I haven’t been sleeping since my wife disappeared two weeks ago.

Sleep was never a problem for me. As a child, my mother told me I slept like rock hitting the bottom of the ocean. I never dreamed. Or, if I did dream, I never remembered. After marrying and having my son, a good night’s sleep became essential to my way of living. My dentist school friend and I opened our own surgery. Routine set in. I woke, went to work, came home and slept. I always slept well. But since my wife went missing, I don’t sleep at all. I lie in bed and think. Thoughts clog my brain and the headaches come. Pills don’t help. I don’t drink. All I can do is wait until my wife comes home so that I sleep again.

I wonder if she has been kidnapped. Or if she was stolen from the house by a band of criminals. I’m not a very imaginative man. That’s all I can think of. It’s the only explanation. Her car was gone. Maybe she had gone to get it fixed and was abducted. Maybe she went for a drive and crashed. A midnight drive? My wife never drives at night.

When the police come to see me about her disapperance, there is nothing I can tell them that might help.

“When was the last time you saw your wife the night she disappeared?” the policeman asks, a notepad and pen in hand.

“She was brushing her teeth at the sink.”

I remember this because I had passed her reflection in the mirror and noticed how her skin seemed younger and fresher than usual. Must be the swimming.

“We were on our way to bed.”

“You say she was brushing her teeth? Was this something she usually did before going to bed?”

“Yes, of course. It’s routine. She brushes her teeth every night before bed. She’s always taken good care of her teeth.”

My wife was quite pretty. Not gorgeous but still attractive. After years of sleeping next to her, I became so used to her thin lips and muddy eyes that they stopped defining her. Now I can’t even picture her face. All I can think of is her hair. She had dark hair that was coarse and cut off at her shoulders. I would find thick strands of it on my pillow, or in the bathroom sink, or on the walls of the shower. Apart from the stray hairs, nothing she did ever bothered me. Sometimes she would leave her books lying around which did irritate me. But I would just put them back on the shelf. She was a good mother and a good wife. I have no good explanation for why she vanished.

The policemen have more questions.

“Did you notice anything different about your wife the night she disappeared?”

I shake my head. “Nothing comes to mind. She’s always normal.”

“What do you mean ‘normal’?” the other officer asked.

I push my glasses up my nose. “She’s always the same. She cooks and cleans and takes our son to school. She makes me dinner, reads and goes swims at the gym. That’s her normal life.”

“And she didn’t seem like she was acting strange that night?”

One thing had been slightly off the night she vanished. I had come home from work and found the single bottle of brandy we owned was open and missing a milliliter or so. I don’t drink alcohol because the thought of liquor rotting my teeth makes me sick to the stomach. My wife must have drunk it. But she hadn’t drunk in years. I had made her quit alcohol when we married because it left a sickening smell on her breath. She had never complained. And she looked healthier and slimmer. Why would my wife open a bottle of brandy that had gone untouched for years?

“Did your wife say anything the night she went missing? Anything that might help us understand where she is?” the first detective asked, scribbling in his notepad.

“Nothing.”

“Could she have gone to be with another man?” This intrusive question surprises me.

“Excuse me?”

“Is there any possibility she went to another man’s house?”

My brow furrows. “She doesn’t know any other men.”

“Could she have gone to a friend’s house?”

“She doesn’t have any friends.”

The detective raises an eyebrow. “No friends at all?”

I shrug and adjust my glasses again. “If she did have friends, I would know. She sees me and our son. Nobody else.”

“I see.” The detective gave his partner an odd side glance. “Is there any chance your wife could have left or run away?”

Sleep was never a problem for me. I slept heavily and long. My wife on the other hand, I have no idea about. She would put our son to bed, read him a story and then go to bed after me. In the mornings she was awake before me. She had household jobs to do. Food to cook and surfaces to clean. Other than that I don’t know what she did. I never asked. There was no chance my wife would have run away. Her life was perfect. She had a successful husband and an adorable son. What more could she want?

The detectives tell me they will keep searching for her.

After the police go I put my son to bed and sit in the living room. On the coffee table is a book. “*Anna Karenina.”* I reach over and open the first page. A few crumbs of dark chocolate sit in the page crease. I am confused. Our family never eats chocolate. I close the book and put it on the shelf.

I haven't been sleeping since my wife disappeared two weeks ago. Nothing helps. All I can do is wait for my wife to one day return again, and then I know I will sleep again.