

THE LETTER HE CARRIES

*To be read while he is locked, and away from her
A companion to the letters — for adults 18 and over*

A note before the letter. This one is not for deciding anything. It is written to be folded into a pocket, or recorded and listened to somewhere he cannot do anything about it — the middle of a working day, a train, a car park before he goes back inside. Its purpose is to keep him pointed at her across hours when she is nowhere near him, and to make the evening arrive slowly. A model rather than a script; and it works best in her own words, in her own voice.

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My love,

You are reading this somewhere sensible. A desk, probably. Somewhere with people in it, where you have to keep your face doing ordinary things.

Good. That is exactly where I wanted you when you opened it.

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You have been aware of it since about half past six this morning — the moment you moved, the moment you stood up, the small unmistakable fact of it under your clothes. It has been sitting quietly ever since, doing nothing, waiting. And now, because you are reading a letter from me, it is not sitting quietly any more.

Shift in your chair. Go on. Feel it wake up.

That is me. Not the steel — me. I chose it, I fitted it, I closed it with my own hands, and every single time your body tries to answer something today it is going to find me there first. You cannot get away from that any more than you can get away from your own pulse, and I want you to notice how quickly the ache arrives when you think of me. Three sentences. That is all it took.

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Let me tell you what I am going to do to you tonight, so that you can carry it around all afternoon.

I am going to take my time getting undressed, and I am going to do it in front of you, slowly, while you stand where I put you with your hands at your sides. You will not touch me and you will not look away. And I will watch you the whole time — not my own reflection, not the room. You. Because the interesting thing in that room is what happens to your breathing when I take something off, and the way your jaw sets, and the moment the steel stops being comfortable.

Then I am going to touch you. Not much. Not nearly enough. Just enough to start it properly — my mouth somewhere unhelpful, my nails somewhere worse, my hand resting where you most want it and doing absolutely nothing at all. And then I will stop, and step back, and look at you, and wait.

And you will already be leaking. You always are by then. I like it more than you know, and I look at it on purpose, and I let you see me look.

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Here is the part you should think about between now and this evening.

There will come a point tonight where you have had enough. Where it goes past pleasant and into something else, and some sensible part of you would like it to stop — and you will not say so, because it is not that kind of stop and we both know the difference. You will simply hold still and endure it and let me carry on.

And that is the moment I am most interested in. Because your face will be telling me one thing by then, and your body will be telling me something else entirely, and I have never once had trouble knowing which is true. You cannot hide it from me. There is no arrangement of your expression that outvotes the way you strain, the sounds you do not mean to make, the fact that the steel is unmistakably tighter than it was ten minutes ago. Your mind can say enough as often as it likes. Your body has already told me you want more, and I will believe your body.

That is what being owned by me actually means. Not that I make you do things. That I read you — accurately, without asking, at exactly the moments you would rather I did not — and that you have handed me the right to go on the strength of what I see rather than what you say.

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So yes. You should be slightly afraid of tonight.

Not of me. You are safer with me than with anyone alive, and one word from you ends anything, and it always will. But you should be afraid of how thoroughly you are going to be uncovered — standing there bare in a warm room with nothing to hide behind, being looked at properly by someone who has known your body for years and reads it better than you do. You cannot be composed with me. You cannot be the man who handles

everything. All the things you carry all day into that office are going to be taken off you in about four minutes, and then you will just be mine.

And you want that so badly it frightens you. I know, my love. I have watched you want it for a long time.

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Now put this away and go back to your afternoon.

Sit through your meeting. Be exactly the man they think you are — capable, steady, entirely unbothered. Say the sensible thing at the right moment. Nobody in that room is going to have the faintest idea that you are aching, that you have been aching since eleven o'clock, or why.

But every time you stand up, you are going to be reminded. Every time you shift in your seat. Every hour, on the hour, all the way to six — and each time, for one half-second, you are going to think of me and it is going to catch.

Do not do anything about it. You could not if you wanted to, which is rather the point.

Just carry it. Carry it home to me.

I have the key. Do not be late —

A guide only. For consenting adults, 18 and over. Everything described here remains subject to the Schedule of Limits and to the halt word, which belongs to both of them equally, works instantly, and is never punished. Nothing about anticipation overrides either.