking into a fish tank. Open concept, good thing. Now she would be able to see everything.

There he was, focused and intent. Doing exactly what he said he was. She shifted her eyes and slowly blinked. Pulling her sweater closer around her, she shivered. Why didn't she feel happy now? Relieved, but so guilty. Guilty of suspicion.

Turning she walked away, she wanted to return home before him. What a ruse, she thought! Now it was she who was dishonest, sneaking, and worst...insecure. It felt like grime, thick and oily. How would she disguise this feeling when she saw him? It was suffocating.

Walking swiftly she left. Turning the key, she felt exhausted. Desperate to feel some other emotion she turned on the radio. The beat of the music calmed her but the lyrics made her anxious. Frenzied she pressed the seek button but found nothing to soothe, only talk radio. How could she focus on anything when she had so many questions and ideas bouncing around in her head? Everything sensory seemed to annoy her. She had to get a handle on her imagination that was getting dark and desperately irrational.

She arrived home, carefully parked the car in the same spot, and turned off the ignition. She hoped the engine would cool down and stop making clicking sounds before he arrived. Once again she rushed to the window. She couldn't help it. She didn't have control over her fear. The torment was palpable, seething and real.

Another hour passed, hearing another car she turned and looked. This time the headlights swung wide and pointed toward her. She ducked down, afraid he had seen her. But even if he did, so what? Why did she think he would leave her for another, unless he already had another or was thinking of someone else? A surge of adrenalin rushed through her as she heard the door open and his loud footsteps. Shoving the thoughts away she went to greet him.

She forced a smile and said hello. He smiled back but when he met her eyes, he saw something hiding behind them. Confused he asked if everything was ok? Laura replied defensively without meaning to. He was perplexed. Fear gripped his heart, what was she hiding? Could she have met someone else? He saw how men looked at her, checking her out when her back was turned.... smiling at her when she appeared to be alone.