# Leave It at the Door

B Alan Bourgeois · Opening excerpt · 1 of 2

Adrian Vale had learned years ago that there were two kinds of mirrors.

There were mirrors that showed you what was there.

And there were mirrors that told you what you feared other people might see.

At sixty-five, he preferred the first kind.

He stood in front of the bathroom mirror wearing nothing but black boxer briefs and one sock, inspecting the gray beginning to spread through the hair on his chest. Not enough to qualify as distinguished. Too much to deny. His hair had gone mostly silver along the sides and temples several years earlier, though the top remained stubbornly dark enough that people sometimes accused him of coloring it.

He didn't.

He had better things to do.

He leaned closer to examine the spot below his left eye where a line seemed to have deepened since yesterday.

“Fine,” he told it.

The line did not respond.

Adrian smiled.

That made several more appear.

“Fine.”

He finished dressing.

Dark navy trousers. Black shirt, open two buttons. Lightweight charcoal jacket. No tie. Shoes comfortable enough to dance in without looking as though comfort had been the primary consideration.

# Reading sample — continued



He had made that mistake once.

Never again.

At twenty-five, he had dressed to be noticed.

At forty-five, he had dressed to look younger.

At sixty-five, he dressed because he liked how he looked.

There was freedom in that.

His phone buzzed on the dresser.

A message from his friend Raymond.

You going out tonight?

Adrian typed:

Yes.

Three dots appeared almost immediately.

Where?

Neon Quill.

A pause.

On a Saturday? Brave.

Adrian laughed.

I survived the 80s. I can survive a DJ.

Raymond sent back three laughing faces and then:

You going alone?

Adrian stared at that question longer than it deserved.

He typed:

I am not going alone. I am going with myself.