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When She Woke Up

by Sue Hitchcock

When she woke up, the other side of the bed was cold. Phoebe stretched out into a star shape, her fingers and toes reaching into the corners of the bed. She had slept like a child. After a delicious tightening of her muscles and a deep breath, she sighed a contented sigh.

For the past few nights since her guilty secret had been revealed, she had slept on the edge of the mattress of the marital bed, trying to avoid touching her husband. He wasn't a violent man, expressing anger occasionally by shouting but mainly by a self-righteous silence. It was only her guilt which made Phoebe fear a violent retribution. She had finally bought a bed for the sitting room, which had a lockable door, and this had enabled her to sleep soundly for the first time in years. The sitting room wasn't exactly a penitent's cell, having ornate plaster work and french doors to the garden. There was even the piano to play.

Because neither Phoebe nor her husband were willing to part with their daughters, they had decided to keep up normal household behaviour, though the separate bedrooms could not be disguised. Much as Phoebe would like to continue having a room of her own, reconciliation would be the only normality which would be acceptable to the girls. Still for now it was heaven.

The alarm went off. Time to get up for work and school.