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## The End of the Affair?

by Garf Collins

Lisa hurried into Coffee Pacifica. Ten minutes early - just time to calm down, she thought, as she caught sight of her exhilarated expression in the wall mirror.

It had all happened so suddenly. The previous day she had been to an art exhibition where she became aware of someone studying the same pictures she did and even photographing some. Despite her usual reserve, there was something about him that intrigued her. Near the end, as she stood transfixed by a vibrantly coloured abstract, he had asked, “You seem so immersed in this picture, would you mind if I take a shot of you?”

She had posed hesitantly for several different views. It had then seemed natural to accept his offer to show them to her over a cup of tea. He was amusing and drew her out in a lively conversation so she had gladly accepted his invitation to dinner that evening.

Lisa’s reverie was interrupted by a sharp hiss of steam from the coffee machine. With a start she realised that Pierre was 20 minutes late. “I expect that his packing has taken longer than he thought,” she reasoned, as she happily returned to thoughts of the previous night. At an intimate family-run restaurant Pierre had again been most entertaining and attentive. It had been so easy to confide in him about her loneliness since her husband had died. As they were leaving Pierre had said that he would be passing her apartment so they should share a taxi. It then seemed only polite to ask him in for a coffee despite the late hour.

“Gosh. He’s now 40 minutes late. Poor Pierre must have found he needed to shop for something. Men can be so bad at packing. But he’s very good at some things,” she thought with a shiver. After the late coffee, as Pierre was leaving he had said, “We’ve had such a good time today would you mind if I kissed you?” She couldn’t remember her reply. All she could recall was the way she had clutched him tightly and realised that she wanted him desperately. After they had made love, she lay in his arms wondering where such intense desire - even lust - had come from.

Early in the morning Pierre told her that he had to go to Paris that day and he needed to pack. Her disappointment turned to delight when he had suggested they should meet later in the café and there they would make plans.

Lisa surfaced again from her tumultuous memories when the waiter asked if he could get her anything more. As she ordered another coffee she saw that Pierre was now an hour late. She became quite worried, especially when she realised they hadn’t exchanged numbers. She sat on with growing anxiety - her mind racing through increasingly unwelcome scenarios to explain his absence.

Eventually, the waiter approached again, “I’m sorry Madam. The cafe is closing.”