

Ascension

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As Sally skipped home from school she held in her hand a little daisy she'd picked from the grass verge by the roadside, and plucked off one petal after another while thinking about Sheila, her best friend at school.

“She loves me,” she said with a smile, tweaking off one petal.

“She loves me not,” she said with a frown, removing another petal.

But at last. Only one petal left. “She loves me!” Sally said with relief. Sheila loved her. Hooray! If only Sally had the courage to tell her that she loved her. That she loved Sheila more than anyone else in the world. They might both be girls and so it probably wasn't proper love she felt towards Sheila, but it was love enough for that. And a love that never really left her, whatever she was doing and wherever she was. Perhaps tomorrow she would tell Sheila of her love. And that she would love her forever and forever. That would be so beautiful, Sally was sure, although her conception of what ‘forever’ meant was extraordinarily short term.

She could see home looming up ahead. A moderately large four-bedroomed detached house in a very pleasant suburban crescent lined by leafy trees. Each house was enclosed by a tall hedge with at least one car on every drive. Sally's heart fell slightly as she wondered what her mother might be up to. She had got so very odd recently. And although she dearly loved her mother, she was also increasingly frightened by her. She hoped her mother would be just sitting in the living room, perhaps watching one of those afternoon soap operas or reading a magazine.

Sally pushed open the wicket gate to the drive and strolled up to the front door. She pushed against it. It was on the latch, so she knew her mother was in and not

visiting one of the neighbours. As she wandered into the hallway, past the huge adult-height mirror and the Constable reproduction, she could hear gasping, grunting noises that confirmed Sally's fears. Her mother was not only at home and acting in that extraordinary way she did these days, she was doing so in the company of some friends or neighbours.

Sally entered the kitchen. Perhaps she could fix herself a sandwich or a cereal or something. One thing she knew for sure was that Mummy wasn't going to do it for her. Sally had learnt that when she first discovered that some things took higher priority for her mother than keeping her children fed and watered. But she found when she wandered in, her eyes focused on the fridge just by the work unit, that one of Mummy's friends was already there. She was also one of the neighbours: Mrs Kunson, from two doors down at Number 42. The woman was about the same age as her mother and had just one daughter. That was Cynthia, a pretty girl with long curly blonde hair, - but not nearly as pretty as Sheila, - who was skipping school a lot more often recently and whom Sally had once seen crying in the Chemistry lab. And when Sally saw Mrs Kunson, she was no longer in any doubt as to what Mummy was doing. The grunting sounds she'd heard weren't because Mummy had retrieved those weights that were still lying around in the garage and had taken up exercising with them again.

"Hello, Sally dear," Mrs Kunson said with a broad grin. "I didn't hear you come in."

Sally almost answered by asking how could she with all the noise coming from upstairs, but she didn't. "Hello, Mrs Kunson. How are you?"

"Call me Cathy dear. Did you have a good day at school?"

Sally nodded, but it was difficult really to focus on the question. And this was because Mrs Kunson was totally naked, one hand holding a lit cigarette and the other a tumbler in which there was some clear amber liquid which was probably Daddy's whiskey mixed with water. And Mrs Kunson wasn't just naked, which Sally found off-putting enough in a woman in her mid-thirties: her enormous pendulous breasts more an affront than a potential source of comfort. Like Mummy she had shaven clean her vulva, which was now somehow even more naked than a bare crotch should be. And from wherever Sally stood in the kitchen she could see that shaven groin, the labia falling out onto the brown leather of the stool on which she sat and opened ever so slightly so that Sally could catch a glimpse of its fleshy fig-like interior.

"Cyn goes to the same school as you, doesn't she? You know Cynthia, don't you? Is she a friend of yours?"

Sally hesitated a bit. She wanted to open the fridge. Get something to eat in her room. She'd prepare a cereal. Perhaps Coco Pops or maybe Frosties. And then butter up some bread. Smother it in either peanut butter or chocolate spread. But she didn't want to be impolite to Mrs Kunson, even though she was sitting just next to the fridge, smoking a cigarette, which Daddy didn't really like people doing in the house, and drinking his whiskey, which Sally doubted even less was something he'd be pleased about. Sally took a deep breath and opened the fridge.

"Cynthia's not really a friend, Mrs Kunson, but we're friendly."

"That's nice dear!" commented Sally's neighbour, puffing thoughtfully on her cigarette. "Would you like to get to know Cyn a bit better, dear? Or a lot better? She's very eager, you know. There's not a lot she won't do these days. Kev, that's my

husband, Cyn's Dad, and me, well, there's not much we don't do with darling Cyn. She might be a little girl, but there's a lot of spare capacity. And I'm sure she'd enjoy the more intimate attention of someone the same age as her."

Sally wasn't too sure she understood what Mrs Kunson was getting at. She poured some Frosties into a bowl and followed that with a measure of milk, which never quite splashed and sparkled like it did on the advert. "I like Cynthia. But she's got her own friends," she replied diplomatically.

"Well, she's got her father and me to keep her happy," smiled Mrs Kunson. "But she's not got any brothers and sisters. And she says she doesn't want to invite any of her schoolfriends home. She says they're too busy."

Sally reflected on this. In fact, Cynthia *didn't* have that many friends these days. She'd become quite a quiet girl, sitting alone at the back of the class. She used to be good friends with Patty, but somehow she and Patty weren't so friendly now. However, Sally didn't want to upset Cynthia's Mum.

"There's a lot of extra classes after school they go to."

"And Cyn says she goes to them as well," sighed Mrs Kunson. "Well, she's often not home until ever so late. So, Sally dear, what do you say? Do you want to visit Cyn? Have some fun like your brother, whatsisname, Sheridan, does."

"Sheridan?" wondered Sally. She knew her brother was spending more time with her mother, but she didn't know how much he was being influenced by her.

"Yes, he's always coming round. Always in and out." Mrs Kunson laughed and stubbed out her cigarette in the saucer she'd been using to collect ash. "Get it? Always in and out. And not just Cyn, either. He's got the darlinest little cock, your

brother.” Mrs Kunson ran a finger up the length of her vaginal gash, lifted it to her mouth and licked it lasciviously.

Sally spread the butter over the slices of bread she’d retrieved from the bread bin, while trying to understand what Mrs Kunson was saying. She knew that Sheridan had started having sex with Mummy. In fact, he hardly ever stopped boasting about it. And it wouldn’t really surprise her if he’d started fucking Mrs Kunson. It’d almost be more surprising if he hadn’t. But Sally shivered at the idea of her brother having sex with Cynthia. Much as she loved Sheila, she wasn’t confident that sex was quite what she really wanted. And she supposed that Cynthia probably felt much the same way.

Suddenly, there came an extra loud gasp from upstairs. Followed by a very throaty scream and a longer series of shouts. It was Sally’s mother’s voice. And Sally wasn’t too sure what she was saying. Was it “Yes! Yes! Yes!?” Or “More! More! More!?” Then there was a kind of woofing growling sound.

Mrs Kunson stood up from the stool and pointed up the stairs. “That sounds like they’ve finally got old Kim, your German Shepherd, in on the act. About time too. The dog’s just been watching for ages. You can’t ignore a dog when he knows what’s expected of him.”

Kim? Mummy said she wouldn’t let him do it again after that time he excitedly scratched Mrs Carter from across the road that time. It was a good thing she’d not needed a stitch for it, although Daddy was insistent she get a tetanus jab. Sally looked up towards the staircase in the hallway, although she knew she wouldn’t be able to glimpse into her mother’s bedroom where all the noise was coming from.

“Who’s with Mummy?” Sally wondered.

“Oh! Well, besides me. And Kim, of course. There’s Becky. Rebecca. Mrs Dolan, you know. And then there’s Fran. You probably don’t know her. She’s a real demon for the strap-on. So, there are four of us, I think. And the dog, of course. You don’t want to add to the numbers do you, dear?”

Sally was horrified. The idea! All she wanted to do was retreat to her room. Put on the telly and watch something. Or put on a CD and read a magazine. Although Sheila didn’t know how much Sally loved her, she was sure that it would be wrong to compromise her love in such a way. She shook her head, while transferring dollops of chocolate spread onto the slices of bread.

“Well, it’s your loss, dear!” sighed Mrs Kunson, standing in front of Sally, her shaven crotch just below the height of the kitchen work surface, and her glass of watered-down whiskey in one hand. She placed a hand on Sally’s face, just under the hair falling onto her cheek, causing the girl to wince. “You’ll soon change your mind, dear. Cyn was much the same as you at first. Bit reluctant she was. Even though Kev and I, we made a point of doing it, you know, fucking, in front of her. Cyn’s education, if you like. And Kev’s mates as well. Cyn soon saw sense. And your mum. Well, she’s almost the most up for it of all of us. If it wasn’t for that bore of a husband of her’s, your dad, well, you’d be well trained already.”

Sally brushed Mrs Kunson’s hand off her face. She didn’t like what she was hearing. No wonder poor Cynthia didn’t have many friends now. No one would want to get involved in that kind of stuff. Fucking was something you did when you were older. When you were fourteen or fifteen or something. Not when you were just twelve.

“See you later perhaps, dear!” grinned Mrs Kunson, who bent over and pressed her lips on Sally’s own and then strode off naked into the hallway and up the stairs.

Sally sat by herself in the kitchen. She lifted herself onto the stool that Mrs Kunson had vacated and chewed and chomped her way through the Frosties and sandwiches. She washed it down with long swigs of sparkling orange-flavoured drink. As she sat there, she looked for comfort at the pictures of cheery chimps and hippos on the labels of the products she was consuming. Above her, she could still hear the sounds of guttural, shrieking, sometimes quite alarming, lovemaking. Not only people’s voices, her mother’s and Mrs Kunson’s being especially loud, but also the occasional woof and the sound of a bedstead thumping against the wall in a rhythmic and repetitive manner. She felt imprisoned. She didn’t want to go upstairs because it meant she’d have to pass her mother’s bedroom. But she also didn’t want to be found in the kitchen by her mother when they’d finished. Although Mummy had promised Daddy, and Daddy had reassured her that this was so, she didn’t really believe that Mummy would always respect her wish not to get involved.

Eventually, Sally tiptoed up the stairs. The door to her mother’s room was open, the one that her father no longer shared, and Sally could see her mother crouched down, kneeling on the floor, with Kim just behind her and hunched over, bandages tied around his paws, and his groin and tail pumping backwards and forwards into her mother’s rear. Beneath her mother, Sally could see another naked woman, not one she recognised, probably Fran, whose mouth was locked to her mother’s mouth and who had an artificial penis, of the kind Mummy called a ‘dildo’, strapped around her waist, but not actually penetrating anything. As Sally passed by

the doorway, anxious not to be seen but curious as to what was going on, she could see Mrs Kunson on the bed, her legs and arms wrapped around Mrs Dolan, but arranged in ever such a funny way, with their faces right up against the other's crotch. That must smell awfully musty, Sally thought. Especially if it smells in that funny pungent way her own crotch smelt like when she'd been stroking it and thinking of how much she loved Sheila.

Sally eased open the door to her room and jumped onto the bed, making an immediate indentation on the flowery duvet that spread across it. Sally stretched her legs out, turned on the stereo which still had in a CD by her favourite boy band of the moment and let the back of her head hit the pillow. All around her were pictures of the various boy and girl groups whose records she enjoyed and which had been cut out of the several magazines she bought every month. She opened one of these magazines, and, as she so often did, she opened it at the advice pages, where there was always friendly advice about what to do when boys didn't say the right things, or when schoolfriends started ignoring you, or when your best friend started going out with a boy.

Sally found the advice very interesting, and some of it was quite pertinent to her, like that letter from the girl who was in love with her best friend but was frightened that she'd lose her friendship if she confessed to her love. That was so much like her own dilemma with Sheila. And all that stuff about periods and those peculiar cramp-like pains she sometimes got and also those funny dizzy spells. That was all very interesting. But a lot of it never had anything to do with her. She couldn't see what other girls saw in boys for instance. Boys were just stupid. If they were like

her brother Sheridan, that is. And they never had advice for girls whose mothers fucked dogs and went around nude all day and had sex with all the neighbours and their husbands. And she was too frightened to write in and ask for advice, because she wasn't sure whether Mummy wouldn't get arrested or something. Although Sally didn't quite know what was legal and what wasn't, she was sure that fucking dogs wasn't something mums should do. And what about that time with the pony? The time when Daddy had got ever so upset and told Mummy that she could do what she liked but never to involve their children. Even if it was just to watch. Sally didn't want Mummy to go to jail.

However, if Mummy did go to jail then maybe Sally could ask Sheila round to visit. With that thought, Sally slightly loosened the buttons that secured her jeans so she could get her hand inside her knickers. And then she and Sheila could be like proper friends. They could sit in front of the mirror, try on make-up and giggle. Sally put a finger on her crotch, the hairs being still quite spare, but less spare than on her mother's shaven vulva. Without Mummy, Sheila could stay over. And the two of them could nestle together on the bed. Sally's finger at last located that little button, the 'clitoris' as they called it in Sex Ed, which was never as easy to find as the magazines said. And when Sheila and she were locked together, they could kiss each other and cuddle. Sally stroked herself energetically, a warmth filling her coming from deep inside where the thoughts of her love for Sheila were most sincere and true.

Sally put the magazine down and rolled onto her side, one hand inside her knickers and her fingers prodding, poking and stroking around her crotch while her other hand caressed a breast, where the nipples were attaining a new hardness and

firmness on a bosom that was not quite flat but nothing like as large as Mummy's. Although her eyes were focused on a poster of the lead singer of a boy-girl group, a cute girl with pretty funky hair and a shiny ring in her navel, the image filling her mind was of Sheila's sweet face, the light brown hair that fell on either side of her face, but not onto her shoulders, the light blue-green eyes and that smile with the silver brace still in place on the top jaw. Oh! She loved Sheila. But she wasn't at all sure how that love should realise itself.

"Fuck, Sal! You're fucking wanking, aren't you?" suddenly remarked Sally's brother's voice.

Sally snatched her hand out of her trousers and turned round to face Sheridan, who was standing naked by the door, his penis obscenely erect and somehow pointing in Sally's direction. Although Sally was sure she ought to be attracted to things like that, the more often she saw erect penises the less she liked the sight of them. And although Sheridan's wasn't as bad as a dog's or a horse's or even a grown man's, it was horrible enough. And ever since he and Mummy had started fucking together, Sally had seen much more of Sheridan's penis, both erect and limp, rather more often than she'd cared.

"Actually," Sheridan continued, "I don't know if what girls do when they touch themselves is called 'wanking'. It's not like you get a stiffy, is it? Not like me. But of course nowadays I don't have to wank any more."

Sally sat up in the bed and glared at her brother. "Have you been ... been ... having sex with Mummy again?" She could see that the penis was covered with a slight coating of dust, which probably meant it had been used for that purpose.

“No. I’d like to’ve been. Mum’s a good fuck. No. She’s been knotted with Kim. She can’t get out of it for ages. I’ve been fucking Fran. She’s a bit younger than Mum and her cunt’s not as loose. But she’s a good fuck too!”

Sally was not a girl who liked swearing. She thought all those words sounded wrong somehow when they were used so often. And Daddy had told her not to swear. And Sally usually took her father’s advice. And Sheridan didn’t used to swear so much before Mummy had persuaded him to have sex with her. And he was only two years older than her. Did that mean that when she was fourteen that she would have to start swearing as well as having sex with older people? It was ever so confusing and the magazines weren’t really much help in answering questions like that. But in the meantime, each ‘fuck’, ‘cunt’ or whatever cut into her like a knife. Although she wasn’t exactly sure what other words Sheridan should be using.

“Go away, Sherry!” Sally ordered. “This is *my* room! You just can’t come in here whenever you feel like it.”

“Okay! Okay!” Sheridan said, holding his hands up, but his penis just as erect and a broad grin on his face. “Yeah. I guess I wouldn’t want you coming into my room. Especially when I was fucking someone. You know, someone like Fran. Or Cynthia. Or Mummy. But you know it could be different you know.”

“Could it?”

“Yeah. You could let me fuck you too. You know that Mummy wants me to. She said to me only yesterday: ‘Wouldn’t it be nice if we could make love with Sally as well.’ So, what do you think? Do you think we should?”

“Mummy’s already said that to me,” sniffed Sally. “And I told her I didn’t

want to. And Daddy said I'm right not to. I've got to really want to do it before I ... before I ... before I give assent."

"Assent"? That means permission or something, doesn't it? Well, the sooner you give assent the better. I'm just aching to fuck you. And look at my prick! It'd love to get inside your little pussy cunt."

Sally didn't like the sound of this at all. And she found the sight of Sheridan's erect penis fairly disgusting, but it was more or less the most prominent feature about him at the moment and impossible to ignore.

"Go away! Just leave me alone! Go away!"

Sally threw a pillow at her brother's face. It bounced off and he laughed, but he backed off. "Okay, Sally! Okay! But it won't be long, sister dear. You know that when Mummy's made her mind up to do something, then Mummy'll make sure it happens."

"Go away! Go away!"

Sally was close to tears and when the door to her room finally closed and her brother was gone, a small lachrymal trickle made its way loose from the corner of her eye and traced its way down her cheek. She wanted to get back to her magazine, but she found it difficult to concentrate on even the relatively trivial articles that filled it.

Sally lay on her back, her head on the pillow and faced up to the ceiling. The lampshade was still the childish one she'd had since she was six where characters from Toy Story were painted on the outside. Her wallpaper was similarly childish, being a reminder of an earlier obsession she'd once had for ponies. That was before Mummy let herself get fucked by one. That was an unpleasant memory. She'd never

really noticed that horses even had penises before, let alone enormous ones like that, and it was frightening not only to see the pony's penis enter her mother's vagina, assisted of course by friends and neighbours, but also to see her mother's expression as it happened. "Go on! Fuck me! Fuck me! Harder!" she had screamed. Was that the same Mummy who used to tuck her up to bed and read her bedtime stories?

Sally thought about Cynthia as well. It frightened her that Sheridan was having sex with her. That couldn't be right. Sheridan was much bigger than her. But not as big, she reflected, as Cynthia's father, who was a burly man with short-cropped hair. It must be horrible to have a man's full-grown thing inside you! And it must be odd when it's your Daddy that does it. Wouldn't that make it a bit funny? At least Sally's Daddy didn't behave like that. In fact, he didn't even make love with Mummy anymore, as Mummy would so often remind everyone whenever they had meals together.

"What do you expect me to do since you don't fuck me any more?" Mummy would ask Daddy across the dinner table, while Sally would look down at her plate of burger, chips and peas with embarrassment and Sheridan would just smirk.

"That's not the point, dear," Daddy would answer. "I don't mind you doing whatever it is you want to do, as long as you don't involve the children."

"You're just a fucking dead loss!" Mummy would announce.

The CD had come to an end, so Sally jumped off the bed to look for another one to put on. Perhaps a compilation or one of those free CDs that were mounted on the covers of her magazines. Just at that moment, she heard a polite knock on the door.

“It’s me! Daddy! Can I come in?”

At least Daddy knocked. Not like Sheridan. Or even Mummy when she was with Mrs Carter that time and she wanted to show her daughter how far they’d embedded the double-headed dildo in each other, before giggling and slamming the door shut again.

“Yes. Come in.”

Sally’s father walked in and sat on the chair just by Sally’s laptop computer. He was a tall thin man, whose hair was already partly grey and who wore wire-framed glasses that made him look exactly like the academic he was in real life.

“I’ve got some news, Sally dear. But I don’t want Sheridan or Mummy knowing about it. I want it to be our little secret.”

“‘Little secret?’” mouthed Sally with fear, who had heard of this expression during Sex Ed. That normally meant child abuse or something.

“Well not so much a little secret as just something not to tell Mummy and Sheridan. You know how things are now with your mother and your brother, don’t you? How they’re ... they’re ... indulging in ... in ... improper relationships?”

Sally nodded. Daddy meant ‘fucking’, but didn’t want to use the word. And she didn’t want to use it herself. But she was worried. Was Daddy going to suggest that he and she should indulge in ‘improper relationships’ like Cynthia and her father?

“I always told your mother that was a step too far. But there’s no stopping boys, I suppose. Indeed, I doubt whether Sheridan really understands what he’s let himself in for. It was bad enough with the animals. I thought that would be the limit. Nothing could be worse than that. But with all the neighbours having ‘improper

relations' with their children, or at least those neighbours your mother spends time with, I guess it was inevitable that"

Sally's father paused and looked towards her with a strangely blank, despairing expression. Sally didn't know what to say, but she was feeling very very uncomfortable. Why wouldn't Daddy go away? Let her watch telly or something.

"I don't know how it all got this far. It was my fault as well I suppose. All those swinging parties and wife-swapping and kinky fun and so on. It all seemed quite harmless in a way. And we tried to keep all that out of sight of you kids as you were growing up. But somehow it just didn't stay like that. The time with the pony, for instance. What *was* your mother thinking about? And then Kim. He was just an ordinary dog. Now look at him! And then your mother had to ... had to ... seduce ... Sheridan. It's all far far too far too much for me!"

Sally's father paused. And then he straightened up, perhaps becoming aware of where he was and to whom he was speaking.

"What's the 'secret' Daddy?" Sally asked with a tremulous voice.

"'Secret'? Well, it's only a secret insofar as I don't want Mummy and Sheridan knowing. Everyone else it's fine. I just want us to leave this house. Tonight in fact. As soon as possible. Preferably when all your mother's friends have left and there'll just be her and Sheridan left behind. I can predict that Sheridan and your mother will be resting in the one bed, the one that used to be *our* bed, and then we can sneak out of the house. The secret is that I want us to leave."

"What? Leave home? Leave everything here?" Sally cried incredulously. She looked around her wildly at the toys and possessions she loved so much. She couldn't

bear to leave them.

“Well, we’ll come back for all your stuff, dear. But I’ve taken out a mortgage on a flat near here. It’s a few miles away, but we don’t want it to be too easy for your Mummy to follow us. It’s only a two-bedroom flat. One bedroom for you. And one bedroom for me. But it’ll be safer for you than here. It won’t be long until your mother will try and seduce you. I can see that. She’s a determined woman, your mother. Once she’s set her mind up on something, it’ll happen. We don’t want you to be like poor Cynthia Kunson. Or even Camilla Carter. We’ve got to get you out of here.”

“But tonight?”

“It’s the soonest I could do it. Well, to be honest I’ve been putting it off. I’d been thinking of other things to do, like getting the law involved. But I didn’t want that. And it wouldn’t make either your mother or me popular with the neighbours. And I thought that maybe with each new taboo broken, your mother had somehow reached the limit of her appetites. But that wasn’t to be either. So, it’s about time. The choice is pretty bleak otherwise.”

“So what do I do?”

“Pack up as many of your things as you need for tonight and the next couple of nights. Once we’ve moved out for sure, once it’s a *fait accompli*, I’ll tell your mother and I’ll get the rest of your stuff moved. But it’s got to be done. You can see that, can’t you Sally?”

Sally was sitting at the head of her bed, her legs crossed beneath her, as she tried to imagine life not living at home. The thought was horrible. She’d got used to living in the pleasant suburban crescent and she’d got to know so many of the

neighbours. To leave that behind... But then Sally thought about Sheila. How could she ever invite her best friend back home to a place where her brother wandered around naked with an erection and her mother made love with a dog while her neighbours joined in? What sort of a home was that? Certainly not the kind of home she ever saw featured on television.

But in a flat? Shared only with her father. It might be smaller, but at least she could ask Sheila to visit. That would be a lot nicer.

“Yes. I can see that, Daddy.”

“Fine, dear. So get packed. But be discreet about it. Don’t tell Mummy or Sheridan. And later tonight, we’ll drive off to the new flat. You’ll like it. It’s not far from the university. Near the city centre.”

Sally nodded. She scarcely cared where it was, although it might mean it was too far for her to be able to walk home from school any more. She could hear in the silence vacated by her stereo system and her father’s voice, the gasping and shrieking coming from her mother’s room. So many different voices! And wasn’t one of them a small girl’s voice like her own? Perhaps Mrs Kunson had brought her daughter around to visit. And that “Wow! Wow!” Wasn’t that Sheridan?

“I can hardly wait!” Sally assured her father in all honesty.