

INTEREST

Written by

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EXT. STREET - NIGHT

MELISSA O'NEILL walks along the quiet street toward The Swan and Rushes. Behind her a car creeps up the road. Looking over her shoulder, she quickens her pace.

INT. SWAN AND RUSHES - NIGHT

HARBIR SINGH sits at a table in the dilapidated, deserted pub. Cradling an emptied glass, he looks from his watch to the pub's ancient television.

A V.T. of a brutish looking man leaving court plays.

NEWS READER

(O.S)

As the Michael Massey trial continues, local police increase their efforts to combat organised crime...

With a CREAK the door opens. Melissa enters. She is nervous. Eyeing everyone with suspicion, she spots Harbir and, skirting the room, joins him.

HARBIR

Miss O'Neill?

She nods.

MELISSA

Mr Singh. May I sit?

Harbir nods. She sits.

HARBIR

You're late.

MELISSA

Sorry, distracted.

She scans the room again. Harbir follows her gaze.

HARBIR

What is so important that we had to meet tonight, Miss O'Neill?

She pulls a battered newspaper from her bag.

MELISSA

This.

She turns to a dogeared page, to a small article titled 'City Council Corruption'. Harbir glances at it.

HARBIR

One of my better pieces. Cut down to two paragraphs and buried on page 19.

MELISSA

I thought it was very interesting.

HARBIR

That's you and my mother. Even my editor has stopped pretending to care. Career poison, his words.

His bitterness creates an awkward silence.

MELISSA

But you still pursued it?

Harbir shrugs.

HARBIR

It's my word against theirs but it's true. People ought to know the truth.

He swigs from his glass. Melissa eyes him.

MELISSA

I agree, Mr Singh. They should. Which is why I think I have a story for you.

INT. MELISSA'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Melissa sits at her desk, working.

Her desk phone RINGS. She answers promptly.

MELISSA

Hello. City First Finance. Melissa speaking.

DIANA

(O.S)

Mel, hi. Alan's asked if you can go over some accounts for him, urgently. He's had to help a client. He's emailed you.

Melissa opens up her inbox, finding the message.

MELISSA  
Yeah, no problem.

DIANA  
Thanks Mel.

The call ends. Melissa sighs and begins to open Alan's files.

She works through the data, diligently, but suddenly pauses, perplexed.

She picks up the phone.

MELISSA  
Hi, Di, did Alan say when he'd be back?

DIANA  
No, sorry. Anything I can help with?

MELISSA  
No. Just wanted to check something. Thanks anyway.

Hanging up, she goes back to the screen.

INT. LIFT - MORNING

The crowded lift rises. Eventually only Melissa and her manager, ALAN TUTTLE, remain. She is nervous, apprehensive.

MELISSA  
Alan...

Alan pockets his phone, before turning to her, smiling.

ALAN  
Melissa.

MELISSA  
Those accounts you asked me to work on yesterday?

ALAN  
Yes.

MELISSA  
Well...

Melissa takes a steadying breath.

MELISSA (CONT'D)  
I'm sure you've got it all in hand  
but some looked a little off, the  
kind that send up red flags. I  
could only see some details but  
wanted to ask you about them.

The lift doors PING open and both exit.

INT. OFFICE CORRIDOR - MORNING

Stepping from the lift the two head down a carpeted hallway.  
Alan's pace is leisurely, calm.

ALAN  
Then you've done the right thing.

He smiles again. So does she.

MELISSA  
Oh. Good. So...

ALAN  
Yes, I know the ones you mean, they  
shouldn't have come to you. Meant  
to send them to our investigation  
team. My mistake.

Melissa visibly relaxes.

ALAN (CONT'D)  
I've checked with the F.A.T.F.  
We're clearing things up.

The two stop outside Melissa's office door.

ALAN (CONT'D)  
I've got everything in hand.

Contented, she leaves. Alan strides away.

INT. SWAN AND RUSHES - NIGHT

Harbir and Melissa sit at the table, both with drinks. They  
speak with muted tones.

HARBIR  
The F.A.T.F.?

MELISSA  
The Financial Action Task Force.

She glances up at the television. The news is still running.

MELISSA (CONT'D)  
They advise, primarily, on money  
laundering.

Harbir looks quizzical.

HARBIR  
So...?

Melissa goes to speak. Outside a car backfires. She jumps,  
knocking her glass to the floor. It SMASHES.

MELISSA  
Oh no no no!

HARBIR  
Are you ok?

She looks round the room. Only an irate barman pays them any  
attention.

MELISSA  
Maybe this wasn't such a good idea.

She pushes her chairs back through a sea of broken glass and  
orange juice. Harbir reaches out for her.

HARBIR  
No, please. Stay.

She looks at him. She takes a breath. She inches her chair  
forward.

MELISSA  
Sorry, I'm not myself. You see...

INT. MELISSA'S OFFICE - MORNING

Melissa enters, travel coffee cup in hand. Taking her seat,  
the workday begins.

She skims through emails before a sudden KNOCK at the door  
disrupts her. Alan lingers in the doorway.

MELISSA  
Alan, hi.

ALAN  
Sorry if I startled you.