

## My Chest is Getting Tight

*'If the offer is still on, I think Littlelegs and I should come over and spend Christmas with you two. You're right the girls deserve the Christmas they planned'*

Ohhhhhh Shit!

Bugger!

Shit!

I know it was me that suggested you two still come over, but how am I going to cope having you here but not having you! It's been nine days since you left me. Nine days! How the hell am I meant to deal with this and smile and give the girls a good Christmas? Standing here in the queue at Smiths, waiting to pay, was not the right place to open your message. I want to scream or cry or curl up in a ball and sleep. I can't breathe, I'm on the brink of yet another panic attack. I'd never experienced one until you told me you were leaving me for HER! Oh God! Why did I think about HER! She's everything I could never hope to be. I can feel my chest getting tighter, my fingers are starting to tingle, and I know they will soon be numb. The room's starting to sway. Looking around me there are so many people. I'm trapped in the zig-zag of the queuing system, along with all the other last minute Christmas shoppers. There are people in front of me, beside me and behind me. I want to run but I can't get out, I'm surrounded. My chest is getting even tighter. I can hear the blood rushing around inside my head. Boom, boom, boom my pulse thudding against my skull. I can hear my logical, internal voice starting to speak. "Keep it together girl. The people in front all appear to be together. It will soon be our turn to pay, then we can get out of here." I've been told I'm very good at making it look like I'm holding it together, when inside I'm falling apart. I'm never sure if people are just placating me or if it's true. I really don't want to freak out in front of everyone in the shop and make a scene. I don't want any attention on me, I just want to disappear. My toes are starting to go numb now. The horrible numb tingling sensation is in both legs and arms as well. I really do need to get out soon. I know the logical me is right and it will only be a few minutes, if that, until I'm done. Ok, I can do this. I know the tingling is caused by not getting enough oxygen into my system. I need to focus and concentrate on my breathing. That's it, take the breath in slowly but deeply. If I breathe in and out through my nose, then other people won't notice. That's it. Take a deep breath, pull a smile, move to the checkout. That's it, smile at the cashier, insert card in the machine. Pick up the wrapping paper, smile and leave.