

Under the night

Richard Hill

Steve is a 36 year old gay man, living and working in West London. He lives with his civil partner Gary. They live in a classy semi-detached house, also in West London. He likes to keep himself 'in shape'. He eats well, preferring organic, locally sourced food and 'fair trade' foodstuffs.

At work, he wears a smart suit and shirt with a plain tie and presents as a smart erudite educated individual, teaching media studies to a group of young diverse and different groups of students. He is patient with their demands on his intellect and integrity. His students try his patience but he always keeps his cool and composure.

His ambition is to be promoted. He aspires to be a Senior Lecturer, then a Head of Media and eventually a College Principal. One thing above all else, at work, he keeps his sexuality to himself, defending and demanding that it is no-one else's business, especially a class of disorderly and probable homophobic individuals. His 'gaydar' usually indicates instinctively who is likely to be a 'closeted' gay. But no-one here is, or so he believes.

At home, he and Gary live quite an ordinary life. Gary, 33 and unemployed, looks after their home, does the household chores and cooks their meals. On Saturdays, they go shopping together at the local supermarket. They unintentionally reveal themselves as a gay couple, because no couple of straight men would argue about which brand of tomato sauce to buy the way these two do.

However, in his own time and in his own space and by late nights he becomes a completely contrasting character which Gary absolutely accepts and agrees to. In this other 'world' Steve is a master and demanding of submissive, passive and obedient 'men' before him. He dresses completely differently, rough ripped denim jeans, a leather biker jacket with biker boots and carries the aroma of musk. His nighttime environment becomes a backroom bar in some seedy sex club in the darker part of the city. He strides in, confident in his surroundings. He takes up his place in the deepest and darkest corner of the club. Around him are similarly dressed leathermen, sidling past other men and some standing behind stacks of black oil

drums. Occasionally, a man pauses in front of him and stares at him but with a longing look in his eyes. This man wants him, but the feeling is not reciprocated.

He stays in the club until 1.30 am and then leaves and moves on to the nearby heavily wooded park where men cruise each other for sex in the darkness. Some are embraced in pairs, some having sex with other men, while others look on. This is a secret unseen world of extreme and intense gay ritual.

Steve has to be extremely careful. If he were to be caught, that could blow his career out of the water. He insists on not making the first move, no matter how much he wants to.

Suddenly Steve recognises a young man cruising him. He sees that it's one of his students from college. He freezes, unsure of how to react. Has he been recognised in return? He's not sure, but he won't reciprocate the sexual advances of this man. Suddenly, Steve wants to be anywhere but here. Suddenly he is. He wakes up.

-ENDS-

565 words

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