

1. CAUGHT

Don't ask me how I'm doing. I'd be happy if I died tonight. You don't know what it's like. You don't know half the story of what's happened to me. This is not the time to tell you. I do not want to confess my sins. I do not feel sorry. This is all how it has to be.

I have been drinking all day. I started when I woke up. I have never been like this before. I feel that it is all coming down around me. I just want it to end. This is not my life. I want to be someone else.

"I want her to know."

"You're not going to show her that picture of us."

"Or course I am. I also took one of you naked. I'm going to send that to her as well."

I realize how embarrassed that made him feel. I had no intention of actually sending him the photos. I just wanted to scare him. To remind him that I was around.

I go over things again and again in my mind. Did I mean to get caught? Is that what is happening? He couldn't do this anymore and just messed things up to make sure that this kind of things would never happen again in his life.

I feel that it's all my fault. I was getting desperate. I hadn't heard from him in almost a week. I couldn't call him. He didn't answer his email. I thought that I'd take a note over to his place. I know that it makes me sound pretty naive. But I had no idea that Angela would be the one who'd pick it up. He told me that they didn't live together. And I slipped it under his door. I was sure that he'd be the one to see it first. But she picked it up. She didn't only read it. She took it with her.

"You gave her the key to your place."

"She stays there all the time. Her clothes are there. You know that."

I did know that. That was why I was so cavalier about it all. And now I've been found out. I'll live with it. I'll accept my bad reputation. And if I've done it once, I'll do it again.

Sometimes pets are the most revealing. They can almost be worse than children who just blurt out the truth. I know many a secret affair that has come out in the open because of a dog wagging his dog around a new found friend. The woman wonders how her lover ever got to be on first name terms with her friend's dog. And then everything comes out.

This is not the first time that I almost got caught. My dog Suzi almost betrayed me. I stopped by to see Angela while Richard was there. And my pet poodle, Suzi, just got all excited. I had to let her down. She rushed right over and just jumped up on Richard's lap

Angela wondered, "How come she's so friendly to you, Richard? You've never even seen her."

I figured that I was busted for sure.

Richard had a quick answer, "She's a girl dog. And I'm a guy."

All of us laughed. At that moment, Angie didn't seem all that bright. But I realized immediately that Suzi was a liability. I needed to get rid of her. I even asked Angela if she would take her off my hands.

"She got along so well with Richard. Maybe he wants her."

"That's the last thing he needs. Richard can't even take care of himself."

Believe me, I should know.

Suzi eventually found a loving home, and Richard and I had dodged a bullet. We both thought Angela would put two and two together. Maybe it was just guilt on our parts.

This time it is worse. I have proven to be my own worst enemy. It's lack of patience. I know that I'm anxious. I'm a bundle of nerves. I want it all now. I didn't get into this thing expecting much of anything. There was almost an aspect of vengeance that inspired me. I wanted to see just how far I could push things. To bring him to his knees and in the process show just how much power I had over guys in general. I knew that he was deeply involved. Angela was almost my friend. But that didn't stop me. Before I knew it, my heart was on the line.

I think that I had it out for Angela. She has always been so cocky. When I had the first opportunity, I figured that I'd bring her down to size. I've done just that. I've put her in her place. But vengeance has its own logic. And now the tables have been turned.

I imagine her reading my note. I had no idea that she would open his door.

"I'm going to be away for the night. Go by and check my mail and water the plants."

She knows my handwriting. She'll see the note first thing and realize it is me. I am royally screwed. I know that I have ruined my life. There is no way to take it all back. No way to make things better. I have brought all this on myself. Down deep I have probably hated Angela all along. I don't like to think something like this about myself. But it is true.

It gives me this incredible sense of power to be with him. It's not like I'm making up for some kind of flaw in my character. Just the opposite. I feel totally free to do whatever I want.

His lover is weak. Angela believes that Richard will rescue her. He will give her everything that she wants. She is dissatisfied in her job. When she is with him, she believes that she is something better than she is. I hate her for this. She needs a man to give her an identity.

I have taken him to prove that I am different. I have never really wanted him for any reason other than the fact that I can have him. This is brilliant. Or it has been up to now. It's not enough to do something so utterly creative. I feel that I have to let the world know. And that was why I was so stupid with my note.

I consider what this is going to mean from here on in. He will accuse me at first, dismiss it all as some silly fantasy on my part.

"She's always wanted me. She just hates you."

I know that Angela will want to believe him. She couldn't imagine that I would successfully take her man.

I may be an evil girl at heart of my soul. This is not about the sex. It is a lust for power. It may be the very thing that motivates all of us. I know about the caring side that all of us want to show the world. We care about kittens and children and are out to save the universe from evil. The super-hero delusion. But we all love this ounce of hell that keeps the fires burning inside of us. That is who we really are.

The more that we admit our true nature, the more fun life is. What is this thing that keeps happen to me? It's just the end result of my philosophy. It's what makes life interesting.

When Angela first met Richard, I warned her about him. He wasn't the sort of guy that she could trust. I knew the type. I hunted them all the time. I wanted to do her a service from the beginning. Take him down just to prove something to her. Miraculously, he seemed to be on to me. He was not going to yield. He seemed to ignore me just to prove his point. And he used her so adeptly that she had no idea what was going on.

I wondered if it was time to confront him directly, but I had really nothing to go on. He

was careful not even to make a pass at me. This was in fact his clever way of hitting on me. Things did get worse.

It wasn't waited for him to make his move. Nothing of the sort. I just knew it would happen. And he held out for so long. What was wrong? She was almost at the point of moving in before he really let down his guard.

Angela invited me over to dinner with the two of them.

"I thought that you'd bring a date. I set the table for four."

I chuckled to myself, "None of the men that I know are really worthy for a sit down dinner."

The last time that we got together, Richard gave me the weirdest looks. Tonight he had a sharp comeback.

"You mean none of them have large enough cocks?"

Angela was shocked. I felt embarrassed for her. I didn't know how to react to help her save face. I didn't even look at him.

"Richard, she's a guest. This isn't the locker room."

All through dinner, he tried to get the reaction that he hadn't got beforehand. Just before dessert Angela excused herself. We were in the kitchen getting the coffee. I didn't say a thing. I just slid my hands down his pants to see what he was worth. He got this bizarre expression on his face as I started to massage him. He couldn't say a word. It lasted until I heard Angela take the last step on the stairs.

When she came in, everything was miraculously ready for dessert. We went back and sat at the dining room table.

"Angela, I love what you've done with your place."

"Thanks." She felt uplifted by my comment. She took pride in decorating her new house. She continued, "Richard's helped a little. I almost feel that he's here all the time."

"You don't go to his apartment anymore?"

"This is perfect for the both of us." She seemed to be hinting him for a proposal. He just was distracted as he started to eat his angel food cake and sip his coffee. He was going to savor every minute of it.

I agreed to help with the dishes. Things went smoothly.

"You don't mind if I leave a little early?" I asked Angela.

"Not at all. Richard, walk her to the car."

He seemed a little reluctant.

She repeated. Walk her to the car. It's not that safe around here."

He was more than put off, "Unless someone is stalking you, this more than safe."

"Richard, it's the gentlemanly thing to do. I've got some stuff to do in here."

He trailed behind me as I walked to my car. It was a nice mild night.

"You're being a real bitch to me. Do you hate me?"

"What about that little game in the pantry?"

I stared at him, "It wasn't a game. I wanted to see what you were made of."

"And did you like it?"

He was getting excited. His hands were already wandering under my skirt. He pinned me from behind.

“You like it rough, Richard? You’re going to teach me a lesson.”

His hands massaged my ass. I could sense that he was aroused. His caresses became more directed. I sighed deeply as I felt him enter me.

Any neighbors watching could have seen it all. It was a lovely performance. Angela would have been proud. And he wasn’t half bad.

“I want to see you again.”

“It wouldn’t be a very good idea. You’re dating my friend. You’re almost engaged.”

“That kind of thing has never stopped you before. I know your type.”

“And I know yours. You’re into degradation.”

“No more than you are.”

At home, I thought about the celerity of it all. I hardly had time to take a breath. And I did achieve orgasm. I’m just sensitive that way. Sort of a male fantasy. I think that’s what keeps me so good at my game.

I hoped that he wouldn’t try to contact me. If I didn’t know him, that would have been it for the both of us.

The next time that we all hung out was at Hilton Head. They rented a place. Angela begged me along. I knew that this was really going to get crazy. Maybe I wanted the danger. Or I just needed to get away.

Everything was so chill at first. Richard seemed to be ignoring me. He wasn’t mean or anything. He just keeping to himself. On the first evening, Angela and I went for a long walk together. As the sun set, I almost thought of this as a moment reserved for Angela and Richard. When we got back, Richard had fallen asleep. What a lightweight! Angela and I made blender drinks. We were like a couple of kids.

After a few days, it seemed as if everything between Richard and me was over. He and Angela were getting on so well together. I didn’t want to disrupt the bliss.

Angela suspected nothing. And it was best that it stayed that way. A little stupidity just got out of hand. That was that. Angela and I knew each other since middle school. This wasn’t going to mess up things between us.

I have no idea what started it all, but Richard came out of the bathroom completely naked with a magnificent hard-on. And I caught him at his game red-handed. Not only that, but he was looking into my room like a peeping tom. And what followed just happened so fast I could hardly gain my breath. I was already pretty excited. It wasn’t like I brought any of this on. But he just put his hand over my mouth so I wouldn’t scream and he mounted me as I lay on the bed. And he felt so comfortable inside me. Except this time, he was really going at it. I tried to match him in intensity. He moved his hand away from my mouth and I kissed him with these deep kisses. And it just made him more and more aroused. This was crazy without end.

I couldn’t have cared less what Angela was doing at that moment. Even if she was watching us at the door, I would have kept on as we banged away on the bed.

I never intended this to happen. It’s not as if he forced himself upon me. But he came into my room and hardly gave me a choice.

“I thought that we weren’t going to do this anymore.”

“We weren’t.”

“So, Richard, what just happened?”

“I don’t know.”

“You came into my room like that. Were you planning it?”

“No, not at all.”

But I felt a little suspicious. Why was I letting this happen? I was sure all this had passed. I thought this was an isolated incident. It convinced me that there was something almost psychotic about the man. It wasn’t just his daring. There was a hatred that he seemed to reserve for Angela. Moreover, he appeared to hate women in general. There was this unusual assumption on his part. And he got away with it. Not only was he doing this to Angela, but he was threatening my friendship with someone who I knew for years. I felt so helpless.

I had just come up from the beach. I was in the bathroom. Richard was motivated by a sense of demented adventure. Nothing whatsoever was holding him back. He heard the water running and assumed that I was in the shower. He took liberties and simply opened the door and walked in. He slipped open the shower curtain and just stepped inside. His caresses were without hesitancy. I barely had time to react. It was as if I had come to expect this kind of thing. He made his attack directly. He never even looked me in the face. It was total embodiment of his desire. I was helpless. I was totally affirmed and totally erased at the same time.

He pulled me close to him and just slipped inside. It felt so natural. Just crazy spontaneous. It drove me wild. We had already become so natural together. I just opened up for him. It all gave me this sense of incredible power. Even as I surrendered to him, I was taking what I wanted to the full extent of my being. And we rolled together in this sea of dreams league after miraculous league.

With the same stealth that he entered the room, he left me to finish my shower. This wonderful warmth just pulsed through my entire body. I had little resistance left. I was giving it all up to him.

After my excursion, I returned to my room and lay down on the bed. This total relaxation washed over me, and I fell into such a deep sleep.

At dinner, we gave no hint of what had happened. I hardly looked at him. That night I hoped that he might duplicate his daring. I gave him such leeway to violate my personal integrity. But this was how I accepted our congress. In a way, it made me seem so weak. No matter, I was giving in to this emotional pull. It was like a tide that just rolled over me.

I lay awake for hours just hoping. I almost wanted to go into their room but was held back by a reasonable caution. The next morning, I was a little cranky. I felt ready to snap at him. I gave him this look. But he didn’t even notice.

I began to long for his advances. At times, I thought that I saw the fin of a shark circling. I made up for my let down with long swims. I ran on the beach in the early morning or in the evening. When the water lapped over my body, I was reminded of the glorious experience that I was a part of. Nothing stood in the way of that wonder, nothing perhaps but Angela.

After our week together, I did not know how things would progress. Perhaps it had all been a reckless fantasy on both our parts. I was ready to accept this frightening resolution to our little experiments. In my soul, I wanted more. I wanted to keep this going. I had little concern for Angela’s wishes in all this. If I ever felt any ill will, this only fed that feeling. She was a friend. But I was giving in to the most malicious thoughts in her regard.

With regards to other men, I was losing my killer instinct. I was moved by this almost

domestic feeling. It was not me at all. I felt as if I was waiting for him to call. It was so absurd. He was my friend's lover. There was no reason at all to expect that there might be anything real between us. But in my heart of hearts, I had this bizarre belief that he was saving part of himself for me. I not only had that suspicion, but I wanted some kind of reward for my intuition. It was completely self-destructive. But that did not stop me. I became more and more immersed in the absurd belief.

I kept checking my phone obsessively. I was restless. I felt tempted to drink. On a few occasions, I thought a jaunt to a local club might cure my appetite. It hardly dulled that fever. Other men just intruded on my new fantasy.

Richard was hardly an honorable type in all this. He did not attempt to contact me. He just left me with this feeling of isolation.

One night I was taking a shower. I had just given over to a scenario of self-stimulation. I rubbed both my hands against my legs. I could almost imagine him with me. I admired that careless in him. I could feel myself slipping deeper and deeper under that spell. My body was on fire just from my imagination. My hands moved supply up my legs. The water sprayed over me with such force. I touched myself gently. I screamed for his passion.

I could almost feel his erect penis. It had a wondrous attraction for me. It almost seemed to exist separate from him. And that image only made me more aroused. I could feel the flow of the shower like a tide rolling over me. My hands moved with such insistence. I gave myself to the rhythmic stimulation. There was an intensity to the regularity. With each second the pleasure built at such an accelerated pace. I now stroked myself harder. I felt transported into another time and place. I floated in the air. The waves of enjoyment were rolling over me. I rested myself against the wall. I allowed myself to be overcome with the experience. I tried to brace myself. My legs felt weak. I was becoming so completely aroused.

I sighed. I needed to scream out. He was with me. He moved inside deeper and deeper. I let go completely. There were no constraints on the feeling. Total freedom.

It's not as if I'm sexually inexperienced. But from the moment that I started to hang out with Richard, he discovered something deep inside me. It wasn't simply emotionally. At first, it was purely the sex. I have no idea what happened. But my body felt so completely free when I was with him. I just opened up totally. I felt no inhibitions. It was a surprise. The two of us flowed into each other with such ease.

I have never thought of my body in this way before. But it just became so turned on. I could feel him deeper and deeper inside. There were no obstacles to my satisfaction. If I had felt a sense of liberty with other guys, Richard offered me so much more.

I hated the fact that I associated this emotional attachment with the sex. It had always been the opposite for me. But he just twisted me inside out. His every gesture started to mean something. I became attracted by his smile. The way that he did his hair.

I started to remember how Angela had first talked about him. I realized that I was becoming just the same. This was so silly. I was feeling like a girl. It was dangerous. I was becoming too vulnerable. I needed to step back and take a breath.

The more that I was away from him, the more that I wanted him. All he had to do was call and I would come running. It was terrible. I was losing my touch. I was no longer out chasing other men. If I was, my heart wasn't in it.

“I don’t think that we’re right for each other.”

“I thought that we were having fun together.”

“We had a great time.”

“You don’t want to come back to my place.”

“I never was going to go back to your place.”

“Let me get your number.”

His desperation only underlined my own frustration. Who was this guy trying to fuck with me? And now the guy who I wanted was off with Angela tonight.

At least, I knew that I could still do it if I wanted to. But that was about it. I could engage in that subtle game of cat and mouse. I was just waiting to get picked off by the first guy who came along. At the same time, there was no way that I was going to follow through. This only added to my frustration. My old way of satisfaction was totally cut off from me.

What was really going on? How had I resorted to such means. This wasn’t the me that I knew so well. I had transformed into some guy of monster. And the jealousy started to really set in.

I no longer sought out the guys who were ready for me. I watched for the most appealing girls and sought after the guys that they were with that night. This started to be a sport in its own right. I was surprised how good I was at it. Even the most stunning women could not hang on to their men when I gave it the full court press. I guess the women were just a little tame. I offered every guy that danger.

I knew all along that I had this special power. And at one point, I took it for a curse. Once you turn on that sort of thing, it’s hard to turn it off or even control it. It’s like being a celebrity. You can’t even go to the grocery store without having some guy hassle you. Jeez!

I never tried to dress down or disguise myself. I wouldn’t wear floppy clothes and a baseball hat. But I always got these guys coming out of themselves to be with me. There was nothing real in it. Over the years my skill was to focus the attention. I made every guy turn it up a notch.

“I just hate it when a guy sees me and assumes that I just want to hop in bed with him. I’m not like that. I don’t even like sex that much.”

“Maybe it’s the guys that you’ve been with.”

In fact, it’s always been the guys that I’ve been with. That’s part of the crazy problem. And now it was Richard who was driving me nuts. I was a hopeless case.

I guess that I shouldn’t have expected anything to happen. I still wanted it so badly. I was ready to put myself out. This was frightening. It gave him the chance to test things out. This made it worse. In fact, that was the beginning of something consistent.

“I’m not going to leave Angela for you.”

“I don’t think either of us want that.”

“It’s not that I don’t like being with you. I do. It’s just that my whole life is tied up with hers. Honestly, you’re way better in bed than she is. Even if I was married to her, I think that I’d rather be with you at night.

Once and for all, my curse seemed permanent. I felt there was something inherently tragic about my fate. Some girls would just move on. And people tried to give me that advice. They just didn’t get it. Down deep, it was still the power of this physical thing. And it really was

a thing.

Things started to take a complicated turn. Richard knew there was something special between us and liked it that way. Fundamentally, I was challenging to him. Even though we had this massive thing between us, he still felt that he couldn't get my soul. This became even more obvious when it appeared that she gave him her treasure, what was at the core of her being. In a sense, this made her even more despicable to me and drove me to keep this thing going with Richard.

What was this remarkable gift on her part? There comes that point in most relationships when the girl just lets down her guard completely. She almost assumes something on her man's part. I know that guys do it too. But a lot of guys keep that strip club mentality so they use women as their possessions. Their lovely wife is at home locked in the safe, and they can afford to play on their own. That is what I hate about it all. I worked to forge this new kind of being for myself. Even then I became subject to a scoundrel like Richard. Maybe it's built in our nature to end up this way. It could be the fact that you experience such a surplus of pleasure that it just takes you over and you can't let go.

That could be the basic problem with guys. They don't know how to get it good. I always wondered about that. That was the reason that I needed to be so adept at my game. I tried and tried to keep myself sane that way. I would never surrender myself completely. Seeing that vulnerability in Angela only reminded me how much I had given up to be with Richard. It wasn't supposed to be that way.

Richard knew that he had Angela's number. It was almost enough for him just to possess her. I hated to let on, but he also detected that weirdness between us. It hurt to let him know so much. It gave him this power over me. But he began to spend more time with me. It wasn't as if he was ignoring her. He gave her enough to continue on in her delusion. He just offered so much to me that he held back from her.

He impressed me by his skill. That only made me want him more. I wanted something real from him, something that he wouldn't give to her.

"I'm not going to marry you."

"I'm not asking for that. I don't want to marry you. You can't be trusted."

He smiled when I said that. I needed to move things along.

"I like being with Angela. It gives my life security. You just remind me how things are messed up. I prefer the fantasy with her. But it can't last this way. It's going to come to an end eventually. She's going to break up with me. It will devastate her, but it's going to happen"

His fatalism seemed to be his justification. He was meant to find the perfect life with Angela. But he also expressed how much he despised his world. Things really took a desperate turn. He practically set me up in his apartment. It was as if he wanted to get caught. He was very careful to hide the evidence. When he got together with Angela it was at her place. Some nights I'd be at his place, and he be with Angela at hers. Or it might be even more bizarre. He would have sex with me and then rush back to her place afterwards, never the other way around.

"Honey, we don't have sex as much as we used to."

"You always told me that your appetite wasn't as uncontrolled. I took it as a criticism. I guess I just took it to heart."

They both would confide in me the inadequacy of their partner. It was getting weird. I

was leading such a double life. It was more of a mental contest than anything that I had ever known. And I loved it.

I used the confidences to my advantage. Even I felt absorbed by my passion, I worked to weaken both of them. That way I could still feel strong in spite of the situation. I used the manipulation to reassure me about my own failures. I became convinced that I was as strong as ever. I wasn't. That meant that Richard and Angela were way more prone to my devices. It was ugly.

I couldn't stop. I couldn't let on at all. I needed Richard for the sex. I needed him just so that I could be myself. He wouldn't give me much emotionally. But I learned how to drain him physically. His intimacy with Angela was obstructed by my influence. She assumed that there was something wrong with her so she did not question his inner motives.

The puppets never knew a thing about their master. But even I was pulled by the same strings. It was silly. I could feel that we were all headed for the same disaster. I held on. I pushed the intensity of the contact between Richard and me. At times, he seemed to be me for more. Even when I didn't see him for days, I could sense his agony.

It is strange that it should have all built to the present. It feels terrible that I have been revealed to be so wanting. The past week has been just unbearable. I have become lost in that belief that Richard and I should be together. Nothing less will do. That motivated me to go over to his place. I really thought that he would be there. I couldn't see the obvious. I had composed the letter in my head. But it was just things that I needed to say. When he wasn't there, I felt that I couldn't leave empty-handed. I know that I had threatened about the pictures. But that wasn't part of it at all.

Here I am at home almost passed out. I am a basket case. I know what I would tell other girls like me. Forget them both. They aren't worth it.

What about Angela? What have I done to her. I think that I always prided myself on this spotless reputation. I could be a hellion in my private life. But I have done everything that I could to conceal my foibles. Now I am revealed completely to the world. It will not stop with Angela. She will be justified in telling the world what a rotten girl I am. I feel so dirty!

When I was fooling around with Richard, I never thought of it this way. At first, I told myself that it was Richard. I couldn't do any of this on my own. I'm a temptress. But I never would have done this to Angela. He just worked my weakness for sex.

Later, on, I just got into being with him. I loved his body. And it became a place of certitude for me. I thought that it could last like this forever. That she would just disappear. Over the months, she just seemed to vanish from the world. I would still see her all the time. But she wasn't really there for me. She became so faint that I felt she had finally disappeared. She was gone.

In these exquisite moments, he was everything for me. He was my man forever. I made plans based on these feelings. Nothing real. Nothing to get riled over until now. I realize that I have stepped over the bounds of decency. I should have walked away when I saw it get out of hand.

Now I have played my last card. I am so depressed. I have held the dagger to my throat.

Sure I am making a mountain out of a mole hill. I can leave the city if I need to. I never really liked Atlanta that much. But I hate being driven out on a rail. So be it.

I have been a creature just driven by her desire. I have followed the likely course for one such as myself. I have been abused by my vanity again and again. I have let it happen. It has been my vaunted pleasure and I have come out all the worse.

I need to fall on the sword while I still can. The liquor is helping my mood. I am a touch morose. Just enough to administer the proper remedy to my psyche. There is no nobility in any of this. I am driven like a monster to feed and pay the price for her excesses. Let me be pilloried in the public square. Let the public taunt me for my self-centeredness. I have destroyed all that is good in my world.

I knew that I was always on this course. But I have always done my best to save face. Little did I know that I was on a collision course with disaster. I can feel that I am slipping further and further into oblivion.

How can I slip away decently? How can I erase myself from this story.

It is hardly late but I feel the darkness close over me. This night will be so oppressive in enacting its vengeance. It is laughable that I am torn by these excesses of emotion. I never never let a guy do this to me. And it isn't Richard who has been my undoing. I have done all this to myself. It is hopeless. I only thank the heavens that I am already at home incapacitated. I would be a terror on the roads.

I am staring at my half-full glass. Under other circumstances I might have passed out at this point. Reality is such a sobering experience that it is counteracting the alcohol. It only makes me drink more. I want to pass out. I cannot.

I am flopping around my apartment trying to right myself up. My usual graceful body seems a clumsy mess. I try to support myself against the walls and the furniture. I am sprawled out in the middle of the floor. It is lucky that I have not puked my guts out. But I have a constitution of steel and an amazing tolerance for alcohol. It has been a necessity of my profession as I set out on these nightly campaigns. I cannot afford to be overwhelmed by an unworthy opponent.

My heart has been my undoing. It was not just my feelings but my conduct which has destroyed me. I have always been so good at planning my skirmishes. Really, this was a minor battle. But the wounds have gone so deep to be nearly fatal.

I know that I will wake up in the morning still intact. But there will be a hollow that stays with me.

I have not been defeated by my sexual desire. I have not followed my own advice. I have been laid low by a man. And not a very appealing one at that. A villain most foul has worked his craft against me. I should have challengee him to a duel for destroying my reputation. I feel so stupid. I still want him.

I cannot cut the cord. And I am tethered to him by the strangest fate. He is no good for me. He never will be good for me. I feel that I will never be able to face Angela. I cannot accept her rancor. I have done this all along knowing what it meant to her. This could be that final blow that I have relished against her. It has not been envy. It has been a disgust for her mediocrity. But I am not able to stand with my judgement. I have become a coward even before myself.

There is little to salvage from any of this. Richard is not going to give up his social standing to run off with a tramp like me. He has taken advantage of my ambiguous social

position to play me like a violin. It is as if I am so lacking in moral fiber.

I know that he can maintain that mask, but even he will be exposed by my miscue. He will prostrate himself before Angela. She will reject him at first. She will spend months rejecting his hold over her. But she has nothing else. This is exactly why she irks me so. She is the sort of person who will run back to him. It is disgusting.

I may be degraded by the demise. But I have always surrounded myself with such sordid affairs. For her part, she has maintained this veneer of perfection. But there is truly no backbone in the girl. This incident will reveal the cowering hypocrite in her. She will have been embarrassed by her best friend. She will have been ridiculed by the man that she adores. But she will still go running back to him. She should toss the both of us out on our asses. And she will reject me permanently with total justification. But she will take him back as she has not other emotional resources. There are so many like her. And I will accept her final judgement as the penance that I need to help me recover.

Richard will be a thing of the past. I will leave all this as a damaged person. I will hide my face and try to go about my business. In the end, my existence will be a reminder to him of his true nature. And he will be glad that he was not forced to do away with me. But he will realize that there is something in him that is so perfidious that it is a wonder that he can even survive. I have always known that I am a shallow person. But he is the ultimate monstrosity and he does not even have an intellect wherein to take comfort. Poor Richard!