

## Banking

Short story by Allison Fine  
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She was always so scared to make a mistake that she made too many of them anyway. It was inevitable. Her husband was constantly on guard to catch her mistakes. She did not want him to notice that she was anxious about it, but she was always anxious about it and always making mistakes. The wrong addresses, checks made out to one company in another company's envelope, miscalculating the bank balance in their checkbook, the wrong kind of whiskey. She was cautious about life. It had not merely passed her by, it hadn't turned down her street at all. She figured if she took her time, was cautious and careful eventually she would go to heaven. She just didn't want to die early to find out and there was a funny feeling in her throat every time she thought about it.

Time was running out, she felt and she'd better grab some gusto soon otherwise she might go to hell planning to go to heaven.

Whenever she corrected a mistake her husband would point out what a lot of time was wasted doing this and wouldn't it be better if she didn't make the mistake in the first place? She would answer him calmly, in her unhurried, nurturing manner:

“Yes, Gordie, that's true, but I do try!”

“Well, the road to hell is paved with good intentions, Norma,” he would say and leave her to ponder whether good intentions were enough to save her or not. Most of the time she concluded they were not, and it was at these moments that a spree of mistakes would explode from her, outside of her control. She felt intimidated by some unseen

force that made her mess things up. It was frustrating and depressing and ultimately drove her to drink.

It didn't matter, then, which bottle of whiskey she got, because she drank them all. Being an alcoholic gave her an excellent excuse to make as many mistakes as she wanted.

Gordie noticed her drinking and starting picking up the slack in many areas. He took over the checkbook, the bill paying, the grocery shopping and even the housekeeping. She was too juiced to make dinner when he got home, so he often ate out or brought in something.

On one of these eating-out excursions he met Sally Sear, a good girl with blonde curls and an easy laugh. Sally didn't give a hoot whether she made mistakes or not. It wasn't her business. She was in sales and all she had to do was sell. She sold wholesale vitamins and health related products, handling the entire northwest region. Her sales were so good she had been made district manager.

Their second dinner out Sally tried to sell Gordie some Yohimbe Bark for dramatically improving his sexual performance. Not that he needed it, he thought. Still, Gordie was performance oriented, so he agreed to try it out.

“But, who do I use it on?” he asked slyly.

Sally chose to ignore this.

“Try it on your wife--I'm sure she'll appreciate it.”

“She's usually too loaded to appreciate anything,” he said, taking a large gulp from his Bloody Mary.

“Well, and whose fault is that?” Sally asked. He was so easy for her, she could make him uncomfortable any time she wanted. It was easy to make men uncomfortable and it was beginning to bore her.

“Not mine, I assure you,” Gordie said as their food was brought to the table.

“Well, I always believe that if a woman drinks it’s because the man just doesn’t listen to her or know how to please.”

“I pleased her plenty. She just can’t hold anything together. It drives me crazy.”

Sally reached over to grab something tantalizing from Gordie’s plate.

“Do you mind?” she asked, as she popped the food into her little mouth.

“No,” he said, laughing. If Norma had done it he would have left the table in disgust, but Sally was a different matter.

“Say, since we’ve been seeing each other, I’ve had--”

“You call this seeing each other?”

“Well, what—what would you call it?”

“Having dinner, Gordie. Don’t get any ideas.” She grabbed another bite off his plate.

“Well--”

“Just eat your food, Gordie.”

He felt chastised and miffed. He didn’t like the feeling; it made him feel powerless, and that was the last thing he wanted. He figured it would be better to go home to Norma and knock her around a little bit. Since he wasn’t really all that into physical violence he’d have to find emotional and verbal ways to make Norma feel like a helpless piece of shit. That would assuage his problems with Sally.

Sally was gone on a business trip and wouldn't be back for ten days. Gordie was stuck going home to Norma every night. She drank herself into oblivion in front of the television and stumbled off into bed at night. Sometimes she'd sleep in whatever she was wearing on top of the covers; wouldn't even bother getting into the bed.

Gordie began to sleep in the den on the couch. Her smell and her loud snoring made him sick. He would wake up in the middle of many nights with a sour feeling in the pit of his stomach, grab some antacid from the bathroom and stare at himself in the medicine cabinet mirror. He hated the way he looked, he hated Norma and he hated his marriage. All he wanted to do was get inside Sally's pants. It seemed she was just playing around with him and that pissed him off.

Gordie decided the best thing was just to kill both of them and rid the world of two fucking women. The problem was, how to do it? He wasn't really a murderer by temperament. Still, murder was the only way he could continue living. There was no other way he would share the earth with these two bitches. They'd have to go. He decided to override his natural tendencies. One afternoon he walked into a small gun shop and purchased a little shooter that fit nice and snug inside his pants pocket. He began carrying it around. Not necessarily with any plan in mind, it just made him feel secure. The handgun nestled in his pocket, nice, neat and loaded. Small, the size of his palm and sweet. It made a popping noise. He liked that. He'd tried it out at the dump to make sure it worked.

The last night before a two-week company trip to the Bahamas, a cruise which Gordie had refused Norma, he experienced an startling masturbation during which he imagined himself four inches taller than he was, his dick several inches wider in diameter, and Sally slobbering all over him with her cute little mouth. It was enough to

make him cry. He did in fact cry out when his orgasm oozed out all over the new bedspread Norma had just ordered from *Crate and Barrel*.

“Shit,” he said as he rushed to the bathroom to get a wet washcloth. “She’ll kill me.” The cum left a nasty milky white spot on the green part of the flowered spread. Gordie figured she’d never notice, but you couldn’t be too sure. Quite obviously she was in a drunken stupor much of the time, but it was punctuated with odd lucid moments of anal compulsions.

“Oh, fuck it,” he thought to himself, “who cares? I’m leaving for the Bahamas, I’ll get some nice ass down there while I’m schmoozing around the pool and Norma can just sit here and cry about my cum.”

One day while in the kitchen waiting for Norma to come out of the bathroom, (she spent a great deal of time vomiting in there), Gordie casually picked up a large carving knife from the Fingerhut Knife Set Norma sent for several months ago. He looked at the knife and realized that this whole thing was ridiculously simple. Norma came out of the bathroom, smelling like vomit and looking like a rag doll.

“Hi Norma, honey,” he said, turning away when she tried to kiss him. She went to the sink and poured herself a glass of water. While she was drinking the water, Gordie simply plunged the knife into her back. She cried out. He pulled the knife out; it was harder than he thought, and plunged it in again, this time just where he thought her heart might be. She gasped, let out an awful shriek and collapsed over the sink, accidentally turning on the tap. Water ran all over her head and neck. She looked appalling. Gordie pulled the knife out of her, wondering what to do next.

Leaving her at the sink, he ran out to the garbage and threw the knife in there. Then he ran back into the house, calling 911.

“Help. Someone’s been here and stabbed my wife!”

The operator reassured him an ambulance was on the way. Gordie grabbed a garbage bag and dashed upstairs, threw some clothes into the bag, grabbed his keys, ran out to the garbage, took the knife, wrapped it in his underwear, and opened the garage door. He decided to leave the door unlocked so the paramedics could get in. Backing his car out, he took one last look at the house.

“Bye, Norma, you shit-ass Bitch,” he called and drove off.

“Where to, now?” he thought.

Sally answered the door in her bathrobe.

“Gordie, I’m busy.”

“I--have to come in Sally, I just murdered my wife.”

Sally burst into laughter.

“I’m serious, God damn it.”

She looked at him. This asinine, brainless, flabby loser was becoming a nuisance.

“Come on in,” she said, holding the door open. As Gordie walked in he noticed her place had the remains of what looked like company. Ashtrays filled, drink glasses, a man’s shirt draped over the back of the couch.

“Company?” he asked.

She looked at him.

“Who is it, Sal?” a male voice came from the bedroom.

“Oh, that loser I told you about,” she laughed, winking at Gordie. “Don’t want him to get upset,” she whispered to Gordie. He winked back.

Out of the bedroom came the actor from the detective show Gordie used to watch. It was in re-runs now. Gordie recognized him right away, even without the makeup and the toupee.

“Hey, aren’t you...?”

“Yeah,” said the actor and lit a cigarette.

“Who is this clown?” the actor asked the air.

“Gordie, meet James Harrington.”

“Hey,” said Gordie, striding over to shake his hand,  
“is that your real name?”

“No, dude, I changed it. It was—oh, I don’t know if I should tell you or not.”

“I won’t tell anyone, I promise.”

“George Barhaus.”

Gordie’s hand stuck out into the air.

“I don’t shake hands,” said George and walked over to the bar to freshen his drink.

“Oh, might catch cooties, huh?” Gordie said. Sal looked at him with all the disdain she could muster up in her sexually satiated state. Gordie felt inside his pants pocket. The hand-gun nestled there nice, neat and loaded. Small, the size of his palm and sweet. It made a popping noise. He liked that. He’d tried it out in the back yard when Norma went to bed. Neighbors thought he was shooting a squirrel.

“Sal, I’m running into the shower,” George spoke, and disappeared into the bowels of the bathroom. Gordie stood alone in the center of the living room looking at Sally’s furniture.

Sally sat on the edge of the couch sipping her drink.

“So, what the fuck you doing here, Gordie--I mean--”

Gordie’s hand was quick. Moving the little pistol out of his pocket he popped her one right there. She fell backwards, didn’t even utter a sound she was so shocked. A gurgling noise came from her throat. Gordie walked over and looked down at her bloody little body falling over the back of the couch, the drink spilled all over the front of her shirt, and popped her another one right in the head. He aimed at the television causing an eruption of noise as he blew out the tubes and the screen.

George entered the living room naked and dripping wet.

“What the fuck?” he yelled and noticed Sally’s blood-spattered body draped and skewed over the back of the couch.

“Shit,” was all he could say and looked as if he would sink to the floor.

Before George could react further Gordie popped that asshole actor in the stomach three times and ran out the door.

Now it was done, he thought. Thank God.

The next morning he went to the bank and withdrew all of his and Norma’s savings, along with whatever was in the checking account, closing all their accounts. There was a CD Norma had started without telling him. A God awful lot of money was in there, more than Gordie could ever have imagined her saving on her own. He cashed out

the \$30,000 CD saying that Norma had just discovered she had cancer, she was in the hospital upstate, and they needed the money for experimental treatment. The bank manager had no trouble letting Gordie sign out the money.

As he was leaving the bank one of the tellers smiled at him.

“Hope things work out okay for you, Gordie. Oh, and have a good trip--well, I mean as good as it can be.”

“I’m banking on it,” Gordie said and swung his body swiftly out the revolving door.