

Fatal Mistakes

James enters their newly renovated home at 12 in the morning. It is dark. He sighs as he removes his coat and sits his briefcase down. He takes a moment after his long day. A lamp turns on. Evie sits below it with a gun beside her on the table.

A moment.

James - Honey, I'm home.

Evie - Hi, my love.

I made dinner.

It got cold so I threw it out.

James

(surprised) Oh, uh, I see. Well, that's okay. I'll just find something small to snack on before bed.

(He moves across the room to kiss her. She plays along.)

Evie

Aren't you going to ask me how my day was, dear?

(James crosses to the kitchen. He takes a moment, noticing she's acting strange, then looks at her. He sees the gun.)

James

How was your day, Evie?

Evie

Long. Tiring. *(She sighs and adjusts in her seat.)* I did a lot of cleaning today.

James

Oh, yeah? I see, the house looks great. Thank you, dear.

(She sighs while he shuffles through the refrigerator.)

Why do you have the gun out?

Evie

Oh, just wanted to be careful, you were gone for so long. I didn't want to be helpless if anyone decided to come in uninvited.

(She stares at him for a moment, watching him move about the kitchen.)

Oh, by the way, I folded the towels. I put them away.

(He stares at her.)

James

Where they belong?

Evie

Don't be silly, dear, of course I put them where they belong. I didn't simply leave them out for all to see.

(She cocks her eyebrow up suggestively.)

James

Yes. Ahem. Of course not.

(He turns to the hall.)

James

And they're in the hall closet?

Evie

No, no. You didn't let me finish. I told you, dear. My day was long. I'm so very tired. Domestic chores are hard work. I scrubbed down the kitchen, steamed the tile, vacuumed the carpet. You know, the works. I did the laundry, folded the towels, put them away.

(James moves to pour himself a glass of whiskey while she speaks.)

They didn't all fit, as, if you'll recall, *you* wanted to get some fresh white ones for your mother to visit over the weekend.

So I did some rearranging. I moved the linens from the guest room, you see.

(James turns back to face her.)

James

The guest room.

Evie

Yes, dear. The guest room.

James

And what did you do with the towels?

Evie

I put them in the guest room closet.

James

It seems a bit inconvenient to have to go to the guest room for a towel, dear. Think of any visitors we may have.

Evie

Don't deflect, James. I saw what you put there, in the closet. All wrapped in duct tape like some sad Christmas present. It seems you've forgotten our agreement.

James

Oh, I knew this was coming.

Evie

So why didn't you fix it?

James

(He sighs.) I've had a long and difficult week.

Evie

Oh, *you've* had a long and difficult week?

James

(James spits the word.)

Yes, dear. I have. Jeff is really onto me about getting this project launched, and I'm starting to get really sick of all of this shit. I -

Evie

How about a drink, love? I just bought a new bottle of merlot today, if you'd open that.

(A moment. He stares at her, and she stares back before smiling softly.)

James

Yes. Fine.

(A moment passes while James opens the fresh bottle and pours her a glass.)

Evie

How long did you think you could hide it from me?

James

It's not like it was there long.

Evie

Do you really think that matters?

James

(He sips his whiskey before replying.)

I was going to tell you, dear. I was simply waiting for the right moment.

Evie

(scoffs) Oh, please.

(She takes the glass of wine from him and sips it.)

You wanted to keep it all for yourself, you selfish bastard.

James

Now, surely you know that's not true. Besides, I just got it in Sunday.

Evie

You've had her hidden in our guest room closet all this time??

James

No, no. I got it *in* Sunday, meaning I only...*(searching for the right word)* found her three days ago. She wasn't in the house until last night.

Evie

And just when did you plan to tell me about it?

James

Well I, uh... I was thinking we could spend the whole weekend just toying with it, like we used to. I took off work Friday and Saturday. I thought it would be nice for us.

Evie

Nice?! James, do you see how reckless this is? Do you see that you're risking our freedom, our *livelihood*? We agreed that we would choose them together, that we would only choose the unimportant lowlifes, that we would never, ever, bring them home. Think of the mess!

James

I was trying to surprise you, Evie.
Nothing I do pleases you. Why am I never enough?

Evie

Oh, not this again. James, you broke our arrangement. It was my turn to decide who we pick, and you jumped the gun and got greedy, and brought her *here*!

James

Evie, she's a prostitute, nobody is missing her. She lives a high risk life, it's her own fault. I don't understand why this is such a big deal - I thought I was doing something nice for you -

Evie

A prostitute?! James - that girl in there is no prostitute. Have you seen the news at all lately?

James

What are you talking about? Did you see what she was wearing? Sitting alone on a street corner, waiting around for her next hit-

(Evie turns on the television. A young blonde woman's photo is seen on the news, the newscaster reporting on her recent disappearance.)

Evie

James, that girl you brought to our home, that girl you kidnapped and hid in our closet? She just turned 21, she was celebrating her birthday when she disappeared. Her friends and family and the police have been searching everywhere for her.

James

That-that can't be her. I didn't -

(James stops. There is the faint sound of kicking in the background.)

Evie

(She groans.)

All day, she's been doing that. Ever since I opened that damned door. I had Donna over for breakfast yesterday, James. Imagine if she'd been awake, if Donna heard her!

James

You're right - I'll take care of it. You weren't supposed to see her - I thought she was dirty. I shouldn't have ever brought her in, I shouldn't have -

Evie

No shit, you shouldn't have! God, James, this is bad. This is really bad. This sick little secret of ours - I never should have told you about that side of me, I shouldn't have let you convince me that it'd be okay. We should have just stuck to the fantasy of it all.

James

I'll make this right. I'll take her out, I'll get rid of her. It's still dark out, nobody would see. I'll take her to the old warehouse and just get rid of her.

Evie

(laughs) You are an absolute idiot. She's seen my face already, if she gets away we're done for. The body? The autopsy? We can't just drop her off in the marina with the others - she matters to someone. You really fucked this up for us.

(The TV volume grows louder, as well as the kicking from the closet It builds in intensity as James spirals.)

James

Well fucking shit Evie, don't you think I know that? Fuck - just stop talking for once in your fucking life - I can't think. Turn it off, I can't think - TURN IT OFF!

(James flings the nearest candle holder at the tv, cracking the screen and silencing it. Evie stares at him, shocked by his aggression towards her. James paces around the room, muttering to himself.)

James

Alright, shit. Okay. It's fine, it's fine. We have no other option but to waste the bitch now. Go get her, make her stop all that noise.

Evie

W-what?

James

You fuckin' heard me. Go get her. Now!

Evie

James, don't talk to me like tha-

James

Don't say another god-damned word, Evie. Go get the fucking girl, bring her in here. You're always yapping on and on about how you clean all the fucking time, alright, fine. It's my turn.

(Evie looks at him for a moment, uncertain, before she moves down the hall. She hesitates for a second and grabs a knife off the counter before moving down the hall and into the guest room. A muffled scream is heard.)

Evie

Shut the hell up, if you know what's good for you.

(Evie leads her down the hall, her hands and feet bound with duct tape. Duct tape also covers her mouth. She struggles out into the living room where James waits, still pacing, the gun now in his hand. He finished his glass and poured another.)

A moment.)

James

If only you knew how much trouble you've caused. *(He points the gun at The Girl.)* I'm going to take this tape off your mouth. You scream and I pull this trigger. Understand? *(She nods.)* Good.

(He pulls the tape off of her mouth.)

Now tell me, and *behave*, dammit... what were you doing out on that street corner so late at night?

(She stares at him, shaking and scared. She looks around the room, waits for a moment. She spits in the center of his face before she begins screaming.)

The Girl

Help me! Help me, please, somebody! I've been kidna - *(James smacks her across the face.)*

James

What did I just tell you, you disgusting whore? *(He puts the tape back over her mouth.)* You've caused so much trouble for me, you know that?

Evie

We don't have time for this. Why would you even give her the chance, James?

James

Shut the hell up, Evie! *(He turns to her with the gun.)*

(The Girl, who had been working on loosening the ties around her hands behind her back, watches the two of them.)

Evie

Look, I don't know what's gotten ahold of you lately but you cannot talk to me like this. Sure, this is bad, but I am your *wife*, James, and we agreed when we went to see the counselor that -

James

I can't talk to *you* like this? You mean the way you speak to me all the time? The way you speak to me every night I come home from a long day of work, providing and taking care of *you*? I've had enough of your degrading, your nagging, your pissing moaning and groaning. Do what I say, otherwise we're both fucked and no more of this - any of it!

Evie

This is about more than just the girl.

James

Of course it is! You're impossible to please, Evie! I've had enough of it. I'm done! It's clear that I can't even do something nice for my wife without fucking it up - I'm such a failure, I can't do anything right. Is that what you want to hear Evie? Is that it?

(He cocks the gun and holds it towards Evie. She lets go of The Girl and starts to back away, her hands up.)

Evie

No, James, that's not what I meant - I just - James - think about this - think about who I am, everything we've done together, everything we are to each other.
James. Do you remember our first time together? The way she screamed - the smile that crept up on your face, that look in your eye? James - my handsome man, think about this, baby, please -

(James is spiraling fast. He's muttering to himself, trying to sort things out in his head.)

James

I should've done this a long time ago. I should've...

(James shoots himself in the head and collapses. Evie screams. In the chaos, The Girl breaks her ties off and moves to grab the gun that's fallen on the floor. Evie collapses next to James' body and holds him. The Girl stands up and points the gun at Evie, shaking and ready to shoot. Evie sobs over James. She looks at The Girl.)

Evie

I know how this is going to go... But a word of advice, woman to woman?

(The Girl stares wildly at her.)

If you think for a second that he's not it, you're right. Don't get married.

(The Girl shoots Evie. There is silence. She looks at the gun in her hands, shaking, and puts it on the table. She looks around for a phone, runs to it, and dials 911.)

The Girl

H-hello? I... I need help.

End.