

Possession

by Francesca Ryan

He shook his head at Kim's interruption.

"I'm not in a bad mood. I just need the space to finish this, that's all. The process of writing is a little like madness, a kind of possession not altogether benign."

"Oh Paul, please. You think you're some kind of shaman now?" she laughed, "get over yourself." It wasn't a kind laugh. "Or take your precious scribbles upstairs and leave the kitchen to me. I've got stuff to do."

He carefully replaced the screwtop on the Sainsbury's Taste the Difference Merlot and looked at Kim. She marched towards him, took the bottle from the table, unscrewed it and poured an enormous glass for herself.

"Steady now Kim, we don't want a repeat performance."

Paul's a writer. Or as his agent describes it, an Author. Paul O'Hara. Fuelled by every cliché in the book, if you'll pardon the pun. He likes his booze and cigs. And domestic drama, of course. Kim provides plenty of that. Look at her now.

Let's look at Kim then. Pouring the rest of the Merlot down the sink in front of him. Watch as she pours a stream of purple into the big white ceramic basin with blue inlay. It was made for them especially. They can afford that kind of interiors magazine detail; they aren't on a meagre income.

She's being melodramatic of course. And he will write about it. Merlot melodrama; sounds suspiciously alliterative doesn't it. And 'suspiciously alliterative' has too much internal rhyme. All signs of a second-rate writer. He's a bit of a banal writer is Paul. Though what about my own style? A double B there; 'bit of a banal.' Not so marvellous myself. I'm a different thing of course. I'm not a writer. I'm a diary, I'm the *thing that's written*, not the composer of it.

"You really are a first rank narcissist, Paul."

Kim can tell by Paul's thunderous face that she's pushed it. She slumps down at the kitchen table, aware that she's gone too far. She watches him as he gets up and carefully puts his workbook to one side.

"Not everyone who disagrees with you is a narcissist, Kim."

His voice had taken on that quiet level. Ominous. Calm before the storm. Kim waited, not looking at him anymore. He went over to the yellow Welsh dresser and took down another bottle of Merlot, placing it on the table in front of himself.

“I’m going to sit here and get on with my work, Kim. My work. Which pays for all of this. You are going to sit next door. Or go for a walk. I don’t care which. Leave me alone please.”

Kim shook her head and was about to say something. Instead, she noisily scraped back her chair. She slowly stepped pointedly over to the kitchen door and left. Leaning back into the table, he pulled his work over towards himself again.

It’s the kind of set-to that happens regularly in some form or another with them. They thrive on it, Paul and Kim. No need to be concerned for them. They are not unhappy. I should know, I’m always here on the top dresser shelf. The diary. I have a thick brown cover. They know I’m here. No, not written by either of them; I just am. Why shouldn’t I be? Paul, I know, would claim me as a shamanic offshoot of his own creative process. Well, perhaps I am his ‘shamanistic offshoot’; note the shocking alliteration cropping up again. He’s not as good as he thinks he is. Mind you, Kim has been known to write herself. Not so dusty either, if you ask me. She goes to that big Victorian library, preferring to do it away from the house. She takes her laptop, and never talks about it with Paul. One creative in the house is enough. There’s no room for two, with that kind of madness.

And certainly not three.