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By R. A. Conti

Debbie felt so tired she dropped her keys twice before unlocking the door. She pushed it open, pulled her luggage into the dark hallway, slipped her shoes off, and sighed as she felt the plush carpet under her feet. The apartment seemed quiet. *Sandra must be out*, she thought.

She turned on a lamp, looked at her mail piled on the kitchen counter, and yawned. She would be nonfunctional unless she got some sleep. Debbie walked toward her bedroom. The plush carpet muffled her footfalls. She always liked the soothing silence the carpet created.

Voices floated out from Sandra's bedroom when she drew near the door. One of them was male. *Sandy must be 'entertaining'*, she thought, smiling. *Well, that's good. The girl's been working too hard for months*. Debbie felt pleased Sandy was using the time Debbie was away to have some fun.

Then Debbie heard a male voice. "Oh, God, Sandy, that's so good!" Debbie's heart froze. It was Ben's voice. Was Sandy 'entertaining' Ben? She stood quietly and waited for more sound to confirm or dispel her suspicion.

A moment later, she got more confirmation than she wanted. "Oh, Ben, don't stop!" Sandra cried out. Debbie knew what she had to do.

She placed her trembling hand on the doorknob but did not want to turn it because she did not want to confront what she suspected. The door swung open quietly. Ben was on top of Sandy. A second later, Sandy looked up and saw Debbie. "Oh, my God! Ben, stop!" He grunted, wanting to finish. She pulled his hair. "Stop, Ben! Now!" she ordered.

Debbie struggled to contain her rage. "I never would have thought either of you would do this," she said.

Ben's head popped up. "Deb?"

"Yes, Deb. Get off me, Ben," Sandra ordered. He rolled off and turned toward Debbie, saw her rage immediately, and felt her disappointment.

"You two... you've betrayed me. I've told you both how much trust means to me. If you wanted each other you could have just..., well, told me."

"You said you weren't coming back until the weekend," Sandra reminded Debbie.

"My client was called home. I left early. I'm glad I did." Debbie paused, waiting for one of them to say more. "Aren't you going to tell me why?" she asked.

"I came over to return some of your books," Ben explained. "Sandra asked me to have a drink and stay to chat for a while."

"This is not chatting, is it?"

"Well, we got to talking," Sandra added. "I remembered what you've told me about how sweet he is, and how happy he made you. I started feeling warmer toward him. I began to see why you liked him so much. I was drunker than I thought. I decided to find out even more about him. I tried to get him interested in me."

"Seems like you succeeded."

"Don't blame her. I was drunk too. I succumbed to her almost immediately."

"Didn't you stop to think about what you were doing?"

"Oh, yeah," he answered as if he suddenly found a way to soothe her. "We stopped and talked about you."

"Me?"

"But we were so drunk and turned on that we just agreed that we didn't want to hurt you and that if you never found out, it would be okay. Just this once."

"But I've found out. It's not okay."

“I guess if we had been sober we would have realized that,” Sandra apologized. Debbie scowled. They averted their eyes, ashamed.

“You know, when this happens in the movies, the victim does one of two things. She bursts into tears and runs away, or she pulls out a gun and shoots somebody.” They sat bolt upright when Debbie mentioned the gun. Neither would have thought such a reaction would occur to her.

“But I’m not going to run away, although I am crying. And I’m not going to shoot you, mainly because I don’t have a gun.” They looked relieved. “Instead, I’m coming over there and I’m going to slap the shit out of both of you.”