

## Regs

Before unlocking the door, Derek likes staring in the portal window for a long time, watching Jack watching Jill as they huddle in their chairs near the giant monitor. They wear shirts in anticipation of his arrival.

Jack can't move but he speaks a language Jill gets. Jill speaks words in slow motion. She can move her arms. She points at the penis on the screen, jumping and falling, jumping and falling, the woman's hair something like wet.

Derek lifts Jack out of his Tracer SX and lays him down on the double bed. Jill grins with purpose as Derek removes Jack's long sleeve shirt. Jack's face and head are shaven. Only the front of Jack's face is without ink.

After college, I moved back home to Orange County. I didn't know what I wanted to do with my life. I'd been an English major, so I was thinking things through. I figured I'd call around for local work. Soon enough, I'm sending day nurses into the field. To hell with the regs, says my boss every time. Send Derek.

Derek knows I once followed him. He told me the drill never changes. Jill sends a laser into the pan of her Mariner chair. With deliberate ceremony, she takes off her shirt and bra. She has small formless legs, so soft that their white flesh holds the puncture of Derek's grip for minutes.

Everything I say here is true. Even the names. Against state regulations, Derek lifts Jill into the harness hung by a pulley above the bed. Its seat has three holes, two for her legs. Jack's erection points at the harness. I once told Derek, Listen, I didn't think they could get them. His eyes smiled as he shrugged.

Now Derek goes to the crank on the wall and lowers Jill down on Jack. Adjustments are necessary. Derek maneuvers the harness so Jack and Jill are one. Derek admitted he's disturbed by the way her alabaster legs—that's the word he always uses, *alabaster*—contrast with Jack's blue and red tattoos of underworld demons, human limbs dangling from their teeth.

Derek goes to the crank and turns the handle back and forth. It seems like a dream, he says. Sometimes slowly, sometimes fast. Jill no longer has to tell him. Jack doesn't make that gurgle. Derek can read their minds. I'm thinking things through. My boss doesn't want to know any more than he has to.

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