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Level 2

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Within High Fences

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Chapter 1 *Night work*

There was nothing different about that night. It was the same as every other night, I thought. But that night, my life started to change. I didn't know it then, but I know it now.

It was a January evening and it was cold and dark. I was leaving to go to work and I was wearing my uniform. Tom, my boyfriend, was watching a DVD.

'Bye, Tom,' I said.

He didn't answer.

'Tom?'

'You know I don't like you working at night,' he said. He said this every night. He kissed me, but the kiss felt cold.



I walked out of the front door. We lived in a comfortable new house in Greenwich, South East London. I thought I knew who I was. I thought I knew what I wanted. I had Tom . . . my man. He was older than me, tall with blond hair and blue eyes. He liked buying me things – clothes, shoes, jewellery – expensive things. For my eighteenth birthday he gave me a gold watch.

We met when I was at school. I wanted to be a writer then. Tom laughed at me. He told me writers were intelligent. ‘You’re not intelligent,’ he said. ‘You’re beautiful, but you’re not intelligent.’ And I believed him.

I moved in with him when I finished school. I didn’t think about the rest of my life. I thought I was in love. Tom was all I wanted.

That night I started the car and drove through the dark. It was very cold. As I drove I thought about Tom. I put my hand up to my face. I could feel his cold kiss on my cheek.

Tom said the night was his time with me. He said I didn’t need to work. It wasn’t a great job but I liked the money. And I liked shopping. Now I could buy the things *I* wanted. For the first time in my life, I was earning some money. For the first time in my life, I didn’t need Tom for everything.