

KEY EXCHANGE
by Kevin Wade



(Philip is lying on his stomach. Lisa straddles him, massaging his shoulders and back.)

PHILIP: Yes.

LISA: There?

PHILIP: Yes. Ah.

LISA: You've got a big knot here. *(Presses a spot)* Feel it?

PHILIP: Ouch! Easy. Just massage it a little, huh? You don't have to squash it.

LISA: Relax. Breathe deep. Stop resisting. *(She continues kneading his back. Philip breathes loudly)* It's like armor.

PHILIP: I've got a strong back.

LISA: You've also got a lot of tension. *(Pressing a spot)* That's from tension.

PHILIP: *(Wincing)* Ow. Christ.

LISA: Relax.

PHILIP: I'm relaxed already.

LISA: Breathe.

PHILIP: I'm breathing.

LISA: It's like golf balls. You're carrying a lot of stuff back here.

PHILIP: It's pure energy. I store it back there. *(Winces)* Ah, that's enough. That's good. Thanks.

LISA: *(Getting up)* Fine. Be tense.

PHILIP: *(Sitting up and rubbing his shoulder)* It takes years to build up knots like that. They don't just come undone in a few minutes.

(Turns to her) Thank you.

LISA: You're welcome.

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PHILIP: Want me to do you?
 LISA: Would you?
 PHILIP: No. Yes. *Lisa down.*
 LISA: My legs could use some work. *(Lisa lies down on her back. Philip kneels beside her. He starts with her calves)*
 PHILIP: How's that?
 LISA: That's good. *(He continues on past her knees and to her thighs)*
 Oh yeah. There. That's it, ah yes. *(Philip kneads a little harder. Lisa starts laughing)* Oh don't tickles oh ah-ha eow stop it that tickles. *(He stops, starts again gently)* Oh God. Oh. You shouldn't do that. It shocks the muscles when you do that.
 PHILIP: You can't shock these thighs. They've seen it all. *(He leans over, talking to her legs)* Right, you guys? That night docked outside Corfu? The moon, the stars, the reasins, the waves lapping at the hull, that Turkish tanker crew lapping at the two of you. *(Lisa laughs. Philip continues gently massaging her thighs. This goes on for a few moments)*
 LISA: I'm meeting my father and his wife for dinner tonight.
 PHILIP: That's nice. Where are you eating?
 LISA: Tavern on the Green.
 PHILIP: Delicious.
 LISA: You're invited.
 PHILIP: Oh.
 LISA: I'd like you to come.
 PHILIP: *(after a moment)* I don't think so.
 LISA: Why not?
 PHILIP: I just wouldn't feel comfortable. Not yet. *(He ends the massage and sits back)*
 LISA: Everyone feels comfortable with my father. And he really wants to meet you. You'll like him, Philip. He's a big mystery fan too. When I was a kid, he used to read me to sleep with Raymond Chandler stories.
 PHILIP: Really?
 LISA: Yeah. He'd do Bogart and imitate a saxophone and everything.
 PHILIP: That's great. *(Pause)* I can't come.

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LISA: Why not?
 PHILIP: I just can't.
 LISA: That's not an answer.
 PHILIP: It'll have to do, all right?
 LISA: No, not all right?
 PHILIP: I can't come because he's your father and he'll know I'm screwing his daughter.
 LISA: That's ridiculous.
 PHILIP: It's not ridiculous. It's the nut of the situation.
 LISA: He doesn't care about that. I'm not his little girl anymore.
 PHILIP: He cares, believe me. There will come a point when it will hit him, he'll realize that this guy inhaling the endive across the table is doing his only daughter every which way, and it'll grab his gut, and he'll try to be casual, maybe shoot me a little smile and a knowing wink, and I'll catch it and try to look worthy, but in our hearts we'll both know what's going on.
 LISA: That's not true.
 PHILIP: It's the primal paternal reaction.
 LISA: It's a load of baloney.
 PHILIP: You don't understand.
 LISA: *(After a moment)* I think I do understand. It's like the keys, isn't it?
 PHILIP: What?
 LISA: Exchanging our keys. And the Tampax in your bathroom closet. And all the other times you take a little thing and blow it up and look into the future and see yourself stuck. *(Imitating him)* So say I go eat with you and your father. Then you know what happens? I'll tell you what happens. Next thing, you're getting chummy with my parents. Then it's ball games with your old man. Then Thanksgiving with my folks, you and my mother are in the big cahoots, and Uncle Whoever is wanting to know if we've set a fucking date yet...
 PHILIP: STOP IT!
 LISA: Well isn't that it, Philip?
 PHILIP: Stop pushing me.
 LISA: Pushing you? Jesus, I ask you out for a dinner and you make

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it sound like the last supper.

PHILIP: No, you made it sound like that. You stuffed all those words in my mouth, you do that so you can make me wrong.

LISA: You hear the same spiel enough, Philip, you get a feel for what it's coming.

PHILIP: That's good. Why should I come to dinner? You don't need me, you could just keep switching seats and be both of us, you know so fucking much.

LISA: What are you so scared of?

PHILIP: Christ, Lisa, come on.

LISA: No, Philip, you come on.

PHILIP: Not wanting to meet your father tonight doesn't make me scared.

LISA: Then I don't know what it is, but it's something. I see it when you've had a few drinks, or when we're making love, and you'll say love you, and damnit you mean it, and then you'll do a thing with your eyes, a funny little frown, and then you cut off, you order another drink, or roll over and make a joke and get out of bed. Anything you have to go out on a limb for, you tag a disclaimer on it and wiggle away. It makes me feel like shit.

PHILIP: Lisa, I can't just snap my fingers and be where you want me to be. I've got my own pace, it doesn't pop change like...

LISA: Pace is a lot of bull. You either want me or you don't. This isn't a bicycle race, you're not pacing yourself in a pack. This is you and me. (Pause) I can't do this anymore. I'm tired of holding myself back. And I deserve better than this. I'm smart and pretty and funny and there are a lot of guys, good men, who would be proud to have me show them off to my father, and who would be pleased as punch to have a key to my apartment, and yes even happy to keep a box of Tampax in the bathroom closet. (She gets her trapsack and pulls it on.)

PHILIP: Lisa, please, don't go.

LISA: I have to go.

PHILIP: I love you. I do. I'm sorry I'm such a fuck up.

LISA: I'm sorry too, Philip.

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PHILIP: I'll come to dinner tonight. I'd like to.

LISA: Don't do that.

PHILIP: I'll meet your father.

LISA: Don't. Not now. It's forced, I don't want it forced. No more pulling teeth. Ums and buts and well all rights.

(Michael enters, stage left. They don't notice him. He is stooped over, holding his bicycle and catching his breath.)

LISA: No more excuses. About dinner with my father, about the importance of screwing around, about your goddama pace. I'm sick of fighting you every inch of the way.