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The Lesson

by Miriam Silver

I think I had a good time last night. I sort of remember he was easy to talk to and that we got along well. I also recall that I didn't expect to meet anyone new at Sharon's party because I was depressed and tired but mostly I did not want to go there in the first place.

I live alone now that Gerry has gone. Been low ever since he told me that he had found someone else. There's silly me thinking we were building our future together, reasonable actually as we had been collecting stuff and were in the mortgage business.

Sharon has stood by me all through my difficult time and was sure her birthday party was what I needed to help me forget.

"Come on now my friend," she said, "you'll know a lot of people, get that blue one on, I'll expect you, even if you only stay a short time."

And so I went, complete with no expectations, a bit dressed-up just to appease her.

There was music, faces I didn't recognise and drink that gave me the courage to join in the laughter and chat with a guy who didn't seem to mind that although I'd never met him before I behaved in a very familiar way. He was so easy and comfortable to talk to.

"What time is it, my phone's ringing, where is it, what the...?"

And there on my screen was a picture of me looking over-animated. Horrified, I pushed off my duvet, sat up, instantly having only to clasp my aching head.

Clutching my phone I headed to the kitchen where I made a strong coffee and called Sharron.

“Please tell me, I don’t remember getting home last night.”

“See, I told you, you had a good time, met that bloke, you know, the one in export, not here often,” an explanation I hadn’t expected, “we’re meeting for brunch today,” she added, ringing off leaving me even more worried and reluctant to recall last night’s events.

Drinking the last of my coffee I accepted I couldn’t go anywhere, certainly not anywhere anyone from last night will be, I felt so ashamed, overdid everything, just like me, at least as I used to be, must have reverted, I’ll ring her now, urgh! Means looking at that picture, no I won’t, I’ll have a shower and then go back to bed forever. Hang on, better check my emails first.

“Hi lady in the beautiful blue! Anthony here, we met at Sharon’s party, please meet for brunch as arranged, perhaps you’ll tell me your name then.”

At least I knew his name, he must have sent that photo, yes, it’s his, when, how?

“Sharon please tell me you brought me home? You didn’t, no, not him.”

“Cool down, Annie dear friend, you don’t think...” and I cut her off, too upset to even contemplate my stupidity and went back to my emails where he was again,

‘Got your address, be round soon.’

All I could think was that she shouldn’t have given him my address, now I’ll have to get dressed, but I don’t have to open the door, maybe I’ll call through it, apologise for all the trouble. Of course, I did open it when he begged my forgiveness and pushed a huge bunch of flowers at me, leaving me no alternative except to have to invite him in especially as he apologised for taking that picture.

“Could have been worse,” I thought as I opened the door.