

“Red Pattern” by Alexander Lee-Rekers - Tyson - M - 40s/50s/60s

Tyson has returned home, disheveled, distraught and late for dinner on a significant wedding anniversary. His wife sits at the dining table, staring at him as he leans in the doorway of the spacious sitting room.

TYSON: I'm sorry I'm late. I had to shop for your present.

I went out on my lunch break, I told Sam I'd be back by two for the partner's meeting and I popped into that new department store by Royal.

I was standing in the foyer, surrounded by perfume stands and display cases and I looked at everything, at all the stuff, and I had this horrible, horrible thought: I don't think I know you. I don't know when that happened, but it has. And that really hurt to know.

Must have been half-past two before somebody from the store actually came over to check on me. They must've thought I was there to set the place alight, the look in my eyes... So I spoke to the floor manager, this nice woman named Beverly, and she asked me if I needed any help. And before you know it, I'd told her everything: the pressure at work, Ellen being sick, having to cancel the holiday and then the feeling I'd just had about you. About us.

She listened to all of it. Just listening and nodding. And then she helped me pick something out.

He holds out a wrapped package.

It's a scarf. Red pattern. Beverly said scarves show that husbands think about the future: how it'll look on their wife when they go out somewhere nice, or if her neck might get cold in the winter, or on a holiday.

And I do think about the future. I do.