

## QUIVER

### THE WOMAN WHO WAS TIED UP AND FORGOTTEN

Sandra and Brian are a middle-aged couple. Sandra is a statuesque blonde with a purposeful stride. She has been an architect for a long time and, like most people lucky enough to be focused early in life, she is now rich thanks to regular clientele and some astute property investment. Brian made his money specialising in orthodontics, and has found a niche amid zinc fillings, metal wire and plastic plates. His patrons are the rich Jewish matrons of Double Bay, who sit in his surgery clasping the hand of their buck toothed off-spring, and find Brian's brown suits strangely comforting.

Sandra and Brian have a routine to their love-making. It begins with a series of signals. The first comes from Sandra, who puts on her flannel night dress after a regime of skin care. It reminds her of boarding school. It makes her feel naughty. She then reclines on the bed and switches off the bedside lamp. Brian, dressed in his cotton shorts, obediently follows her cue. The second signal involves Sandra suddenly wrapping her leg over Brian's torso, inadvertently brushes the tip of his penis. In the ensuing silence Sandra mounts the compliant Brian and rides him until she reaches orgasm. Brian's climax, a high pitched whimper, follows a second later. Afterwards she likes to get up to brush her teeth. Sandra is larger than Brian and likes to be in control; Brian likes to think he enjoys being dominated. This is their equilibrium.

Sandra has just placed a tender to the Sydney City Council to design a museum to house firefighting equipment dating from the beginning of the

colony. She has spent months drawing up her design. The council is to announce its decision that evening. Sandra and Brian have dressed for the Opera: Brian has donned a light summer suit in an unfortunate shade of Beige and Sandra is in pink organza. Sandra sits by the phone, waiting. The heat makes her glisten. A fan spinning in the corner blows her hair away from her face. Her portfolio lies open on the desk. The drawing of the museum is a collision of swirling red arches and stark vertical chimneys thrusting up into a charcoal sky. It looks like fire, like the building itself is struggling with the elements.

The phone rings. She jumps and grabs for the receiver. Brian heads for the drinks cabinet - either way he is prepared to fix his wife a scotch. He watches her face as he pours the drink. Impenetrable, mask-like, with only a light veil of sweat betraying her. She answers the clerk on the other end of the line in short polite affirmatives. It is this cool control of hers that Brian finds impossibly erotic. He watches the ice-cubes tumble into the whiskey then bob to the surface.

He hands her the scotch. She puts down the receiver slowly then quickly swallows the drink in one gulp. She throws the glass against the white stipple wall. It just misses Brian's head.

'I've got it!' She dances around the fan, her pink organza flying. 'I've got it!' Tentatively he reminds her that they are running late for the Opera. --- They get there just as the lights are dimming. It is a production of Humperdinck's Hansel and Gretel. The director has created a Gothic nightmare of epic proportions. From where Sandra sits she can see the tenor sitting on a giant chair, his feet swinging a good ten inches above the floor, his golden curls and painted pink lips a pederast's dream. The witch thrills madly as she binds his feet and

arms to the wooden limbs. As the final knot is pulled tight Sandra feels a strange heat flooding up her lower limbs. She looks at Brian, who is leaning forward, face flushed, his tongue plays with the gap between his front teeth. She looks back at the stage.

The opera singer's legs lie parted tied to the chair with bright pink ribbon. Perhaps it is the feeling of success that makes Sandra unusually aroused. Perhaps it is the humidity that hangs like a collective sweat over the city. Sandra suddenly finds the image of the singer tied to the chair more than a little sexy.

In the dark Brian's hand takes hers and places it firmly on his growing erection. The witch throws back her head and begins to sing, her bright red mouth stretching wide. Brian throbs to a climax under Sandra's moving fingers.

The next night he brings home a length of pink ribbon. Lying there afterwards, her ankles and wrists stinging, her body still warm from an orgasm whose voluminosity had surprised even herself, Sandra realises that they have stepped over a boundary displacing their equilibrium. She glances over at Brian, who lies with his back to her, his skin glistening.

Soon the demands of Sandra's commission begin to dictate their lives. She is in a frenzy, bent over cardboard models in which the doorways yawn red, the turrets shoot up like flames and the external fire escape spirals down like drifting smoke. The more she scrawls her designs across the heavy draft paper, the more she feels her cells, her muscles, her juices thicken in expectation. The movement of her thick pencil as it sweeps across the graph of her building suddenly holds

the promise of a penis. A compass swing imagines tracings across a nipple. She wants her every orifice filled. She wants to lose control. To lose responsibility.

Every night, after hours of exhausting drafting and debate, she succumbs to Brian's little knots. His manipulation of her limbs makes her scream - stretching her, opening her - while the night breeze drifts in through the balcony doors, carrying faint shouts and the wailing of fire engines.

Sandra visits Brian during his lunch hour. Between the X rays, plaster casts of jaws and root-canal work, she arrives, breathless.

Brian, recognising the click of her stilettos on the concrete steps of the fire escape, dismisses his assistant. Still wearing his white surgical gown, he leads Sandra by the hand to the dentist's chair. He ties her hands and ankles to the steel frame and gently places a gag in her mouth. He picks up a scalpel and gently cuts away at the crotch of her nylon tights. Kneeling he hoists up the chair until her crotch is almost at eye level, then carefully splits her white underwear. With trembling fingers he folds the fabric back to reveal her Gold, as he calls her thick bush of blond pubic hair and cunt. To the sound of Stravinsky, he spreads her nether lips open and then very slowly begins to snip away at the fringes of pubic hair around her vagina with tiny scissors, until the pink labia shine under the heat of the dentist's lamp. Brian pauses, Sandra is transformed. She trembles silently under his fingers. Her huge eyes roll above the gag. The only visible flesh is her vulva. Brian's hand brushes the tip of her clitoris. It flushes a deep red.

Sandra revels in her helplessness. Brian, unaccustomed to this mute, malleable Sandra, fixes a small circular brush to the end of the drill. He bends down and,

with one hand parting her labia, he caresses the tip of her clit with the spinning brush until she begs for mercy and comes, writhing, still tied and gagged to the chair.

The semen dries on the inside of Brian's thigh. Sandra takes a new pair of tights from her handbag and rolls them over her full, firm legs. She uses the reflective surface of the overhead lamp to apply her lipstick and adjust her hair. Completely clothed in a conservative grey suit with padded shoulders, her permed blonde hair immaculate except for the curls that have stuck to her sweaty brow, she tucks her portfolio under her arm and heads out to an appointment with the Sydney City council.

Brian watches her from the window and begins to grow hard again, thinking how no-one would guess that this woman belonged to him, this dynamic controlled woman, who was, a minute ago, completely in his power.

Time is running out. Most nights Sandra comes in after eleven. She slips her clothes off and collapses exhausted on top of the bed covers, still dressed in her underwear. Brian lies there, his eyes open, feeling her breath rise beside him. He wants to touch her but now all that is forbidden. Shut out, a part of him starts to hate her.

The closer the completion date of the building, the more distracted and obsessed Sandra becomes. Conversation evaporates. She can talk only of work, poured concrete and foundations. Brian thinks he is disappearing, fading into insignificance. Soon their only real contact is during her lunchtime visits, when she is slave and he is master.

Her urgency consumes her. Her orgasms feed her work. Her work inflames her further. To save time she stops wearing underpants and taken to wearing a suspender belt.

She has also shaven off her pubic hair. Everything is closer to the skin. As she walks through the council chambers in her high heels and long skirt she can feel the movement of her legs rub the spheres of her sex together. In a boardroom meeting, caught in a ring of men, she relishes her secret nakedness. Everything is designed to maximise the moment. The frenetic pace she lives her life has taken on a rhythm. This is her new equilibrium.

A man is perched on some scaffolding, just below a neon sign reading 'Beryl's biscuits are the best'. He sees a woman, beautiful at forty. She walks into a dentist's surgery in the building opposite. The man immediately senses something in her poise - her very gait - that suggests sex. As he draws closer, he fancies for a moment that he can smell through the glass, through the steel, sensing the rich pungent smell of her sex. Silently, out of view of his colleagues, he swiftly lets down the pulley so that his section of scaffolding is directly opposite the dentist's window. Hidden by a section of flimsy hardwood, he watches at his leisure the beautiful woman opposite whom he thinks is in love with a dentist. He watches as she walks into the centre of the room and then lifts the edge of her skirt.

The dentist walks up to her and pushes his hand roughly between her legs. It is as if the man can feel the damp imprint of her sex on his wrist as the dentist pushes the woman towards the chair.

She falls slowly into it, her hair bouncing slightly on her forehead as if in slow motion. The dentist opens the woman's legs with his rubber-gloved hands and ties her ankles to the chair. She puts up no struggle, but stares down at him with wide eyes. The man watching fancies he can see her bosom rising and falling in fear, in excitement, in submission. He moves closer to the hardwood panel and presses his erection against it. She has large breasts hidden under a tight white cotton blouse. It is this exterior of demure righteousness that pleases the watching man. He imagines that under the white cotton she would have large brown nipples that would harden against his teeth.

The dentist lifts her arms and ties her wrists to the head of the chair. The man watching would unbutton that blouse and release those full breasts. That's what he'd do. He would weigh them thoughtfully in each hand then slowly run his thumb over those hardening brown nipples until they became erect. Then he would squeeze them firmly together and begin to suck at one and then the other until he could hear the woman moan. That's what he'd do if he was there. But the dentist seemed only interested in touching the other. The best part. The bit he'd leave to the end. The man watching reaches down and with his calloused hand, imagining the lips and tongue of the woman pulling down over the shaft of his penis, then over the knob with small circling motions, taking him deep into her throat. He always likes leaving the best part until the end.

Now the dentist has his face buried between the

woman's legs. The man watching looks at the woman's face. Her cheeks are flushed and her eyes are rolling back in pleasure. She moves her arms backwards

and forwards, chafing against the rope binding her to the chair. The man watching closes his eyes and comes against the grain of the wood. Every day after that he eats his lunch suspended in the little steel cage that hangs down the side of the building opposite the dentist's surgery.

It's now mid-December and the pressure on Sandra is immense. She feels as if her whole life is focused down onto a thin point, and that point is the commission. Everyone else recedes, defined only by their function only in relation to the execution of the building. The more obsessed she becomes, the more Brian's anger ferments inside him. He hates the cardboard model of the museum, with its red turrets and display windows large enough to house several fire engines. He hates the way his wife burns with beauty as she manages four phone calls, two builders awaiting orders and a landscape gardener. He hates the way she has begun to look through people until they say words like facade treatment, tilt slab and Clerestory lighting. He tries folding up his anger and slipping it between the gum and the lip. Like an abscess it festers. He decides that he will confront her. He will force her to take a day off. But when he rings her office the line's engaged, when he tries the mobile the call is diverted; the fax is always busy.

He finds himself waiting for lunchtime. He finds that tying her down excites him more than fucking her. The equilibrium tilts back with the chair. ---

It is the end of summer, the reflective glass is now fitted to the steel frames, and the man's work is almost done.

He sees a small blue B.M.W drive up a ramp and disappears into a parking lot in the street below. He smiles to himself and starts counting. Twenty. He knows it takes twenty counts for her to be in the opposite building and seated in the dentist's chair. Nineteen. 'Just off for a smoke!' His mates smile knowingly. He climbs into the small steel cage and begins lowering the pulley by hand.

Fifteen. He can see her walking swiftly across the road, her blond hair white in the sunlight. He is excited by the knowledge that he alone knows where she is going and why. The pulley stops with a jolt. It sways slightly, then rests against the steel brackets. He squats close to the iron-mesh floor and stares into the surgery. The room is empty. The lamp is illuminating the vacant dentist's chair. The green of the leather cover shines, desolate and medicinal. He hates the dentist.

Five. She is at the door taking off her long leather coat. She is hanging it carefully over the hook on the back of the door. The dentist enters. He walks up to the woman and pushes her over the dentist's chair. She falls, breasts forward, across the seat. He pushes his knee between her buttocks. As she is pinned to the seat, he grabs both her wrists with his hands and uses a towel to tie them crudely together.

Three. The dentist lifts up one thigh and pushes it over the arm of the chair. He ties the ankle to the outside frame. He then pushes her right thigh over the other arm and ties that ankle. Sandra is spread-eagled over the seat, her buttocks arched high in the air. Her face is pushed down into the seat. Brian rolls up her dress.

Two. She is wearing nothing but stockings.

One. He thinks she looks the most beautiful like that. In surrender. He can see her elegant hands pressed up against each other almost in prayer. Her cheek is pushed down against the green leather. The man squatting in the steel cage thinks other women would lose their dignity tied up like that. But not her. He loves her for that. The way she stays dangerous even when tied up.

Brian steps back from his handiwork. His heart is pounding uncomfortably close to his throat. His wife's arse lay spread before him, the faintest wisp of blond hair framing anus and cunt. Beautiful. He can hear Sandra breathing. Her eyes are shut. He kneels and places his finger a millimetre above his wife's clitoris. He watches her grow erect. He wants her to say the word, he wants to hear her beg. He spreads her lips even further apart and blows hard along the ridge of her clit. Sandra squirms. He can see the moisture collecting in the dark shadows. But she says nothing. Her silence makes him want to smack her hard across the arse, But he thinks this will give her pleasure, push her over the edge. He would like to take his cock out and press it against the rim of her arse-hole, gently teasing. Then plunge into her, feeling her arch in sudden pain. He does not. Like a mystic, he slowly runs his spread palms over the circumference of her, in the air above her skin. She is groaning now. He steps away and walks around to the other side of the chair. She looks up at him. Her eyes are blank animal. He wants her to say how much she wants him, needs him, to lose control. He pushes his fingers into her mouth and probes the inside of her gum, soft, wet. She sucks at his fingers, wanting.

'You want me, don't you? You need me, don't you?' She says nothing. He pulls his fingers out of her mouth. He kicks the base of the chair. It spins around. Her body rotates with it like a crazy Merry-go-round.

He watches her, her torso swinging from shadow to light from light to shadow like day to night. She doesn't cry out, but accepts this chaotic world as if it is her penance. The chair stops spinning. Brian buries his face into her cunt. He sucks and licks her until she is close to bursting.

Suddenly he stands. He takes off his white smock and hangs it over her leather coat and leaves the room. The door slams behind him.

The man in the steel cage watches the dentist leave the room. The woman is still tied over the chair. He looks down at the street. The dentist, his bald head a pink map, walks across the street then into the car park. The man's heart begins to hammer. He looks back at the room. The vulnerability of the woman tightens his loins, his cock lies hard in the leg of his shorts. Slowly he begins to slide the steel cage down to the ground.

Sandra lies motionless. She can feel the heat of the lamp on her back. She is listening hard for her husband's footsteps. She hopes he's in the adjoining room, although she has already heard him disappear down the corridor and into the lift. The presence of him in the other room is an irrational illusion but she holds onto it to stop herself from screaming. She struggles with the ropes but he has tied her firmly. It is impossible to escape. She lies there open to the world. It is then that she hears the click of the door.

'Brian?' With her face against the seat, Sandra cannot see him. The footsteps are heavy. He comes up behind her. His hands are on her. They run down the sides of her buttocks to her pussy. He opens her lips, his thumb on her clit. Strange hands, heavier than Brian's, the skin rough like a cat's tongue. He rubs her gently. The strangeness of this man excites her. His smell is different, he smells dark as if he has more body hair. Like soil, the faint tinge of machine oil underneath. She feels the dull weight of his cock against her thigh. He enters her slowly. He is bigger than Brian and she stretches with his thickness. She gasps as he starts to increase his rhythm. Pushing his large hands under her skirt he releases her breasts, pulling at the nipples. He reaches up and unties the knots around her wrists. He pulls her upright and down onto his lap, cupping her breasts as she rides him, and biting the back of her neck. She feels the mouth she hasn't seen yet – full and strong, the bottom lip jutting over the top. She twists to see him but he firmly keeps her facing away.

The dentist chair tilts back like a bed. He pushes her down, so that her face is near his knees. He moves her legs so that they run along his hips to his shoulders. She is now lying flat against his body. His cock is still inside her, pushing against the back of her sex. They move slowly. From his reclining position he can see where he is entering her. He parts her buttocks, gently easing two fingers into her arse. She moans and claws at his legs, she can feel herself swell towards orgasm. She reaches back and clutches at his clothes, her fingers tracing an embroidered insignia. McGillis. Squeezing her breasts, he thrusts into her. She cannot hold back any longer, her orgasm ripples through her. She cries out as she feels him contracting with her.

The movement of her head triggers the X ray machine. It extends its lens automatically before taking another image. ---

The next day Sandra is driving in her blue BMW down a highway in the Western suburbs. It is a humid day, the traffic is heavy. The working drawings are on the seat beside her. As she waits at a red light she glances across at them. They look impressive, blue and pink ink trace the three dimensional proportions of the museum, a maze of column grid and footing details. She drives into the car park of the warehouse. A sign stretches over the gateway: McGillis building corporation est;1972. She has arrived. ---

Brian is leaning over Elsa, an attractive patient in her early thirties. As Brian taps her tooth with a dental pick, Elsa winces in pain. His assistant enters the room and taps him on the shoulder. She has Elsa's dental X-rays as he requested, but there is something else. He excuses himself, leaving Elsa wide-eyed, her mouth braced open. He follows his assistant into the next room. Silently she pins the X ray against the light. Two pelvic bones, one male, one female are visible. The bases of both spines and two pubic bones are pushed together, bumping like white bats in the dark.

'Fucking' He mutters under his breath. 'Sorry?' the assistant asks not trusting her ears. 'Fucking, it's a X ray of fucking' Brian pronounces clearly, while instinctively twisting the wedding ring on his middle finger.

Sandra spreads the drawings out on the executive's desk. He is the chief foreman of the company. Over a hundred men work under him. As she bends over, he notices her cleavage and the soft texture of her hair.

'I'd better call Robert, he's handling this job'

He speaks into an intercom. She glances around the office. A girlie calendar on one wall, featuring the famous porn star Candy Perkins, advertises concrete; a photo of the wife and baby grand-daughter on the desk. Through the glass partition, Sandra can see the workers moving large sheets of wood across the warehouse floor.

'Robert's the best in the business, you'll be right with him.'

She recognises his aroma before she sees him, a lingering concoction of sweat, hair and faint after-shave. The same smell. Her heart races, she feels herself responding in scent.

She looks up. His face betrays nothing as he extends a hand. He squeezes her hand slightly as they shake. He is younger than she thought. His eyes are an intense blue. The hair on his chest curls over the white singlet under his blue overalls. He catches her looking at his body.

As she takes him through the drawings, he listens quietly. His hands, heavy workman's hands, slowly caress the lines of the museum, working their way through the collision of masculine and feminine, the vertical and the arched.

Outside the office he offers to drive her to the site.

'Only if I'm in control ` she says and smiles slowly.

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