

*Anna and Phil - Part III*

After Anna said goodbye to Alexis at the bookstore, she decided to eat dinner over at a restaurant called The Ice Cube. The scent of food in the air was wonderful. She was taken to a booth by the hostess where a few other patrons were sitting nearby. When the waiter came to her table, she ordered a gyro, fries, and a large ice water. After having dinner, she felt her thoughts drift and the intensity of her sexual desires begin to ebb.

She thought back to the time when she first met Phil and found herself wondering if her motivation to marry him was driven more by love or by sex. Time passed as she mused the situation over in her mind.

They first met about six years ago when some of their favorite bands played at a local club. Besides just simply having fun talking to him, she felt that it was meant to be to spend time with him. After all, it was not often that she could find a friend that was so much into the same kind of music that she liked. It was an even rarer occurrence that she ever felt an attraction to someone of the opposite sex that shared these same interests. As a result, her feelings were not driven by sex, but by something more intangible. She then thought that it had to be love that brought them together.

Having sex with him on the honeymoon just made things better. It was so good that it was hard for her to stop after just a few minutes. Unfortunately, after about three years, she felt like things regressed. Phil just wasn't as interested as much in sex anymore. By about a year later, there was hardly any sex at all. Eventually, their relationship declined to the point to where they are now, just simply companions, not feeling the same sexual feelings that they used to. Sex was one of those things that she enjoyed to feel with him. Being carefree and having fun with each other like how they did at the live music concerts was also something that seemed to be gone. Every once in a while, Phil would put on some music. However, it seemed to be an attempt to vent his frustration rather than to create a more carefree atmosphere.

*I think I might be missing something. Either that or Phil is keeping something from me,* she thought.

After reviewing the past few years of her life, Anna picked up the bill and paid the cashier. It wouldn't be long before she would need to make it over to The Hideaway.

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It was some time before Phil started being less concerned about his obsession with adult films. Finally, he made it to the point where he felt like he could do something else besides sulk. After getting up and walking over to the kitchen, he fixed himself a light snack to eat.

Every once in a while, Phil thought back to the days when he liked to see some of his favorite bands. He then thought about how these concerts played such a key role in his relationship with Anna. However, looking back, he could see that the music was a key element in how it helped create a less serious atmosphere for them both. The bands they saw together seemed to be concerned about nothing except playing music and having a great time. Everyone at the concert was drinking or having fun, and they didn't display any pretentious attitudes.

Now, he knew that he had a problem. Even if he could not admit it to anyone else, he knew that his pornography habit wasn't right. As he thought once again about how to approach Anna about his addiction to these films, that familiar sense of fear of what she might think came back to haunt him. The only music he could hear, at least in his own mind, were his own nightmarish songs filled with confusion. Phil just didn't know what to do.

The contributing factors to Phil's decision to become absorbed in all of these films were manifold. Phil's responsibilities with the local construction company took up a lot of his resources. On top of that, sex with Anna was extremely consuming, at least in Phil's opinion it was. Anna was insistent that almost every sexual position had to be truly experienced for at least a number of minutes. After a while, Phil became exhausted after having sex. He also didn't like the fact that it took up a lot of his time. Anna would almost always want their love making sessions to occur a few times a week and last at least an hour or more each time. Phil tried to tell her that he thought that their sessions went on for too long, but it only created more tension

between the two. Anna just could not stop even after forty-five minutes.

By contrast, watching a scene from a movie only took about fifteen minutes and Phil was on to other things, such as maintaining the house or watching the stock market. In addition, there was almost always bills that needed to be payed and phone calls that needed to be answered. Working for a construction company was not an easy task. For the past six months, a desire to save time and energy by withholding sexual activity with Anna, has been adversely effecting Phil's marriage. In the process, he has become farther away from her than he was when he first met her.

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As Anna drove off, she reminded herself as to why she was heading out to The Hideaway. It was to her, what The Lofty Tavern was to Phil. There was a major difference from this concept however, which was that Anna went to The Hideaway to meet other people, whereas Phil went to The Lofty Tavern to experience more isolation from his usual routine.

Both places were a bit different in other ways as well. It would be a bit more accurate to say that Anna went to The Hideaway to meet other women, and not just other people. In fact, this was a place where such social interactions were the primary reason for this establishment. To put things in basic terms, it wasn't a secret around town that The Hideaway was a seedy lesbian bar. The Lofty Tavern on the other hand, had an atmosphere of being about as straight as you can get, and people didn't usually go there just to get laid.

After parking her car and walking up to the rear entrance, Anna felt like she was in a safe haven. Only the most open minded and sexually adventurous people hung out at The Hideaway. With her inhibitions now at an extremely low level, she easily opened up the back door of the club and made her way to a table. It was early enough that she didn't need to pay to get in.

A few minutes passed while she did some reading and had a drink. Finally Alexis walked through the door. Her attire was similar to what she wore to the bookstore, except she had on a nice short skirt on with a pair of matching high heels. Anna smiled sweetly and offered Alexis to sit down with her.

"Thank you," Alexis said.

Anna looked at Alexis while examining her situation. She wondered if Alexis had enough time to watch her new video and make any progress with her personal life. However, it seemed like it would be too forward to ask right now. Anna thought she would try a more subtle approach.

"What's on your mind?" Anna asked.

Alexis took a moment to think. "I still find myself thinking about my husband. I think I am getting over it, but feeling happy sure has been difficult."

"How did he pass away?"

Alexis looked like pain became etched on her face as she started to speak. "He died of Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis.

"Oh dear. I am so sorry. That must have been very difficult for you."

"Well, it was. There was the dry irritating cough, and he was constantly complaining about not being able to breathe properly. There was also the feeling of discomfort in his chest that he so often told me about. Last but not least, treating him with the proper medications were a major headache. There were the adverse side effects to be concerned about, and they became expensive as well."

Anna took time to take all of this in. "How are you doing now?"

"I am getting by. My husband and I lived on a large estate. I still live there now. He passed the ownership of the land over to me when he passed on. It was written in his will that this be done. I have been able to sell some of it off to some of the local farmers who need it. I also manage a lingerie store, and the money this job makes me is pretty good."

"That's great," replied Anna. "What store do you manage?"

"Lucy's Lingerie."

Anna brightened with pleasant surprise. "I know where that is at. I have been there a

few times. I am surprised that I haven't seen you there."

"Well, we do mail order as well as sell lingerie in the store for people. Some people are too busy to drive to our store, or they might be a bit shy or self-conscious when buying something sexy or intimate. As a result, I am often in my office taking phone orders."

Anna sat for a moment in thought. "I see. It sounds like you are doing okay, with the exception of the loss of your husband."

Alexis nodded approvingly. In the background, the music of Amorphous Androgynous played at a nice audible volume. It was still a bit early for the club's loud and conventional dance music to be played. Hardly anyone was even near the dance floor, so this laid-back ambient music created a very relaxing atmosphere for the patrons that were sitting at their tables.

Anna looked at Alexis for a while. After thinking about her recent encounter with Alexis, and how stunning she looked, Anna said, "I noticed you changed into a skirt. It looks good on you."

"Thank you," she replied. "Thanks again for helping me find what I was looking for in the bookstore. I had a chance to watch the video but it really didn't do a whole lot for me."

Anna tried to look surprised, but she knew all along that those videos hardly ever did what they claimed what they would do. "Well, I am sorry to hear about that. I don't usually watch those kind of instructional videos."

Alexis seemed a bit taken back, but excepted the statement anyhow. "What do you watch then?"

Anna was surprised by the forward question, but she answered it anyhow. "I sometimes like to read erotic books or films."

Struck with the declaration, Alexis took a moment to consider it. "You mean you subject yourself to pornographic material?"

Anna straightened her resolve. "There is a difference between what is pornographic and what is erotic."

Alexis pressed Anna for more details. "So, what is the difference?"

"Pornography is when women or men are treated as objects and thus something inhuman. It is also much more graphic than what is found in the erotic genre. Erotic literature or erotic films contain men and women having sex. However, they don't often contain the vivid, and often cliché details that men expect from pornography."

Alexis was starting to understand. "I see, but why do you say that men, and not women expect this from pornography?"

"Because most women don't like pornography. As a result, they don't bother to watch it. In fact, I have found that very few women like it. However, most men like pornography. Most pornographic films lack the intricate details that are often found in erotic movies. Most men find such extra footage in erotic films to be a bit boring."

Alexis became even more interested. "What kind of details, or extra footage?"

"The kind of details that women are interested in. How a woman is effected by the things that other people say to her. How she is effected by how she is looked at, or the tone in the voice of the man she is talking to. You know, emotions and sensitive feelings."

Alexis felt like she was starting to become confused. "Well, when my husband was alive, he always cared about me, and treated me like he was just as sensitive as me. He never treated me like an object. I don't know why anyone would want to spend time watching a movie if they can experience the same thing in real life."

Anna felt like she was just trampled on. It was most likely because of her recent hardships with Phil that made the previous comment by Alexis hit home in a bad way. "Well, my husband has not only been ignoring my desire to spend intimate time with him, but he often acts like he doesn't care to one bit."

"Oh my, I am sorry to hear that."

"Well, it bothers me to even talk about it. When we talk, there just isn't any real sensitivity in our conversations anymore. Both of us just say enough to somehow coexist."

Alexis felt a bit of sympathy for Anna. She was realizing that a very nice woman, who is experiencing such hardships, would take time out of her day to be with her. "How about if you come over and we get a little bit more familiar with these kinds of erotic films. I want to see, first hand, what difference they may have with what is considered pornographic. Do you have one that you can bring over?"

"I have a few, all of which are very artistic and extremely well done."

Alexis took out a piece of note-paper and wrote her address and some other things on it. Anna took it and put it in her purse.

Alexis put her hand on Anna's arm and said, "Will you be able to see me tomorrow at noon?"

"That will be great. I look forward to seeing you again."

The thought of seeing each other again filled the minds of the two women as the night progressed on. Eventually, they left The Hideaway before the hours became all that late. The anticipation of seeing each other in a more intimate and private setting, motivated both of them to save their energy for what was yet to come.

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Eventually, Anna made her way home.

"Hello dear," Phil said.

"Hello," replied Anna. "Did you find enough to eat?"

"Yes dear. Thanks for leaving that food in the fridge for me." Phil felt tense. He knew he should try to say something soon. However, he didn't know where to start.

"I will go into my room to change," Anna stated hastily.

"That's is fine. I will see you soon."

Anna went into the bedroom to change into a pink night gown. After a moment, she appeared in the living room. She decided to get some food and watch TV for a while with Phil. There seemed to be unstable tension in the air.

"How about if we watch a movie?" Phil asked.

Anna thought about that for a moment but then remembered her experience with Alexis. "I would rather take a shower," answered Anna.

Phil looked at Anna for a moment. "You have been taking a lot of long showers lately. Have you been giving birth in there or something?"

Anna strengthened her resolve. She felt as if Phil was trying to read into her thoughts. "Yes, everything is fine. I just need time to relax and wash my hair."

After a hour and a few minutes, Anna was in bed. Once the film was over, Phil took a shower and made his way to bed as well. Even though their bodies didn't touch, their minds were conjuring up some very similar images.