

Leigh Green
123 Writer's Way
Writesylvania, WR 12345
(555) 555-5555
mlgreen@fullsail.edu

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She Tastes of Scotch
by Leigh Green

Despite the television, Mark could not control his imagination. He kept seeing her in the shower; skin gleaming, hair spilling over naked shoulders, hands smoothing over slick skin. He buried his face in his hands, failing to control his breathing.

He felt lightheaded, chest tight. Pressing hands into the carved arms of the room's only chair, he pushed himself upright and crossed to the mini bar. The ice bucket made a hollow sound when he lifted the lid.

"I'm going to get ice," he said, stepping into the hall before she could reply.

Mark's hand froze on the knob when he returned, hearing nothing from the room. His skin prickled, making him aware of the cool metal beneath his fingertips. Inhaling deeply, he opened the door and stepped inside.

Jane stood at the foot of her bed, suitcase open and belongings strewn about. A green, satin dressing gown draped over her thin frame. It obscured her curves... save where her hips pressed into the thin fabric. The robe was darkened by her damp, brown hair where it lay between her shoulders.

Something stirred in Mark and he averted his gaze, moving mechanically to the bar. "Want a drink?"

He heard the rustle of fabric behind him, but remained focused on his task. Ice clinked against glass, echoing in the small room.

"Sure." Jane's voice cut to the quick. Musical in a single syllable, it sent chills down Mark's spine.

Breathing deep to steel his nerves, Mark poured their drinks. He turned, extending a glass for Jane... only for her to disappear into the bathroom. He started to speak, but was interrupted by her call from behind the door: "I'll be right out."

Glancing to the mirror, Mark frowned at his reflection. He held two glasses of scotch, his hair was shaggy, and his tie was uneven. Setting both drinks down, he freed his hands to deftly remove the tie. He was running his hands through his hair when the door opened. Glancing to the mirror, his heart skipped a beat. She was wearing a little black dress, her hair curled gracefully, and her eyeliner smudged around brown eyes in that way he liked.

With a final glance to his own green eyes in the reflection, Mark picked up their drinks and turned. He smiled as he offered Jane her glass.

"There's still time before dinner," she said, lips curving in a smile as she took a drink. A small smudge of red was left behind on the rim of her glass. Subconsciously, Mark brushed the back of his hand across his mouth.

"...sit outside for a bit," Jane was saying when his attention returned. He nodded, following her out onto the patio. Tropical plants sheltered the concrete slab, climbing a wooden fence. Jane sat at the far side of the small, iron table.

"Enjoying your first trip?" Mark said, closing the door partway as he joined her.

"It's exciting!" Jane sat her drink on the table, crossing one leg over the other. Mark caught a glimpse of the smooth, pale skin of her thigh before she tugged her skirt down. "I can't believe we're going to dinner on the company dime."

"Well, it's vendors, so it counts as networking," Mark said, shrugging nonchalantly.

"We could just as easily have drinks in the hotel bar..."

"It's not as impressive. By picking up the tab at a nice place, we're showing our success."

Jane turned her drink on the table's surface, leaving a streak of condensation. "I'm nervous," she said, voice soft.

"Why? You did great today."

Jane sighed, looking down into her glass. After a sip, she spoke: "I only had to take notes and pay attention... but tonight, I have to actually seem like I know what I'm talking about."

"You do know what you're talking about," Mark said, frowning.

Jane shrugged, finishing her drink as she stood. Mark's vision was filled by the curve of her waist and how her dress clung to her hips. With a deep breath, he forced himself to look away.

"Let me get you another," she said, fingers brushing over his as she took his glass. He hadn't even noticed he'd finished; leaving only rapidly melting ice. His fingers tinged where hers had touched them. Sighing, Mark followed her inside.

Once again, her back was to him. The curve of her neck and shoulders as she freshened their drinks only accentuated her form; hair falling to leave a sliver of skin bare at her neck. Heart beating in his throat, Mark closed the distance between them. He slid his hand against the gentle slope of her waist, feeling her tense beneath his touch. The room was silent, save for the settling ice and the thundering of blood rushing in his ears.

"Mark..." Jane's voice trembled.

He leaned in to press his lips to the bared expanse of skin. His breath washed over her neck -- stirring the curls -- as he pulled back. Jane sighed, turning in his arms.

"We'll be late," she said, lifting her chin to gaze at him from beneath long lashes.

Moving closer, Mark pressed his lips to the corner of her mouth. She tasted of scotch and something sweet. "I don't care," he said, pulling away to see her eyes. Her expression was one of uncertainty and an interest echoed in the slight part of lips. For a second, Mark envisioned her pulling away, slapping him and giving him a look of disgust.

Instead, Jane's hand slide along his side; leaving lightning in its wake. Mark's eyes widened a measure, but closed swiftly when her mouth covered his. Jane was kissing him and without thinking, he embraced her; crushing her to him.

When they finally parted, she breathlessly asked, "What about your wife?"

"Who?"