

The Escape

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Kimberly's life is about to be changed by three strangers she will never talk to.

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Reliable, dependable, respectable, Kimberly Parsons was the perfect pastor's wife. Her course had been set since the tenth grade when Frank Parsons had asked her for a date and she had refused. It was the first time any girl had refused the rising star of the football team. A few months later, Frank asked again and was again met with a refusal. Though she did allow him to sit with her at lunch in the cafeteria. By the time Frank mustered the courage to ask a third time, nobody doubted that they would soon be walking down the aisle together. Which they did after Kimberly finished college and Frank started his Master of Divinity program at the Seminary. Frank's coach had been disappointed by his choice. He had been a starter on the college team in his first year and there had been talk of a possible NFL career. But his early promise had faded and by his final year the NFL talk had stopped and he was no longer even an automatic choice as starter. But for a run of injuries on the team he would have been cut. Frank had heard the call of the Lord and saving souls was more important to him now than moving pigskin yard-by-yard across a playing field. And Kimberly, ever faithful Kimberly never questioned Frank's choice then or in the six years that had followed. Kimberly had found work at one of the telephone call centers that were advancing across the mid-West as agricultural employment declined. The work was poorly paid and unrewarding but it paid the bills and allowed Frank to find a step on the first rungs of the preaching profession. Kimberly's college degree allowed her to rapidly work her way up through the ranks to deputy center manager. Which in practice meant manager in all but name and pay grade, the owners believing a Y-chromosome to be an essential prerequisite for receiving a manager's title and manager's pay but not to do manager's work. The titular manager was a nephew-in-law of the owners who arrived late in the morning and left early in the afternoon for either his mistress or the golf course. Kimberly knew about the mistress of course, as she knew the private lives of everyone in the office. It was her business to know. She knew that in the next six weeks she would have to fill at least two positions of employees who had given notice and at least another three who had not: Beverly who prepared the scripts for the representatives to read would be leaving to care for an aunt with Alzheimer's, Kath who answered calls was considering

returning to the abusive husband she had fled six months ago and Carol who had discovered she could earn more money with less aggravation working a pole instead of a telephone. It was a shame about Carol, she had been one of their most productive reps. The others work would not be missed. The life choices of others were their own affair. If she was going to be judgemental, Kath's choice seemed remarkably poorer than Carol's. Kimberly knew that compared to most women at the center, her marriage was a success. Frank's job was poorly paid and likely to remain so. But Frank was ambitious and his congregation was growing. The problem was sex. Or rather, the lack of it. Kimberly had not been a virgin when she began her careful pursuit. In high school through the start of college, sex with Frank had been hot and frequent. Then in their sophomore year, Frank had stopped making approaches and began withdrawing from hers. By the start of the summer, Kimberly had had enough. There was a blazing row and they separated. Then a few months later, Frank returned and declared that the reason he could not sleep with her was that he had found a personal relationship with God and sleeping with a married woman would be a sin. After a long talk, Frank had proposed and Kimberly accepted. There would be all the sex she wanted again after they were married. Only after the marriage ceremony and only by degrees did Kimberly begin to understand that sex within the marriage would be for strictly procreational purposes. Sex was now a duty to be performed once a month at the peak of her cycle. A passionless, joyless exercise in futility for all concerned: she was taking the pill. The call center was a production plant, one of almost a dozen run by the company. Their job was to fulfill the orders won by headquarters in Austin. Once a month a manager from each of the fulfillment centers would gather in Austin to receive their marching orders for the month ahead. It was a routine chore that her boss would have normally delegated to Kimberly if not for the chance to spend a night away from home with his mistress. In late spring of 1994, the mistress' husband completed his overseas army posting and with it the opportunity for overnight stays. And so early in May, Kimberly found herself driving over the McHoon bridge on her way to Austin. The strength of her marriage, her faith and her faithfulness were as beyond question as the strength of the bridge itself. No-one who knew her would imagine that they would soon be brought down by an incident involving three strangers she would never talk to. The meeting ended early in the afternoon and the managers headed to a bar to drink. Later they would visit a strip club together. None of the managers would think to invite Kimberly of course. The least worst outcome was that she would be offended, at worst she would accept. Kimberly joined the men in the bar, ordered one drink for forms sake, made her excuses and left. She had expressed an interest in visiting the Zilker Botanical Gardens, but that was really an excuse. Had the epoch been later she would probably have returned to the hotel to work on her laptop but at the time portable computers were still rare and without a network to connect to of limited use. The manager had one of course, but like the cell phone the company paid for, it was for status rather than use. Kimberly knew how often he used the cell phone because she paid the bills each month. Which is also how she knew whenever he changed his old mistress for a younger model. With several hours to kill, the botanical gardens were as good a place to be as any. As she walked the meandering path through the wooded part, Kimberly reflected on the fact that the men she worked with were without exception, total shits. Where did it all come from, the idea that men should

automatically occupy the top position regardless of merit? “Why should a man always be at the head?” Kimberly realized she had said this out loud. She looked round to see if anyone might have overheard, but nobody was there. There was a bench at the top of a rise overlooking the lake. She did not need to rest but she did need to think. She had heard the same question the previous Sunday when Frank had given his sermon on a reading from Corinthians. Suddenly her train of thought was interrupted by a flapping and fluttering of wings as the geese on the lake quarreled. A young woman in a bright red dress was throwing bread crumbs. Straight, jet black hair framed a narrow face with pale white skin, blue eyes and thin lips. Short and fashionable, with lips, shoes and purse coordinated to the exact same shade of red as her dress, any young Parisienne would have been pleased to wear the ensemble to a reception or a shopping trip on the Champs-Élysées. On a Texan nature trail, even a nature trail in the state capitol, it was incongruous. Red dress continued to stare out at the lake as the geese came to terms with the fact that the food had gone. After a short time, another woman appeared, older, maybe mid forties, also immaculately dressed but in grey. Without exchanging a word, grey dress approached red dress and grasped the hem with both hands, raising it to expose her buttocks and midriff. A third figure approached, a man wearing a blue blazer, English cut in the style with which Gary Cooper and Fred Astaire created men’s elegance in the 30s. Past his twenties but certainly short of his fifties, blue blazer might have been any age in-between. Without word or gesture to either red or grey dress, blue blazer approached red dress and ran his hands across her buttocks and belly. Red dress made no response, neither shrinking from his touch, nor adjusting her position to afford him access. From her vantage point on the rise, Kimberly could not see exactly where blue blazer touched red dress except that it was definitely intimate. The tableau ended almost as soon as it was begun. Blue blazer nodded to grey dress and left, grey dress dropped the hem of the skirt and left in a different direction. A few moments later red dress was gone and Kimberly was alone again. What just happened? Why did it happen? Did I imagine it happening? How could I imagine such a thing happening? Why would I imagine such a thing happening? Questions and theories consumed Kimberly’s thoughts that evening and night. Questions and theories led to yet more theories and questions. Red dress and grey dress were prostitutes and blue blazer their client, but why go to so much trouble for so little? It was a college thing, but the ages were wrong. Were they aware they were being watched? If so did it matter to them. Was that the point? Questions and theories provided no answers but did yield one inescapable conclusion: Kimberly was obsessed and the reason for her obsession was separate from and more important than any incident that might have or might not have happened in the gardens. Kimberly undressed and prepared for bed. She had taken her white night gown from her case and laid it out on the bed. As she reached out to put it on, she caught sight of herself naked in the full length mirror that was the door of the closet. She was still beautiful. Her body was no longer as thin and angular as in her teens but neither her waist nor her belly has the slightest amount of excess fat. The angles had been filled in by flowing curves. Her breasts were fuller and rounder but still quite firm. She now wore her hair parted at the center in long tresses that broke from the parting straight until they broke into waves at her cheeks. Why cover her body? The absurd garment in her hand was thrown in a corner. Kimberly looked in the mirror again.

Could she have stood there while a stranger touched her like blue blazer had touched red dress? Delicately, Kimberly ran a hand across her belly. How far could his fingers have reached? She found that slight changes in the position of her hands allowed her a wide range of access. In one position her clit was out of reach, in another she could touch almost the whole length of her slit and crook her index finger slightly inside. She was wet. That would have to be taken care of soon. Leaving her finger inside, she tried replicating the placement of his other hand on her buttocks. This was more difficult since he had been standing to the side of red dress and so his hand was in front of his shoulder as he touched her. Touching her own buttocks with the palm of her hand meant reaching behind her shoulder. This experiment suggested blue blazer's fingers might have reached into her crack, possibly touching the anus. The pad of Kimberly's finger touched her own hole. She examined herself in the mirror. Would her figure have satisfied blue blazer as well as red dress? She thought it might. Forgetting about blue blazer and red dress for the moment, Kimberly adjusted the position of her hands to find the best position. It was really quite pleasant. Working her hips in a slow circle afforded an interesting range of feelings. She imagined little electric sparks flying between her middle fingers on her clit and hole. Her slit was wetter than before. This motion allowed the tip of both fingers to slip inside their hole. Instinctively, she parted her legs and bent her knees slightly to open herself up. The sparks became stronger and each spark drew a deeper gasp. The orgasm came quickly causing Kimberly to step backwards and collapse on the bed with surprise. She had never had a standing orgasm before. Since sex with Frank had become invariably orgasm free, most of her orgasms came in the bathroom. She would wash her hands return to their bedroom and sleep. As she was following this routine, she noticed that the hotel had provided a small bottle of lotion along with the usual shampoo and conditioner. She placed a small bead on a finger tip, it was slippery. K pulled the sheets from the bed and arranged the pillows so that she could view herself in the mirror. The lotion made it easier to work a finger tip a little deeper than before but was made to be absorbed quickly into the skin. There must be something better. A tray on the desk contained the remains of her room service. Butter: it had worked for Marlon Brando. Working swiftly before she changed her mind, Kimberly lubricated a finger and pressed it inside her. It was neither painful, nor unpleasant. The ring of flesh pressed tightly around her finger. With her right hand in her ass, she had to work her clit with the left. It felt different. She had a sense, a sensation of being centered about her ass. A finger or a cock in her cunt gave her a sensation of fullness that quickly led to thoughts about the sex. The finger in her ass concentrated her thinking on her ass, her cunt and her clit. She was torn between exploring the new sensations and release. Moving her hips in a circle gave an interesting blend of feelings. She could feel the orgasmic pressure building as she moved her hips forward and pausing slightly as she rocked them backwards, building and building with each cycle. Gasps of breath turned into moans which quickly became shouts as the dam finally gave way. For the first time in years, Kimberly actually cried after an orgasm. At some point during that night, the cotter pin holding the Southwest bearing pin of the McHoon bridge snapped. This transferred the lateral forces on the bridge onto the cotter pin holding the Southeast bearing pin which quickly failed in succession. Now with both bearings loose, the bridge began to shake and rattle crosswise in the wind, each shake or vibration

working one pin or the other free throughout the next day. Towards the end of the evening commute, both bearing pins at the South end of the bridge were ejected causing the central beam supporting the highway to fall away into the river below, the bearing pins at the Northern end of the bridge acting like the axis of a hinge. Miraculously the concrete carriageway itself remained in place long enough for the traffic to come to a slithering stop short of the chasm that had opened up in front of them until that too was forced to succumb to the forces of gravity and collapse. Had she delayed her departure, Kimberly might have been caught in the catastrophe herself. It was the main item on the local news. But Kimberly was not watching the news, she was staring intently at a blank sheet of paper. She was alone in the house, Frank had left for some church event and would not be back for at least two hours. That should give her just enough time if she was efficient. Drawing on her management training classes, Kimberly drew a line down the center of the paper. Above the column on the left she wrote the heading STAY. She paused for a moment. It was cold in the room but she could feel the pencil becoming slippery with her sweat. All her senses collapsed in on themselves blocking out the room, the bed and even the paper. Her eyes lost focus, her ears could only hear the pounding of her heart. Her grip on the pencil, the only thing connecting her to the outside world. Breathe. After the crisis, a moment of perfect calm. Her decision was made but her methodical habits compelled her to complete the task. Above the right hand column Kimberly wrote GO.