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UNFATHOMED STORIES BY RICHARD KOSTELANETZ

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Just as I was finally enjoying sex with my husband, the bastard deserted me.

Around his fortieth birthday, when he realized a full biography would be written about him, he began to preserve certain documents, while destroying many others, preferring that such a book be more innocent than interesting.

The most recurring figure in her fiction is her bossy mother, sometimes disguised as a man.

I thought she was calling her dog, but out of the forest came a man who seemed mute.

It is a place where the shit hits you every morning, just as you wake up.

I've always been distrustful of people whose personalities change once they come into professional power or success, who think that their new importance grants them exemption from human niceties.

By coming to dinner parties alone, I make myself vulnerable to every husband's paranoid fantasies about good-looking lesbians.

He invented a machine, a kind of thermometer, that he thought could measure not the quantity but the quality of affection he felt for each woman in his life.

Looking at his pudginess now, you could hardly believe that only ten years ago the professor was a notorious lady-killer.

Only if she lived apart from her husband could she keep her vices secret.

Her principal critical talent, upon which she based her university career, was the superior understanding of inferior texts.

Some of his writing was aimed at peers he knew; most was written for an audience neither he, his colleagues, nor his editors wished to meet.

At least once a day I had to tell someone, anyone, that my new boss, notorious though he had been, was far more likeable than expected.

He was continually throwing things out; he knew there would never be any need for 99 percent of the junk that came his way.

Her psychiatrist told her that she could best sustain her marriage by making herself permanently unavailable to her husband.

Into her consciousness her parents injected high expectations that, try as hard as she might, would never be fulfilled.

He had a complicated domestic life, with his wife in one city, his favorite mistress in another and his young children in a third.

Thanks to help from the men she befriended, she advanced rapidly in the bureaucracy and earned the envy of other women.

When I stopped to pick up my mail, I was offered a big box, almost too heavy to carry, whose return address and thus the name of its sender were unfamiliar to me.

He was such a flagrant philanderer you wondered why his wife didn't leave him.

Though her diet required that she abstain from the evening meal, tonight she made an exception that was noticed by one and all.

He knows that none of us had ever before met anyone quite so tall; his height would distract us from knowing him well or discovering the real reason for his befriending us.

As the country's most famous artist entered the Queen's chamber, all eyes turned to her bare feet.

He differed from the other men courting her in having an intriguing reputation for erotic research ignored by everyone else.

Alone on the road, I was feeling so depressed I changed a ten-dollar bill into a stack of quarters that I hysterically stuffed into pay telephones.

As she heard that the residents of a neighboring town belonged to another "tribe," she was surprised to discover that they were human beings just like her.

While her suspicions about there being another woman in my life were essentially correct, most of her hunches about who and how and when were all wrong.

He wouldn't let you into her house unless he thought you'd accept his claim that the large bottles of water in his living room came, as he said, from a fountain of youth.

Like all true stories, this begins in the middle.

For reasons unforeseen, it took me more than eighty days to go around the world without ever leaving the earth, which is to say resorting to an airplane.

They were a bunch of professors who, while each had good taste as individuals, could be trusted to be collectively stupid.

Half the numbers on my long distance telephone bill were to places unfamiliar to me; and since I lived alone, I wondered how they got there.

Some of the art he inherited could be sold; most could only be given away.

Even though all of the successes anyone could have come his way, he still regarded himself as a struggling young author who needed everyone's help to survive.

He sought older women who would be less surprised by his odd sexual tastes.

In his father's home movies he saw a person he could not connect to himself--a young man who was normal in all visible respects.

What I want most of all in a wife is someone who remembers everything I forget.

He had more successes than anyone else he knew and more failures as well and so wondered whether the gnawing dialectic would ever be resolved.

It was the first time I ever loved a woman taller than I--two inches she said, five inches I felt--and it had more psychological effects upon me than I instantly knew.

Once out of solitary confinement, he sat down at a typewriter and wrote out of his own head the poem he had committed to memory, a poem that a century later every child now learns in school.

What she couldn't understand is how she happened to fall in love with someone who was neither intelligent nor good-looking.

You didn't know how he spent each day, but you were sure that whatever he did would eventually land both him and his wife in jail.

Since my wife had hired several burly bodyguards, I figured that I as her estranged husband needed a few as well.

What should I think, and what should I do, about the piece of fruit that is being offered to me?

This was not a neighborhood through which you walked to get to someplace else; you wanted something to happen while you were there.

He feared that every success that came his way would only make the shitheads controlling his fate ever more envious.

He first met her half way up the mountain and, even though she turned back, held no prejudice against her when they happened to meet again.

Eschewing all underwear, she also flaunted skirts favored by women half her age.

She'd not only bought the Brooklyn Bridge; she had visionary plans for developing the surrounding real estate.

I can't spend the night with you, dear love; I have a job interview in the morning.

What would be required, pray tell, for you to give me, an unknown actor, top billing?

Wouldn't you know that he'd think me, an invalid, the man who stole his wife.

As the personal assistant to such a famous man, I get to witness a lot of celebrity secrets.

Don't you want to let me make you feel like someone who has just discovered America?

I don't sleep with my employees; the mere thought of exploiting people over whom I have power is disquieting.

He had sufficient discretionary power to change his loyalties with the seasons.

Which would you prefer, if given the choice--a doctor who has had your disease or one who hadn't.

He called her his "steeplechase lover," so adept was she at leaping over obstacles.

The advantage of having no scruples at the beginning is that you can adopt whichever ones suit your needs.

Since the enemy's spies had infiltrated the government of a neighboring country, there was reason to believe them present in ours as well.

What he saw on the television screen, talking back to him in live time, was his own face ten years later.

What he needed to know before he would make their divorce final was which of his wife's children were his and which were fathered by another man.

What a surprise it was to discover that older women were better in bed; they knew how to take care not only for you but themselves.

He liked boxing as a sport very much like writing--for failures you had no one to blame but yourself.

What must a lady do to get such rich lingerie--"pay or play?"

Even though he screwed up every estate his colleagues bestowed on him, my lawyer got another opportunity from his favorite brother.

"Don't you enjoy," I said, thinking you desire whatever you can imagine deserving yourself.

The rain was beating on the roof until I opened the door to go outside and discovered that it had abruptly stopped.

Once I got divorced and returned to living with my parents I became the obnoxious spoiled child they hadn't known before.

When I changed my name to something more pronounceable, I made many more friends.

Though we looked like twins, my sister and I were born 10 months apart.

With breasts so naturally large I'm continually looking for clothes that would reveal they aren't false.

Because the university accepting me was pleased to advertise my attendance there (and nowhere else), my teachers were instructed to make my classes easy for me and indeed nearly all of them did..

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