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Silvia's Garden Shed

by Sho Botham

She walked briskly down the path, to the garden shed nestling under the long feathery branches of the silver willow tree. She still loves that it looks like a garden shed to the uninitiated eye. Being under the protection of the willow tree kept it safe from prying eyes. Silvia didn't talk about her time spent in the garden shed.

Bert, Silvia's husband, had never been one for gardening. He left it to his wife who, according to him, loved to spend time pottering and planting. It was a very long time ago that Bert stopped asking Silvia about her love of the willow tree and her garden shed underneath its branches.

Golf was Bert's thing. He loved nothing more than completing 18 holes before work. It set him up for the day as a busy CEO. He was a laid-back sort of a chap when he got into the office after playing a round of golf.

Silvia worked part-time in the local biscuit factory. She arrived precisely at 8.30am on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. And could be seen closing her office door at 1pm on the dot - going home time. She preferred walking as it meant she could get rid of the smell of custard creams on the way home. Their sweet sickly smell seemed to permeate her clothes and hair despite her keeping the office door into the factory, tightly closed.

Her walk home, was always 10 minutes quicker than her stroll into work. She was eager to get into her shed. A slow cooker for Christmas some years ago had freed Silvia from kitchen duties preparing the evening meal. Bert loved his slow cooked beef stews and didn't question that he was presented with them on a very regular basis.

Opening the door of her shed, Silvia walked down the 15 steps into the room below, She looked around the familiar, long corridor-like walls, lined with the very latest in high tech communications equipment. A video screen sensing her presence flashed into life. Looking directly at the screen, Silvia's biometric data was checked, as an extra precaution before sharing the latest news with her.

Over another splendid beef stew, Bert dropped his bombshell, "we're moving," he said.

"What do you mean, we're moving?" asked Silvia with a high pitch to her voice.

"The company's looking at opening a branch in New York and I've agreed that we'll go over there for three months to do a recce of potential office sites. We can leave just as soon as you can arrange time off from your job. You could give it up, if you like. We don't need the money.

"But we can't just up and go," said Silvia, "we can't."

"Yes we can," said Bert with a gleam in his eye, "it'll do you the world of good getting away from that garden shed of yours for a while."

Silvia looked at her husband and realised that he knew.