



It Never Happened

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Graeme was in the photocopy room when Chelsea entered.

‘I’m nearly finished.’ Graeme made room for her as Chelsea squeezed her buxom body past him in the confined space.

Chelsea put her work down on the sorting table and turned to him with an eager smile. ‘I’m chill. Don’t hurry.’

Graeme turned back to the machine. ‘Are you enjoying working here?’

‘The people here are bliss, yeah!’

Graeme liked the energy she put into her words. ‘Great!’

‘What’s the name of your cat? The one in the picture?’

Graeme remembered the picture of his wife and Circos on his desk. ‘That’s very much my wife’s cat. She calls him Circos.’

‘How do you spell that?’

This reminded him a dream he’d had of Sarina, his wife dancing with Circos on a moonbeam. He didn’t want to share this. ‘Like circus, but with an “o”. Nearly done.’

She picked up her stuff. ‘What do you think of the weather?’

He turned to her. ‘Freezing – it would be a good day to be cuddled up in bed.’

Chelsea paused and tilted her head towards him, her mane of red hair framing her big eyes and full lips. ‘Okay.’ She pressed her body against him.

Graeme felt electricity from her body flow through him. He wanted to say no. It would risk everything that he valued. He tried to think about the loss of his wife’s love and respect and how he wanted to start having children. Sarina was already not keen to have children with him, even though they’d been together for over fifteen years. Chelsea’s passionate look melted Graeme’s resistance. He hadn’t been looked at like that for such a long time.

He thought he could still be home at a normal time, when he met Chelsea at the Parmelia, in the city.

Chelsea was every bit as energetic with her gorgeous body as he had imagined. They felt such passion for each other that nothing else in the world seemed to matter or even exist. He loved hearing about her youthful and exuberant life. It reminded him of the life he'd had, before he'd settled down.

She loved the stories about Circos. How he sat between him and his wife to keep them apart and how he could lean his body against him to edge him out of bed. She laughed. 'I think cats rule this world.'

Graeme rubbed her nose with his. 'You might be right. Circos hasn't used his claws on me, but they make a *schwing* sound as they come out.'

She ran her fingernails over his bum. 'Like a sword from a scabbard! How old is Circos?'

'That's a good question. He was an adult cat when I met Sarina fifteen years ago.'

'That's an old cat!'

'You're right, but I hadn't thought of that before. He doesn't seem old.'

After another love making session, Chelsea put her hand on his shoulder as he caught his breath. 'Do you want to get something to eat?'

The rest of Graeme's world flooded back. He picked up his watch from the bedside table. It was after eight. Graeme desperately tried to think of how he could explain his lateness to Sarina. He was never late, well not since he and his friends had lost their keenness for drugs and alcohol. He tried to think of who he could be with – other than Chelsea. All he could think about was Sarina dancing with her cat.

'Come on,' Chelsea insisted, 'I'm famished.'

Graeme thought he would think of an excuse for Sarina while he had dinner. Another half hour wouldn't make much difference.

At dinner, Chelsea squeezed his hand when he told her how Sarina wasn't interested in kids and how much he wanted them. Chelsea told him how much she was looking forward to having children.

When they finished their meal, they exchanged longing looks over the table and went back to their hotel room. In the chaos of their passion Chelsea fist pumped the air. 'It would be bliss to be your wife.'

This shocked Graeme – he'd been thinking the same thing. 'You'd be a wonderful wife, but I couldn't leave Sarina.' Despite this Graeme had forgotten to think of excuses for his wife. He just wanted to be with Chelsea.

Graeme woke up with the sun shining through the window of their room. He sat bolt upright.

Chelsea stirred and looked at the bedside table. 'Oh my God, look at the time. You'll be late for work.'

Graeme was about to say that work was the least of his worries, but when he turned to look at Chelsea he froze. The harsh sunlight made her look older – much older.

Chelsea pushed him out of bed and told him to have a shower. In the shower Graeme tried to think of who could give him an alibi. Sarina knew the wives of his friends. He couldn't use them. Ian would have been perfect, but he was in Europe with one of his new girlfriends.

Chelsea joined him in the shower and rubbed herself against him. 'This has been great – we should do it more often. You're such an impetuous thing.' 'I just couldn't resist you.'

She kissed him. 'That's sweet! 'Let's get some breakfast. You can be late just this once, can't you?'

Graeme shrugged. 'Ah well, I don't want to be the turkey that called an early Christmas.'

Chelsea furrowed her eyebrows and tilted her head, puzzled by his response. 'I've brought you a fresh shirt and underwear.'

'Wow, thanks, that was thoughtful. You must do this all the time.'

Chelsea smiled and hugged him. 'Not near often enough,' she said dreamily.

Graeme found it a bit creepy. The shirt and underwear were just like his own.

When Graeme got to work everyone seemed to be looking for him. Urgent problems abounded. He was just getting on top of it when Sarina walked into his office.

When Graeme looked up his heart stopped. ‘Sarina!’

‘Oh, Sorry Graeme, I didn’t mean to startle you.’

Sarina looked young again. She didn’t look tired and she spoke with an energy she hadn’t had for ages. Strangest of all she didn’t look angry at all. ‘Sarina, I...’

‘OMG, are you worried about what I said in the photocopy room?’

‘What?’

‘I’m sorry Graeme – I don’t know what came over me. I know you love Chelsea. I’d never come between you.’

Graeme felt like the room was spinning. He put one hand on his forehead and the other behind his head to try and stabilise it. He looked at the photo of Sarina on his desk. He picked it up to have a closer look.

Sarina came close and leaned over his desk. ‘Can you forgive me. I just found out that you two have been trying to have children. Can we pretend what I said never happened? I’d be so embarrassed if anyone knew.’

Graeme looked up from the photo of his wife. It was of Chelsea looking older and there was no cat. ‘What? Oh, Okay.’

‘Bliss, you’re a sweetie. Oh, sorry, Mum says I use that word too much.’

Graeme couldn’t remember his wife using that word before.

Sarina looked at the picture he was holding.

‘That is such a lovely picture of Chelsea. She looks so happy.’

‘Sarina?’

Sarina ignored him. ‘Graeme, do you think it’s better to be married or young?’

Graeme couldn’t say anything.

She winked at him as she left. ‘Yes, that’s what I think.’