

Family

She comes home late and stands in the living-room, checking her BlackBerry. Three e-mails have arrived since she stepped through the front door. The first is from her principal secretary, confirming two important breakfasts the following morning. The second is from a teenage moviestar who she fucked at a party the week before; he wants to take her to dinner any night she's free. The third is from her secretary's secretary, telling her that she's already got another job lined up and it's a hell of a lot better than working for her any day of the week so she can go screw herself. She deletes two of them before looking across the room where her three year-old son is sitting on the floor, entranced by his favourite TV show, a piece of scheduling she cancelled a few hours ago. He looks as if he's barely breathing and from where she's standing she can almost see the reflection of the show he's watching in his eyes. She opens her mouth to say something to him but stops herself quickly; if she distracts him he'll only want to talk to her and she's too tired for any of that needy shit tonight so she walks into the kitchen where her husband is cooking dinner. She hasn't seen him or spoken to him in four days; she keeps long hours.

'That's not pasta, is it?' she asks by way of a hello. 'I'm no-carbs this week.' He looks across at her and shakes his head before picking up the remote for the CD player and turning the volume up. She has no idea what he's listening to. Some country and western crap. 'That's giving me a headache,' she says, even though it isn't. She just wants it switched off, that's all. He turns the volume down again but starts to sing along as he slices tomatoes. She takes a bottle of water from the fridge and goes to the bedroom.

There's a photograph by the dressing table of the three of them on holiday in the Bahamas a couple of years ago. She's smiling at the camera, he's smiling at her, the baby looks cranky. She stares at it for a moment before picking it up; she can't believe she'd put a picture on display where she looks so fat. She pulls the photograph out of the frame, opens a drawer, takes out a pair of scissors and cuts it straight down the middle, crumpling the half that holds her picture before throwing it in the bin; she places the rest, the part that captures her husband and son, back in the frame and centres it. She's cut it neatly, there's no jagged edge. She's still looking at it when he comes in and tells her that her BlackBerry just buzzed in the kitchen. She nods and follows him out, feeling better already.