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Forbidden Fruit

by Chris Robinson

My dearest love

It is with great pain and regret that I write this letter but I feel I owe you the courtesy of an explanation for my abrupt departure. I never meant to leave you but circumstances dictate that I cannot stay. You may consider my decision cowardly but I truly want to do the right thing for us and for others close to us. You have your marriage to consider. You made your vows to God on your wedding day and there are also your children to think of. I have my own relationships to protect. I also made vows to God and I have my flock and parish to consider.

I do not regret what happened between us but what started as an amazing friendship has gently evolved into something so beautiful and deep that I fear you have now become an addiction which gets stronger by the day. I wish the hours away until I can see you. Most of our meetings are so very public that it makes me frustrated and short tempered with others around me. Everyone seems to want my attention but I only want to give it to you.

I try to avoid looking in your direction when giving a sermon for fear of stumbling over my words but I know you are there and the urge to look your way gets greater each week. During hymns I sometimes steal a glance to your regular seat. Your position by the stained glass window at the rear of the church allows the light to reflect off your hair as if you are wearing a halo. You look like an angel and to me that's exactly what you are.

Being so active in the church and the community means that avoiding you is becoming harder and harder. Attending village events or partaking in the occasional pint at the pub inevitably means that our paths cross. I wonder if subconsciously I arrange my days to make sure I catch a glimpse of you somewhere. Like an addict I need my regular fix and like an addict I know that the only way to resolve the situation is to remove the damaging substance from my life.

I would have been happy to carry on worshipping you from afar but you took it to another level by declaring your feelings for me last year.

I had no idea that you felt the same and the joy and excitement you brought into my life could be described by some as an illicit torrid affair. Others may even call it sordid but we know the truth don't we my darling. We simply fell in love.

By the time you read this I will be gone. I have requested a move to another Parish some distance away. I shall not burden you with the knowledge of where it is. It will, at my request to the Bishop, remain a secret.

I ask that you concentrate on your family. You were fundamentally happy before this began and you can go back to that stability with no one any the wiser. I shall concentrate on improving my relationship with God and asking his forgiveness for leading you astray.

Please try not to be sad but if you ever feel lonely please take comfort in knowing that I truly loved you. God be with you always.

Father Vernon Blake

Polly put the letter back in the envelope with trembling hands. She looked at the handwritten name on the front again, the shock and disbelief at what she had read gradually giving way to anger and tears. The letter was addressed to her husband.