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An Addiction

by Mary Brannigan

I never meant to leave you. To break the thread that pulled me ever to your side. My friends could never understand why I put up with your careless treatment of my besotted heart. They said you were playing with me like a cat with a mouse. I couldn't see your faults - taking the crumbs you tossed my way, dropping everything and everyone to gravitate to your side. You fed a need I didn't know I had. I who had sworn no man would ever treat me badly.

I was blind to your slights, making excuses for you time after time. There was always a reason for your actions - or so I thought. My best friend gave me one ticket for her college dance. I asked for one for you. She refused. " You are my friend and he is turning you inside out. I won't be a witness to it". Her husband, who never intervened between us, said I was better than this. Surely I could see your game. I didn't attend the dance.

And so I let it go on month after month till you told me you were going away - the very next day as it happened. The shock hit me like a slap across the face. "You'll phone" I said pathetically. "Sure when I've settled in" you replied. So we said goodbye and I waited for your call. Three months passed before my flatmate said "there's some guy on the phone for you". My heart raced when I heard your voice. The thread was as strong as ever. The hunger was still gnawing at me like an alcoholic in need of a drink. The phone calls continued at infrequent intervals till at last you invited me to visit. I booked the first available flight out. When you met me at the airport I thought all my Christmasses had come at once.

That night we went for a drink at your local pub. As the evening progressed, after you introduced me to your friends, I saw your eyes stray to a group of women at the bar. I asked if you knew them. "Oh sure, I've taken them all out at one time or another" came the laconic reply. With that one sentence something in me snapped. It was liked I'd suddenly woken from a bad dream. Next morning I packed my case and went home. The need had left me.