



Stories for the Train

Tales on the go

0:7:00

The Affair

By Dee Holmes

“Sara, I thought we might go away for a few days, somewhere sunny maybe” She was caught off guard, she hadn’t been expecting Mathew to come out with that.

“Why, what’s brought this on so suddenly. I don’t really feel now is a good time”

“I just thought it would do us good, we haven’t spent much time together since Alfie was born”

“Well yes that’s true but maybe in a few months’ time”

“Alfie is quite old enough now to stay with your parents for a few days”

This was going to take some quick thinking and evasive action on Sara’s part. Going away for a few days just wasn’t an option at the moment. Much as she would love to.

“To be honest Mathew, I’m just not in the right frame of mind for holidays”

His suspicions about Sara’s behaviour of late were not eased by their present conversation. He was undecided about whether to pursue this discussion or not. She was a wonderful girl, wonderful Mother, he just couldn’t bear the thought of losing her. And if he

was confronted with his worst fears, he would have to make a decision. What then. But like an itch, he had to keep scratching it.

“Whenever I call you are never at home just lately, and your mobile always goes to message”

“Oh, I’m probably shopping, or having lunch with my NCT chums. You can imagine with all the children and mothers talking at the same time, it isn’t easy to hear a phone, much less answer it”

“You certainly seem to dress up for these lunches and the shopping nowadays I haven’t seen you in a pair of jeans for ages”

“Well I thought I would dig out some of the smarter trousers and jackets I used to wear for work. Tidy myself up a bit, I won’t get to wear them otherwise”

He realised he was getting nowhere. It isn’t easy to find out what goes on at home when you leave the house at 7am and don’t get back until 7pm. He felt tormented, everything was going horribly wrong. He knew when Sara agreed to marry him that he was punching above his weight, but it had all been going so well. Until a few weeks ago. It was then everything started falling apart.

He left every morning at 7am, his case containing his paperwork and laptop his constant companions. Yesterday he had added an app to Sara’s phone, hoping she wouldn’t notice. He hated the idea of stalking his own wife, but now at least he would find out where she was going during the day and then maybe who she was seeing.

For several days her routine seemed to be the same. Peculiarly, she went to the area where his parents lived, stayed for a short while, and then she went to the station and on to London and the area where she worked before Alfie arrived. Then after several hours she reversed the route and was back home, in time he noticed

for Alfie's tea and bedtime routine. It was the same pattern for the whole week. What on earth was she doing? Please don't tell me he thought that she's seeing that conceited idiot Peter Russell, he never did quite trust that friendship.

"How have you and Mummy spent your day Alfie"?

If only he could talk, but a bit much to expect of a seven-month-old. It wouldn't be so easy for Sara to carry on with whoever she was carrying on with then.

"Oh, we just did the usual round of things didn't we Alfie"

They seemed to talk a lot through Alfie these days. Mathew decided to call on his Mother this weekend and ask if she had seen anything of Sara during the week. She was evasive, decidedly shifty he thought. Maybe it was because of his present predicament that his Mother felt so badly for him.

He decided that if the tracker showed the same pattern on Monday he would come home early and be waiting for her, they couldn't go on like this. Or he couldn't anyway.

Sure enough, off she went, and Mathew made sure he was home in time. He was waiting in the kitchen when Sara walked through the door with Alfie. The shock at seeing him there was written all over her face.

"Where have you been Sara"?

He kept his voice quiet and controlled. She was silent for a while clearly caught on the back foot.

Actually Mathew, where have you been? All day every day for the last four weeks. You see I know that your Father made you redundant. Your Mother didn't realise you hadn't told me. I've been

freelancing in the City because I knew that at some point soon, we would run out of money. Alfie has been staying with your Mother.

He sank into the nearest chair, his head in his hands, his profound humiliation and feeling of failure obvious.

“You could have told me you know, she said gently”

Alfie sensing the drama started wailing loudly. And Sara knelt by Mathew and held him in her arms. He was shaking, rasping sobs escaping from his huddled frame. The long days spent in the library trawling the internet, sending CV’s going for interviews had taken their toll. This was what rock bottom felt like.

“Hey, let’s go for a few days in the sun after all she said, I think we need it”

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