

The Box

By

Amy Armstrong

INT. BAR - NIGHT

KATHERINE, a wealthy woman in her 50's sits at the bar, drinking a glass of wine.

A man walks in, we can't see his face.

KATHERINE looks up. She smiles seductively at him.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - LATE AFTERNOON / EVENING

KATHERINE opens the front door to her house carrying shopping bags in both hands. She is holding her mobile phone to her ear with her shoulder.

KATHERINE
(On the phone)
Yes... yes I know darling.

KATHERINE closes the door with her foot and walks down the hallway, struggling with her bags.

KATHERINE
(On the phone)
No your father's away this weekend...
no, golfing, wouldn't you know.

INT. KITCHEN - LATE AFTERNOON / EVENING

KATHERINE enters the kitchen and places her bags on the counter top.

KATHERINE
(On the phone)
He'll be back tomorrow afternoon. Mhm?
Yes, yes I know.

She starts unpacking her shopping bags, placing items in the fridge.

KATHERINE
(On the phone)
You were here earlier? I didn't know
you were coming down, you should have
said! I haven't seen you in a while.

KATHERINE finishes putting her groceries away and grabs the phone in her hand. She sighs.

KATHERINE
(On the phone)
No, no, it's fine.

She kicks off her heels.

KATHERINE
(On the phone)
What box?

Perplexed, she glances over towards the kitchen table. A small cardboard box is sitting solitary.

KATHERINE
(On the phone)
Yes I see it. Where was it?

KATHERINE walks towards the table, inquisitively. She studies the box which is addressed to KATHERINE RICHARDS.

KATHERINE
(On the phone)
Thanks for bringing it in. Anyway, I need to go- Okay, yes.. alright, bye, bye.

She sets her phone down on the table and picks up the box.

She studies it for a few seconds before carrying it over to the counter and setting it down.

She grabs a wine glass and a bottle from the fridge. She opens the bottle and pours herself a glass before taking a sip.

KATHERINE pauses for a few seconds. She sighs, then grabs a knife from the cutlery drawer and cuts along the edges.

She opens the box and glares inside.

Beat.

She carefully places her hand inside the box and pulls out a photograph. Her expression stoic.

Beat.

She closes the box shut, grabs it, and throws it in the bin. She inhales deeply before returning to her glass of wine - she picks it up and finishes the remaining liquid in the glass.

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

KATHERINE is sitting at her desk, glasses propped on the bridge of her nose, looking through paperwork.

She pauses for a moment and looks up, unfocused, before shaking it off and returning to reading.

Beat.

KATHERINE hastily gets up from her desk and walks out of the room.

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

KATHERINE enters the kitchen and walks over towards the bin. She takes the box out of the bin.

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Katherine sets the cardboard box on the table.

Slowly, she begins to open it.

She takes the out photographs one by one and sets them on the desk in an orderly fashion. She stands, towering over them.

Each photo is of her husband with other women, most of them considerably younger.

KATHERINE glares expressionlessly.

Beat.

Suddenly distracted, she catches a glimpse of something at the bottom of the box.

She pulls out a cassette recorder and headset from the box, baffled, she inspects the cassette before putting the headphones on. She sits down on the sofa and presses play.

The tape rolls. A muffled voice can be heard; it's her husband. A woman is giggling, she sounds young. Him: "You're so beautiful, you know that?" Her: "Oh..thank you". She laughs, awkwardly. Him: "How about we take our drinks up to my room, hm?", Her: "Oh...I thought you were married?". He sighs, "Don't worry about that, hm? She doesn't need to know" She giggles, "That's very naughty". Him: "Well, I hope you're a very naughty girl" She giggles. Him:"I want to fuck you so bad-"

KATHERINE, disgusted, pulls off the headphones and furiously removes the tape from the cassette, throwing it on the floor in a rage.

Now crying, she puts her head in her hands.

Beat.

She runs her hands through her hair and takes a deep breath, composing herself.

Beat.

Wiping the tears from her eyes, KATHERINE slowly gets up from the sofa and returns to the photos on the desk.

KATHERINE
(Whispering to herself)
Who sent these?

She lifts one of the photos and inspects it, turning it over to reveal writing on the back, containing the date, time and place it was taken.

She flips over each photo; they all have the same handwriting.

KATHERINE
(Quietly, with sudden realisation)
I know you.

KATHERINE frantically checks through cards on the mantelpiece - none of the handwriting matches.

She paces.

Beat.

Suddenly, she runs upstairs and grabs a ladder from the spare room.

INT. ATTIC - EVENING

KATHERINE opens the attic hatch and disappears up inside.

She searches hectically through old boxes.

Finally she stops, lifting a letter out of one of the boxes. She opens it. It is the same handwriting.

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

She returns downstairs and places the letter on the desk beside the photographs.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

It's dark out. Rain pouring down on the car, KATHERINE sits in the driver's seat. The car is stopped. She looks out of the side window.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

KATHERINE gets out of the car and marches up the driveway. She rings the doorbell and waits, raindrops running down her face.

A middle aged man opens the door.

ANTHONY

(In shock)

Katherine?

KATHERINE

Why did you send them?

ANTHONY

Send what... I don't know what you're talking about-

KATHERINE

I *know* it was you.

ANTHONY

Katherine you're soaked, please, come inside-

KATHERINE

I'm not going anywhere near you, just answer the question.

ANTHONY

Katherine, *please*, just come inside-

KATHERINE

Stop avoiding the question.

ANTHONY

(Exasperated)

Fine! Just *please* come inside.

She hesitates for a second.

KATHERINE

Fine.

KATHERINE walks inside.

INT. MAN'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

He closes the door.

ANTHONY

You're soaking-

KATHERINE

I'm fine-

ANTHONY

I'll get you a towel-

He walks towards the kitchen, she follows.

KATHERINE

No, just listen-

INT. ANTHONY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

He picks up a towel from a pile of freshly folded laundry on the kitchen table.

KATHERINE

(Demanding attention)

Anthony!

He stops.

Beat.

He looks up at her. She is standing facing him at the opposite side of the room.

KATHERINE

Why?

Beat.

ANTHONY

You deserved to know the truth.

KATHERINE

So you've taken up stalking my

husband?

ANTHONY
It's not like that-

KATHERINE
Isn't it?

Beat.

KATHERINE
You just can't let things go, can you?
It's pathetic.

ANTHONY
Sorry, *I'm* the bad guy here?

KATHERINE
(Furiously)
My marriage is none of *your* business!

ANTHONY shakes his head and turns away from her.

KATHERINE
What makes you think you have right to
go poking about in someone else's
business?

He takes a bottle of whiskey from the cabinet and pours
himself a glass.

ANTHONY
I was only trying to help.

She scoffs at him.

KATHERINE
Are you listening to yourself?

ANTHONY
Have you any idea how hard it is to
sit back and do nothing knowing he's
disrespecting you like this?

KATHERINE
Do you seriously think I'm that stupid
that I didn't know all of this? It's
been over thirty years Tony, you need
to move on.

ANTHONY
Sorry, you knew?

KATHERINE
Yes.

ANTHONY
Unbelievable.

KATHERINE
What?

ANTHONY
You're *so* predictable.

KATHERINE
What's that supposed to mean?

ANTHONY walks away from her.

ANTHONY
Nothing.

KATHERINE follows him.

INT. ANTHONY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

KATHERINE
No, go on.

ANTHONY
You'd rather be miserable and keep up this whole facade of the 'perfect power couple' than leave him.

KATHERINE
How *dare* you! This isn't about me, I have children to think about-

ANTHONY
Your *children* aren't *children* anymore, they're *adults*.

KATHERINE
(With force)
You know *nothing* about my marriage! I am *not* miserable. I don't need your pity. I don't need you to come and save me Tony. I am *fine*! *We* are fine. We work. Somehow. I don't know. But we *work*. And that's *all* that matters.

Beat.

KATHERINE

I don't know what you thought was going to happen. Everything was *fine* until you had to interfere.

ANTHONY

You were the one who *wanted* to fuck.

Katherine is silent.

ANTHONY

I *had* moved on, *years* ago.

He paces, exasperated.

ANTHONY

Have you any idea how long it took me to get over you? You broke my fucking heart Katherine, and there was no escape from you- no. Television, newspapers, events- you were always there... with him.

Katherine looks guilty.

ANTHONY

And then, slowly, I started to miss you just a little less every day... until eventually... I stopped missing you. Stopped loving you.

Beat.

ANTHONY

And then I see you that night, sitting there, like you were waiting for me. The way you looked at me, like you were longing for me. Like you *needed* me.

KATHERINE looks down, uncomfortable.

KATHERINE

I was drunk.

ANTHONY shakes his head in disbelief, he laughs.

ANTHONY

Are you serious Katherine? That's what

you're going with?

KATHERINE is silent.

ANTHONY shakes his head before finishing his whiskey.

He walks towards the kitchen, KATHERINE follows.

INT. ANTHONY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

ANTHONY pours himself another whiskey.

KATHERINE stands at the door.

KATHERINE

I'm sorry.

ANTHONY looks at her with disgust.

ANTHONY

You have to be one of the most
narcissistic, egocentric, conceited
people I have ever met.

He takes a swig of whiskey and turns to look at her.

ANTHONY

How did you know I was going to be
there, Katherine?

Beat.

KATHERINE

(She smiles)

You're a creature of habit.

KATHERINE fidgets, unable to maintain eye contact.

They stand facing each other.

ANTHONY

Why him, Katherine?

KATHERINE

I like my life as it is.

I like the respect, and yes, maybe I
do like the status and power. I worked
so hard for this 'perfect' life. To be
seen, to be heard. He could give me
that.

ANTHONY stares at her, bewildered.

ANTHONY
Do love him?

KATHERINE
We work.

ANTHONY
But do y-

KATHERINE
We work. And that's enough. A marriage
is a lifelong commitment.

Beat.

ANTHONY
Why did you sleep with me Katherine?

KATHERINE fidgets uncomfortably.

KATHERINE
I missed you.

Beat.

KATHERINE
I missed the way you made me feel. I
wanted to be held, to be touched. To
feel desired, is that such a bad
thing?

Tears roll down her face.

KATHERINE
But that feeling, that *need* to be
wanted... *never* goes away.

ANTHONY looks at KATHERINE empathetically.

Slowly, ANTHONY walks towards KATHERINE, before stopping in
front of her.

ANTHONY places his hand under KATHERINE'S chin and tilts her
head up to look at him.

There is an atmosphere.

ANTHONY gently kisses her.

Beat.

KATHERINE kisses him back.

They kiss, passionately.

KATHERINE
(Pulling away)
I'm not going to leave him.

Beat.

ANTHONY
I know.

They continue kissing.

CUT TO:

INT. ANTHONY'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

ANTHONY is sleeping next to KATHERINE on his bed.

She is wide awake, staring up at the ceiling.

KATHERINE'S phone vibrates. Its her husband calling - a
'perfect' picture of them posing at a gala pops up.

She pauses for a moment.

KATHERINE declines the call and rolls over, nuzzling into
ANTHONY.

THE END.