

All or nothing



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

My doorbell was the last thing that I wanted to hear on the morning of 20th September. It was the first day that I'd had off work for months so I was hoping to stay in bed for as long as I could. The doorbell rang once more and at that point I realised that my long morning in bed was never going to happen.

I jumped out of bed, the same as I did every other morning, and went to the front door to answer it. There was a postman stood at the door with a small parcel that was rectangle shaped.

" Good morning", I said to the postman.

He handed me the parcel and also a clip board with a piece of paper clipped to the front for me to sign, I signed the paper and went back inside. I took the parcel into my living room which was still a mess from the night before; the coffee table in the centre of the room had an empty Vodka bottle, crisp packets, and also an empty twenty pack of cigarettes.

My sofas outlined the coffee table with one either side, I sat on the one that was closest to me and opened the parcel, there was a small letter inside that said:

To Victoria,

A present from your dearest friend, hope you like it.

Love you and miss you.

Love Tom x x x.

At that moment, a smile appeared on my face, I missed Tom a lot when he was away, especially when they'd been for this long, he had been away for nearly two months now, and normally I'd see him twice a week or more so it was weird for me not to have him near. He was on a business trip in London and I was still miles away from him in Bristol.

I had known Tom since we'd started the same secondary school at the age of eleven, since then we've gone through college and university together too. At school we'd been close and we'd always wanted to do the same kinds of things, I was quite boyish and we used to play football after school had finished and on weekends. Our relationship just got stronger as we got older and it just never seemed to leave, even when Tom moved away for a short while with an ex-girlfriend who wanted everything her way.

I took the velvet container and letter and put them onto the table in front of me, I opened the container to reveal a matching necklace and earring set, they were 18 carat gold and had one small diamond in each, the necklace was a heart at the end of a chain and the earrings were also hearts and also contained a diamond each.

I grabbed my mobile phone from the kitchen side and pressed 1 on the speed dial, I placed the phone to my ear and it began to ring.

" Hi!" said the voice at the other end.

" Tom, its Vic", I said, " just to say thanks for the jewellery set, it only came this morning".

" Oh", he murmured, " you're worth it, oh and Vic's what time is it?"

" About 10'clock in the afternoon, why?" I replied.

" I'm late, see ya!" was the answer I got, and then he put the phone down, I knew he was already very late.

I put the phone back onto the kitchen side and began to walk towards my bathroom, and seeing as I had all day to do whatever I wanted to, I was intending to have a long relaxing bath.

I went into the bathroom, and started to run a bath full of water, I put bubble bath in it, I lit the candles around the edge and my nightdress over my head and threw it into the washing pile. I spent over an hour in the bath, until the water started to go cold and I had to get out because my skin was all wrinkled. I dried myself and went through to my bedroom.

Once in there, I grabbed a pair of silk French knickers out of my drawer and a long, light pink satin dress. It was meant to be really hot today according to the weather reports on telly, so I thought that I would dress appropriately as normally I would be in a suit jacket and black trousers.

I threw the bed sheet over the bed, and fluffed up the pillows a little, pulled open my curtains and opened the window, ready for the day to begin. I blow-dried and straightened my hair before putting on my make-up and getting dressed. I then fed the cat and opened the rest of the curtains in the apartment. I picked up my keys and my phone from on the kitchen side and went out the front door. I went down the stairs and out to where my car was parked, it was my pride and joy, a black Lotus Elise which had taken me

years to save for. I drove it out of the car park and along the street towards the shopping centre.

As I approached the car park, I got my card out of my purse; I paid on the card for all of my parking tickets because I spent so much time in car parks, and keeping cash like that on me all of the time wouldn't be easy. I showed the man at the kiosk my card; he took one quick glance and then returned it to me so that I could get through. I put the pass back into my purse and headed into the main bit of the car park where I found a space next to the stairs that led down to the shops.

I got out of the car and locked it; I then flung my bag over my shoulder and started to walk down the stairs. The first shop at the bottom of the stairs was Monsoon, I could see in the window, the shoes that I had bought the last time I had a day off. I went into the shop, I wasn't sure what I wanted but I knew I had to buy something special to wear to Tom's welcome home party that was being held that weekend.

The dress that I bought eventually, was rose red and touched the floor, it was pure silk and cost me over £200, the slit that went up the back was huge and went all the way up to my thighs, luckily enough I had good legs so I knew I could carry it off easily. I needed a new pair of shoes to go with the dress so I carried on walking on the path through the middle of the centre until I came to River Island, I went in and bought the first pair of black, stiletto heeled shoes that I could find. I already had a purse at home that would match perfectly with my outfit and I was planning to wear the necklace and earrings that Tom had bought me.

The party was being held at Tom's mum's house, as Tom's was too small to accommodate so many people. Jane was too wealthy for her own good, she had married an older man when she'd only just left Tom's dad, the man died five years ago and left everything he owned to Jane. He was lying on millions the day he died and before Jane realised it, she was too. He left his business, his home and everything in it to her, the house alone was worth over  $\frac{1}{2}$ 1 million. The house was on 12 acres of land and had 10 bedrooms which would be well over enough space for the party.

I had known Jane for as long as I had known Tom so she was like a second mother to me, being at her house was nothing new so I wasn't nervous about that, just about seeing Tom again after so long. I had spoken to him over the phone and had written letters but this was different and I was looking forward to it so much. I had to be well prepared for this so I had written myself a list of what I needed to do beforehand. Among the other things on that list was buy new dress and shoes so I ticked them off.

The last thing I did before I left the shopping centre was grab a cup of coffee from O'Brien's, they made the best coffee that money could buy so I always bought one when I was on the move. I got into my car still with the polystyrene cup that was so hot that it was difficult to carry, and put my bag down on the passenger seat. I downed the last bit of coffee and threw the cup into the bin next to the car; I then put my new dress and shoes onto the back seat and drove out of the car park.

By the time I had got back to my apartment, I was knackered; I parked my car in the same place that it had been in before I had gone out this morning.

I then walked into the main entrance hall and up the stairs to the door of my apartment; I opened the door and pressed the button on my phone to check for messages.

" No messages", it said slowly, beeped three times as usual, then back to normal.

I picked up the receiver and dialled Jane's home number, I always tried this first as it cost me less. It rang twice and then her answer machine kicked in.

" The Williams residence, sorry but we can't come to the phone right now, please try our mobiles or leave a message after the tone", the tone sounded so I began.

" Jane, it's Victoria, just to say I'll be at the party, will be there as usual early to help set up, see you then if not before", and I put down the phone.

I went into the kitchen to see it gleaming, the living room had also now been cleaned and there was no rubbish on the table anymore, the cleaner had been in. I put the kettle on, picked up my post from the kitchen side, and sat down on a breakfast bar stool to open it.

The remainder of the day passed as some what of a blur, I couldn't have done anything particularly exciting because I would have remembered. I only finally looked up at the clock on my living room wall at 10 p. m. and I knew that I had work in the morning so I went to bed.

The two days after were the same, work which never changed from day to day, and doing the same thing every day made me more bored than

anything else. I did longer hours than I should every day because I knew I had nothing to do when I got home and this made the two days go quicker.

The weekend came and I knew that Tom was supposed to be coming home. I had the whole weekend off, I wasn't intending to get drunk but just to be sure I had booked the two days which meant I didn't have to go to work with a hangover. I had all day to make myself look stunning for the night ahead; it was only ten thirty in the morning so I got out of bed and put the television on in the living room. I had to be at Jane's at five o'clock to help her with any last minute things, she was having caterers in to cook all of the food and to set most of it up but she knew that I would be sure of what Tom liked.

That morning I went out and had my hair cut and my nails done, I got home and showered to get rid of the excess hair that was in all of my clothes. It was now gone 1 o'clock in the afternoon so I pulled a microwave meal out of the freezer and put it in for five minutes. I didn't have the time to do something proper, today was going to be quite busy for me, I still had to get ready although I was clean. After I had finished the meal, I put the dish in the dishwasher and tidied the kitchen again so it looked presentable; I only just had enough time now.

I got dressed up to my waist; I didn't want to get make-up on the top of my dress so I put that part on last. I blow dried my hair and straightened it, did my make-up, put on all of my jewellery, including the necklace and earring set that Tom had sent me and then put the rest of my dress on properly. I put my shoes on and left and left at a quarter past four.



When I got to Jane's, the place was deserted, there was nobody to be seen anywhere. It was quite early, and Tom wasn't due until around six. Jane came to the front door to greet me, so I parked the car and got out. I followed her through the entrance hall and into the living room which looked amazing as usual, but today the walls were covered in welcome home banners. I then joined her in the dining area situated next to the living room; the table was laid with the most beautifully presented food which I knew she hadn't cooked. A man, who turned out to be the bar manager for the night, was putting the finishing touches to the bar at the other end of the room, more bar staff would come later to help him with catering, waiters and waitresses to carry around the drinks on trays.

I couldn't wait to see Tom; he was always away when I came around to see Jane, he only ever came home for a while and then he was off again to some business meeting or other.

Jane noticed the earrings and the necklace and I told her that Tom had sent them to me. She complained because she said that he never sent her presents and said that he spoilt me, which was mostly true; he did always send me presents from wherever he was staying, even if it was only a t-shirt or a key ring with the name of the hotel on it.

The last guest arrived at five thirty; Jane and I greeted them at the door and took their coats. Finally at ten past six a taxi pulled up at the door and out leaped Tom, as happy as ever with that same smile on his face as I had first seen so long ago. I was so glad to see him, even if at that moment it was only through the window. The door knocked and I stood behind Jane as she

opened it. Tom threw his arms around his mother like a child, a finger just tapping me as his hand passed.

Tom screamed my name as soon as he noticed that I was there, he then pulled me into his chest so that I could put my arms around him for the first time in ages.

" Welcome home", I squeaked, I couldn't breathe very well because he was holding me so tightly.

He spent the next half an hour greeting people and thanking them for coming, and then he came back over to see me. We talked for a while about his trip and about how we both were; he looked great, although a little tired from the journey. He noticed that I had the earrings and necklace on that he had bought me and I thanked him again, he told me that I looked beautiful and I could feel myself getting embarrassed and going red. He just smiled.

Out of the corner of my eye I caught a glimpse of Jane coming from the dining room, she winked and smiled when she saw us together, she had always thought that Tom and I should have been a couple but we had let her down after we had split up years ago.

" Wanna dance?" He asked me.

We stepped into the centre of the living room where Jane had made a space for everyone to dance in. He p me around, and I laughed, we danced for a while to a song which I recognised from my childhood. He kissed me as the song ended and I knew that Jane was watching us. In that moment I felt something which I hadn't felt with Tom since we were together, and then I

heard a voice. I knew even before I looked that it was Jane, stood there hands on hips and giggling.

"What?" Asked Tom, "it was just a friendly kiss".

I agreed with him and Jane walked away. It was now quite late, and most of the guest had left, the few that hadn't were getting coats and saying goodbye to each other.

"Fancy coming back to mine for a bit?" he asked, "for coffee or something?"

I answered almost immediately, "yeh, sure".

We phoned a taxi from Jane's house and got to Tom's just after midnight. He paid for the taxi and we got out. Once inside I sat on the sofa in my usual place next to the window, he got up to make coffee and I suggested wine instead. He put the two glasses down on the table and opened the bottle of wine, he poured wine into both the glasses and handed me one. We toasted "to love and all of life's other pleasures".

We talked some more about his trip and after the third glass of wine he moved closer to me, I wasn't really sure what to do. He touched my face and pulled me closer to him, we kissed, and not just a little one this time but one that lasted minutes, passion and lust filled me and I kissed back. He was caressing my hips and all up my back, he stopped the kiss just for a second and in that time I was trying to remember who I was with and what was happening. It was Tom, just Tom but for some reason it felt so right. I pulled his face back to mine so that I could kiss him again.

He grabbed my hand and led me to what I knew was his bedroom. We fell to the bed still kissing passionately; he removed his jacket and his tie, and then started to undo his shirt buttons. I wanted him so badly and was so excited that I couldn't stop myself from pulling my dress over my head, shocking myself that I could be so forward. I threw it onto the floor beside the bed where the clothes he was wearing only moments before now laid.

We were both now in only our underwear, I felt so calm with Tom, and I wasn't scared at all. Still kissing me, he undid the back of my bra so quickly that I didn't even notice, I had forgotten what Tom's touch felt like but now longed for him. He had taken off his boxer shorts and was now taking off my thongs, kissing and gently nibbling my breasts as he did. He started to stroke my thigh and I moved his hand up higher so that his fingers were on my clitoris, I was scratching his back and pulling him closer, begging for him to touch me more. I screamed with excitement as he slid inside me.

When I woke that morning, I felt different, and then I remembered what had happened the night before. I got out of the bed still totally naked, and grabbed my clothes from the floor on the way out the door, Tom was still asleep and I didn't think that I could wake him; I just wanted to get out.

When I got home I went straight into my bedroom where I cried for hours, I didn't regret the night before but I didn't want to ruin what we already had either. The phone rang beside the bed and I picked up to hear a voice which I knew was Tom's. I was crying as I answered, and Tom could tell this.

He asked me what was wrong and I explained.

" I want it all or nothing at all. There's nowhere left to fall when you reach the bottom, it's now or never. Is it all or are we just friends, is this how it ends, with a simple telephone call, you leave me here with nothing at all?" I sobbed.

" That's what I phoned to say to you Victoria, I want you to have it all, I want us to be together properly, I'm sick of pretending that I don't love you because I do!" he answered.

I told him that I loved him too, I was overpowered by shock.

The next few weeks passed quickly, Jane loved the idea of us being back together again, so did all of our friends. We're planning to wed in the summer and then we want to start a family of our own. Who would have guessed that you can look love in the face for so long and not even realise that it's there. This book is a lesson for all of you, you only live once, live it to the full, don't let anything come between you and your dreams...