

S E C R E T S

B Y L E W I S S H I N E R

THEY'D BEEN MARRIED 16 days.

Michael spent a lot of time in the bathroom, as some of her other boyfriends had. So maybe it wasn't entirely an accident when Teresa walked in that night without knocking.

"Sorry," she smiled. "I didn't know—"

Michael was leaning over the lavatory, fully dressed. He had an index finger under each eyelid, pulling it down. A stream of blood poured out of the underside of each eye into the sink.

"Michael?" she whispered.

He turned to look at her. His eyes were rolled back in his head and blood flowed down his cheeks like dark red tears. "GET OUT!" he roared.

In panic she reverted to Spanish: "*¡Lo siento, lo siento!* I'm sorry!"

When he came to bed it was like nothing had happened. He kissed her forehead and went back to reading his trial transcript. He didn't ask why she shivered at the sight of him.

It was a week before she let him make love to her again. He was so gentle and insistent that she finally gave in. Afterwards, while he slept, she stared at him in the moonlight, searching for strangeness, for some kind of explanation.

She never walked in on him unexpectedly again. As the years went by and she failed to get pregnant she wondered, sometimes, if that was meaningful, if it was related to what she'd seen. The thing that was never mentioned, the thing she tried to tell herself she'd only imagined. The thing she could never forget.

In the end it was Michael who left her. In the ten years they'd been together, he didn't seem to have aged a day. He left her for a younger woman, of course. Teresa thought about calling the woman, trying to warn her, but what could she say?

The feeling eventually passed. Teresa remarried, an older man, a man with few demands or expectations. They had a lovely home, gave many parties, and slept in separate beds.