

KIMBRA

BY ZACK SCHUSTER



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KIMBRA



It was morning. He woke up and she was right across from him, sleeping peacefully, snuggled into the thick white downy comforter. He brushed a few strands of her thin black hair from her nose, which caused her nose to wiggle. She didn't wake up. He slowly slid the covers away and creeped out of bed.

The ground was cold on his bare feet. The air was cold on his bare skin. He was in a t-shirt and tidy-whities and nothing more. He tiptoed over to the bathroom and closed the door quietly. A minute or so later and the shower turned on, finally waking her up.

It was 9 am. If she wanted she could wait a couple more hours before she absolutely had to go. She flopped over on her back, spreading her arms out over the bedding, her fingers absently twirling at the sheets. She stared at the stucco ceiling, her wide smile stretching her soft face hard. It had been a good night.

But honestly, she couldn't stay.

She dressed herself in her day-old clothes and tiptoed out the bedroom door. A minute or so later the shower turned off, and he couldn't find her for the rest of the day.

When nighttime calls on me, I know I'll never be free

It was night. He woke up and she was right across from him, sleeping fitfully, clutching the thin black wool blanket. He moved to brush some hair away from her nose, but she flipped over on her side. He tried to touch her at all, but, her eyes screwed shut, she shoved away his hand. He'd seen this before.

He laid back the covers and sat on the edge of the bed. The ground was cold, and he was tired of feeling it. He got up and went into the bathroom and sat on the toilet. He left the door open so he could keep an eye on her. Or, maybe, she'd wake up and see him and wonder what's going on. Maybe.

She never seemed to wonder.

He rubbed at the thick dark rings under his eyes. His eyes hurt. His feet were still cold. Why didn't he ever put socks on? There weren't any lying on the ground among the scattered remnants of a laundry basket he had thrown into a wall yesterday. Or was it the day before?

He glanced over at her. She was still flopping back and forth. He wondered if he'd need to wash the sweat off the sheets again. He'd probably do it anyway, if but to do something.

Maybe he'd buy new sheets altogether.

But he knew he couldn't stay.

Not right now, at least. He couldn't stand the sight of her right now, and he needed to get away. For now, at least. Just a short drive.

He closed the bathroom door and, dressed in some day-old clothes, he disappeared. When she finally woke up she looked around briefly for him before curling up against the wall. She settled for crying herself back to sleep.

He didn't come back for quite some time. He came back, though.



Everything was brown. He didn't know what time of day it was, and every clock was broken. He just knew it was daytime. Middle-of-the-day time, or thereabouts. Something like that. He had been in the bathroom for way too long doing nothing at all, just killing time. Meanwhile, she was off napping somewhere.

She woke up. She was on the dirty old couch. She had been doing something - what? - and then she fell asleep. She had dreamed about him. She wasn't sure about anything else in the dream, except that it felt good.

She blinked and rubbed at her eyes as they slowly readjusted to the room. She sat upright and thought about calling for him, but decided against it. She wanted to feel her dream for a bit longer.

He found her lying into the couch, her neck arched over the back, her eyes closed, her arms listlessly claiming the couch's real estate. He smiled and, tiptoeing over to her, slowly straddled himself on top of her. She opened her eyes and smiled up at him.

"Hey there, darling."

He smiled back. "Hey there."

He reached up and brushed some of her hair away from her nose. She wiggled it at him. He leaned in and kissed her. They held it for a while.

They were interrupted by her phone buzzing in between her legs.

"Oh, it's time for us to go." She showed the phone to him. They really had to go.

He tossed the phone away and shook his head at her.

They smiled at each other and kissed again.

As they did, she remembered her dream. It was exactly this, except this was way better. She kissed him deeper.