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Guilt's Voice

by Melody Bertucci

His phone buzzed in his pocket alerting him of a message. It burned a hole in his trousers and his morality that now seemed to be slowly vanishing along with his loyalty.

One minute lie won't hurt. It's nothing serious.

On his return home he felt different. He looked the same, he thought as he caught his reflection on his car door as he shut it. He knew the consequences of his actions earlier that day weighed heavy on his shoulders and his conscience. He'd never kept anything from his wife before, it felt abnormal but a necessity now.

Nothing happened. Nothing happened. My tie is tight. Loosen the tie.

His hands were shaking he noticed whilst opening the door. He'd forgotten how to be himself. He desperately needed to remain calm, as he didn't want his dishonesty to be apparent so, he tried to act casual.

His wife walked over to him and gave him a kiss like usual, but to him it felt wrong and he became frozen on spot not knowing what acting casual meant anymore.

"You ok darling?" She asked, but he remained still like a statue. "Darling?" His wife persisted.

"Oh yeah...yes of course dear. Sorry, long day at work!" He lied.

Nothing happened, nothing happened. Don't look her in the eyes. Stop fidgeting

He couldn't bring himself to tell the soon to be mother of his kid, how he had been groping and fondling the receptionist at work just a few hours ago.

We didn't kiss, so I didn't cheat. Nothing happened.

He had acquired an alter-ego. At work he was more seductive, with his side piece. He became "the bad boy" he'd fantasised of being. Whilst at home he was delicate a more PG version of himself and that to him now felt dull, uninteresting and monotonous.

I changed; she knows. Maybe she changed. She deserves better. Maybe she has someone better.

He tried to think if he'd felt that way before. Did he pick at the small things his wife did and/or didn't do, did they even matter then? But you see he was happy before. They had ups and downs, but that never made him sought out the attention of another woman.

It started with a row...about what, he couldn't even remember, that was the damaging thing. His wife left on a training course shortly after and didn't speak for a couple of weeks. So, one night he decided to go out.

I don't make her happy, she doesn't even want to speak to me, she's outgrown me.

He bumped into his receptionist and the two talked all night and carried on the same at work. Their messages become flirtier and they started to exchange of provocative photos.

It's exciting, but it's wrong. I need to stop, but I want more.

When his wife returned, he was aware of the huge elephant in the room. He'd become easily irritated by her and her questions, he didn't know how to reply honestly so he'd snap and became distant.

He tried to be intimate. But it felt difficult, different and strange. He'd close his eyes and the image of the receptionist he longed to kiss crept up in his mind and that would make his intimacy brief, unloving and cold.

It was all too much for him, the lies, the secrecy, the fact he felt he couldn't look at his wife in the eyes anymore. He wanted to own up and come clean, but didn't want to lose everything, so the secret ate away at him and his sleep. He became paranoid and was certain his wife was hiding something too or was it all in his head? He no longer knew as the lines between fiction and reality had already been crossed.