

## The Kiss

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They say it all started two weeks ago at a rave in San Francisco, where drugs and alcohol circulated more rapidly than a rumour. We will probably never find out the true source of this epidemic but we now know how it managed to spread around so quickly: all it needs is a simple kiss.

Yesterday's paper, *The Sunday Gazette*, had a full length report on this plague in its *Observer* section. The article stated that the epidemic was due to an unknown virus that concentrates and incubates in the lips of its victim before spreading throughout the body. The symptoms begin to manifest themselves about 72 hours after an individual has contracted the disease and last two hours before the final stage. The first manifestations are small skin eruptions appearing on the lips, presumably caused by the bursting cells. As the stages progress, every individual cells start exploding in a splash of protoplasm until the last minutes of suffering where the whole body seems to sizzle and leak in a stream of ooze. When the symptoms appear, they say a person would rather commit suicide than endure this tremendous

outburst of pain.

The Kiss, the name that circulates on the street, kills more and more people every day. Today, they proclaimed a state-wide emergency situation, forbidding anyone from kissing. Personally, I would not have to worry about this situation if it was not for my damn wife Helen. Five years we have been married: one great year full of joy and excitement, three declining years where the gap between us widened and one unbearable last year. Nothing can save our marriage now - no children to hold the marital bonds, no more consensus on anything and no more sexual gratification.

The worst part of our relationship today is Helen's fooling around with practically every man she happens to meet. All of our friends know of her little escapades. For a long time I was not convinced until, at a business lunch, I saw her dining out with another man. I witnessed her gratefully acknowledging the young man's advances. Well, now even my lawyer knows about her adulteress relationships and the divorce proceedings would have been finished in less than a month from now.

Unfortunately, the divorce was not enough for me. No ... for personal satisfaction, I had to take my revenge. Why could they not have told us about the Kiss a week earlier? I would have

patiently waited for the court proceedings. No ... I wanted to prove to her, and to myself, that she was not the only one who could attract the opposite sex. What will that nightly escapade cost me now? Everything!

Last Friday night, my wife departed early, excusing herself because of a supposedly business dinner. As anger and disgust started creeping up on me, I decided to escape this feeling by going to Hartley, our favourite night spot before we tied the knot. Passing the well-dressed bouncer, I proceeded through the crowd to reach the bar at the end. As I was about to sit down, she caught my eye. This pale brunette in a short flashy green dress was bent over trying to tie the fine strap of her black high heel shoe. Still working on her lace, she glanced at me and flashed the kind of smile that melts you. The gleam in her eyes brought back my boyhood confidence. My appearance had not changed much since my university days, but until she looked at me, I had no idea how my charm stood up to marriage. I started my approach.

Later that night as we were standing at the foot of her twin bed, she started our blissful reunion with an invigorating kiss. It would prove to be deadly.

Saturday night, as my wife was out with friends, I called June, the previous night's dream girl. Expecting a sultry voice ready for some lively action, the sobbing on the line took me by surprise. June's roommate told me that she had slit her wrist that afternoon. Apparently she had found out she had the Kiss and preferred to let her life flow down the drain.

Now, with probably no more than six hours before the symptoms start to appear, what will I do? It's not even my fault; it's Helen's. It's because of her I had the affair. All I wanted was a little personal revenge. And now, because of one night, I will die while she will be free as a bird. She is lucky if she does not already have the Kiss. Anyway, sooner or later it is going to catch up to her. I suppose it might as well be sooner. Why should she continue having affairs while my body, like a time bomb, is getting ready to explode? She is not going to have it that easy!

"Honey, I know we have our differences right now, but just to show you that I don't hold a grudge, let me give you a kiss."

The End