

Neighbourhood Watch

A short story by Lezanne Clannachan

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The first time I saw the blond it was after midnight. The late-hour grumbling of a taxi alerted me. I studied her through the parted slats of the blind; scuttling up the neighbour's garden path, ankles kinking in ridiculous heels as she glanced about. Very tall, she was. One of those Scandi types, all leg and hair.

The wife – a quiet, unsmiling woman – had been collected by a friend earlier that evening so I knew the husband was alone. The blond had her own key.

It became a regular thing. Coming and going at all hours, head down, hiding her face in her hair. Ashamed.

As for the husband, there was talk of depression. He'd lost his job, spent all day in the house. Bored and lonely, I suppose, wrestling with his impulses.

'There's something you should know about your husband,' I told the wife over the hedge but she wouldn't look me in the eye. She already knew.

'Stop watching us.'

That's what she said as she turned her back on me. But you can't give up on your neighbours just like that. What she needed was proof.

The next time I heard the taxi, I darted out with my camera to catch the blond as she left. She squawked like a seagull and fled back inside. Eventually the taxi left without her.

She's not been back since. Not that they'll thank me. This morning, there was a black bag left out for the bin-men; something poking through the plastic. I went for a closer look. A red-glittered heel had punched a hole through the bag. The husband was getting rid of the evidence.

When I pulled the stiletto out, the sheer size of it shocked me.