

# The Cleaning Company



Jenny Winters

An "Adult TV" Novel

## **Reluctant Press TV/TS Publishers**

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# The Cleaning Company

**By Jenny Winters**

I didn't think I'd be this nervous. My hair was perfect and the makeup artist had just left. My nails were my usual deep red talons. Yes, I'd gotten used to them.

I'd slipped the solitaire from the ring finger of my left hand to my right so that the finger was bare. In a few minutes Paulo was going to slip a wedding band there.

I looked at my reflection and turned as I realised I was no longer alone.

"I'm so pleased that you chose to wear my old wedding dress. I only got to wear it once, not that I wanted to wear it again, but it stayed in my dressing room all those years."

"You must miss him so much," I said softly.

"I do, every day." She dabbed a tissue to her eye. "But having you to look after has been my salvation."

I'm so grateful to you for making my life so interesting when I thought it was all passing me by."

"You saved me," I said truthfully. "I was on the path to goodness knows what before I was sent to work for you."

"That was such a fateful day. I can remember every minute and then when you disappeared for a while, I thought I'd done something wrong."

"You've been so good..." I felt a tear and that would never do after all the makeup girl's skills.

"I do love that dress," she said, smoothing a sleeve and then the skirt. "The way it clings to the hips and shimmers as you walk is a vision of perfection."

"And do my breasts look okay?" I wasn't used to them; not really although it was my decision to have the implants. "I still can't believe what I've done."

"You look lovely, even if I'd have suggested bigger ones for you."

I was scared of the surgery to get these," I said, looking down my new cleavage. "I keep asking myself if I've done the right thing."

"You've promised yourself to a good man and I'm delighted to be giving you away."

I heard the music from the other room. We looked at each other and stood. We walked forwards and each opened our side of the double doors.

I stepped forwards with my benefactor at my side to be united in a way that I'd never thought possible.

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I hated the job but it was the only one I could get to tide me over. I'd graduated that year and was saving hard and hoping to get a scholarship.

An applied biological science was my subject area and I was hoping to get into something really cutting edge and challenging. What did I get? Nothing quite

like that; I worked for a cleaning company. We did get a lot of biological decontamination work but that wasn't part of my master plan for life.

I think my stepmother who owned the firm thought it a great joke. We cleaned crime scenes, specialising in the hideous and horrible, the stinking and the unhygienic. Blood and gore, bits of brains and flesh remnants; we cleaned and decontaminated them all.

Fortunately for my sanity, I was usually teamed with Maria and Rosalind. They'd been doing the work for some years and didn't seem to notice things which turned my stomach. They looked after me like a pair of benevolent older sisters. It was because we were a team that I didn't walk off the job.

We had all the equipment, the protective clothing and the masks, the breathing apparatus for where the smells were impossible. It wasn't nice work, but it paid. It paid even though my stepmother seemed to resent paying the 'dirt' money which went with the jobs.

Then Maria left; I think she'd had enough and Rosalind went East to work for her sister who'd started a similar company. I was a team of one, which was awful, even though I didn't get the worst of the jobs.

Then just as fortunately, Oliver joined the company after I'd been working alone for a couple of months. He was endlessly cheerful, with a sense of humour that kept us both sane. Like me, he'd graduated and not been able to get a job, possibly because he'd majored in psychodynamic applications, and no, I don't understand what that means either.

I liked working with Oliver. He was always cheerful, funny, and could make the most awful scenes bearable with his 'get on with it' attitude. He also worked so hard, even though, like me, he wasn't the biggest or the strongest guy in the company.

We made a matched pair really and that made us the butt of many jokes. We were both skinny and under average height; we both wore our hair long. I told

him to catch up; mine was about six inches longer than his. In our protective boots and overalls, we must have looked a bit comical.

We were good friends away from work. We went to the beach, sailed on the lake, and tried to pick up the hottest girls in the bars during the weekend evenings. We weren't very good at that, but it was fun trying.

After a year or so, Oliver started to take days off and I got partnered with whoever was available. I thought the pressure of work and the awful scenes we saw most weeks were preying on his mind. He seemed distracted and we went out less frequently. Then abruptly, he left the company.

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I was sad not to have a regular work partner. It made the work harder and it was hard enough. I couldn't understand why Oliver seemed to have dumped me as a drinking buddy either, so I called him one day.

"You're through to Paradise Walk."

The answering machine replied in a girl's voice I didn't recognise, before asking the usual questions and asking the caller to leave a message. I double checked that I had the right number and then mumbled something about asking Oliver to call me.

"It's me, Oliver. I'm returning your call."

"Hi," I mumbled. "What time is it?"

"Oh, sorry, it's four in the morning. I'm just home from work and picked up your message. I forget that not everyone works the same hours."

"It's okay, I'm awake now." I lied there. "I've missed having a regular workmate and I really miss someone to hang about with. Could we get a drink together one evening... that is if you haven't found a girlfriend by now?"

“No, I don’t have a girlfriend,” he said slowly. “A drink would be good. I’ll call you at the weekend.”

We talked a little more and then rang off. It was two weeks later that he called and we met on a Friday evening in what used to be one of our regular hang-outs.

Our conversation wasn’t as easy as I remembered. I guess the lack of those shared experiences when we worked together made it a little slow. Oliver seemed different too. I couldn’t describe what made me think he’d changed.

It wasn’t really his clothes or his hair, although it did look glossier and smoother than before. He wore it loose over his shoulders, which was why it took me a moment to realise that it was him sitting where we used to sit. I’d been used to seeing him with it tied back in a low pony tail.

Soon it seemed that we were talking like old friends who hadn’t seen each other for a while. He asked about my work and I described the usual trail of messes and disasters I’d been clearing up. When it came to his work, he was vague.

“I’m still in cleaning,” he said. “The company I work for does specialist cleaning for private clients. I can’t say anything more because they have very strict confidentiality rules.”

“Does it pay any better?” I asked.

“Sometimes it’s harder to please a client,” he replied enigmatically.

He kept chatting but afterwards I understood that I had no idea what he was doing now. Whatever it was, he seemed to be better paid than I was. When he paid for our tab, waving away my protests, I saw the number of cards there and the cash tucked away in the billfold.

His clothes were much newer than I remembered and much more in fashion. I didn’t ask but there were probably a few expensive designer labels there.

We hugged as he left, pleading a busy day on the Saturday.

I watched him walk away. Something incongruous stayed with me. His hips swayed and his shoes were like Cuban heeled boots; higher heeled Cuban heel boots.

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It was a month or so later when Oliver called and invited me to join him, again on a Friday evening.

“It’s my treat,” he announced. “I have a meal for two at Campiglio’s Restaurant. I won the voucher and there’s no one else I could take.”

“You’re still short of a girlfriend?” I joked.

“You could be right,” he laughed as he ended the call.

Campiglio’s Restaurant was one of the fanciest in our town. There was no doubt that it was top quality and equally no doubt that it was way out of my usual price range. We arranged to meet in the bar there.

I knew I wasn’t going to be able to dress for the place. I couldn’t afford it. As I approached the door in my best chinos and neatly pressed shirt, I felt decidedly outclassed by the great and the good of our town arriving in their Mercedes and BMW’s.

“Are you in the right place, sir?” The doorman didn’t hold the door for me as he had for those in front.

“I’m meeting a friend,” I stuttered, feeling quite intimidated. “It’s Oliver...”

I stopped as if suddenly struck dumb. I’d worked with him for ages but I had no idea of his surname.

“That’s all right, sir.” He opened the door and stood to the side. “You’ll find him in the bar to your left.”

It was the hair that I saw first. It was far longer than anyone else in the room and with the lighting



and all the mirrors and glittering decoration it seemed to shimmer too as if it was highlighted. He was talking animatedly to an older man in a suit.

“I stood quietly by his side and coughed discretely to signal that I’d arrived. Oliver turned to me and his face broke into a wide smile. His eyes widened and his lips parted, showing perfect white teeth. He put an arm around to hug me.

I returned the hug, slipping my arm around him too. I remember feeling something I didn’t expect as my hand reached the middle of his slender back. I didn’t give it any real thought as I was more impressed by his black silk shirt with a subtle silver thread in the weave and a decorated statement collar.

“I think they’ve a table ready for us,” he said. “I picked a nice one where we can see everyone.”

He raised an arm to signal to someone behind me. I saw the cuff on his sleeve was decorated too and that the actual cuff was wider than seemed normal. I guessed it was another designer fashion.

I think I ate too much; I certainly drank too much. Oliver seemed to have a way with the place and behaved easily. He was friendly with the waiters and waved to several of the other diners. I kept my head down. I knew that I’d be tongue-tied and awkward if I had to make small talk with any of them.

I went home that night after Oliver put me in an Uber and handed a couple of notes to the driver. Next day, I knew I’d had a good time, but I couldn’t remember much... and my head hurt.

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“I didn’t recognise your voice,” I apologised when Oliver called a few days later.

“I wanted to thank you for coming with me the other night,” he said. “I hope you enjoyed it.”

“I really did,” I replied. “Your winning voucher must have entitled you to the best of everything.”

“I have my moments.” He laughed.

We arranged to meet the following Sunday evening at a bar we used to hang around in when we were working together. I got there first and was nursing a beer when Oliver arrived.

I saw him and so, it seemed, did everyone else in the bar. His hair again made everyone look twice, including me. This time, I’d no doubt that he’d had it lightened and styled. It hung perfectly and swayed in style as he moved.

He sat opposite me, put an elbow on the table and his fingers under his chin, looked at me and smiled. That’s when I noticed his fingernails. They were manicured without a doubt.

They weren’t obtrusive and they weren’t painted any colour, but they were too long, too shaped and perfectly natural looking in a way that shouted that they weren’t natural. He saw me looking.

“It’s my new job,” he said, withdrawing his hand from view. “I have to be very clean and very precise. It’s all to do with hygiene.”

“I remember that you said some of your company’s clients were hard to please.”

“That’s right; they’re private clients and it’s about personal service rather than what I used to do when I was working with you.”

“We got some awful jobs in hideous places,” I agreed. “I used to think it was useful experience but now I’m stuck in a routine.”

“You sound as if you could do with a change.”

“It’s my stepmother’s company. If I don’t work for her, she’ll probably tell me to move out of the house.”

That seemed to end that part of our conversation. From there, we spoke about movies we’d seen and

drifted into reminiscence as the drinks came and went.

This time, it was only a couple of blocks to walk home. Once there, I flopped, fully clothed, onto the bed.

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A month later, we met again. This time, Oliver had invited me to his local bar in a part of town that I hardly knew. I didn't realise he lived over there. It was for the fashionable and well-heeled, not really for people like me but if Oliver was there, maybe I'd misread my friend.

I felt out of place as soon as I walked through the door. It was like the restaurant all over again. This place was way beyond my budget. I should have declined the invitation but I liked Oliver and hadn't many other friends anyway.

He must have been looking out for me because he came over as soon as I was through the door. We shook hands and half-hugged as old friends do. I noticed at once that he was wearing a perfume; a light and sweet scent. This time his hair was definitely lighter.

"You're looking good," I said. "I can hardly believe the change in you since we worked together. Your hair, your hands, even the way you dress and walk seem to have changed."

"I had to change my image to fit in with the job," he replied. "It's important that the clients like you."

"I've some news too," I said. "I got a room of my own; it's tiny, but it's a one-bed apartment all of my own."

"So are you going to look for a new job too?"

"Do you know of one?"

"I might." He smiled. "Let's sit where we can talk."

We took our drinks over to a booth to the side where the noise of the crowd was less intrusive.”

“Are you wearing makeup?” I blurted out, seeing something I didn’t expect.

“I was but I thought I’d cleaned it all off,” Oliver replied. “Where is it?”

“It’s your left eye,” I replied. “It looks as if there’s some eyeliner or mascara.”

He opened a bag which I hadn’t noticed was over his shoulder. He held a small mirror and dabbed at the eye with a tissue.

“It’s for Halloween,” he said, his face reddening at having been caught.

“This is April,” I pointed out. “It’s a long way from Halloween. Were you being early or having a late celebration?”

“Okay.” He shrugged. “It’s the job.”

“You’ll have to explain.”

“I’ll show you.” He took a wallet from the bag and pulled out a card and a handbill.

“Don’t let your house cleaning be a drag,” the handbill said in big colourful letters. “Call the Housework Queen for a quote.” There was a telephone number, the usual Facebook page and web address, and a few indistinct pictures of girls cleaning things.

The focus wasn’t on their cleaning skills, more on their dress, their legs, their heels and hair. I looked and thought about it. I must have been slow because when I looked up, Oliver was grinning at me like I was stupid.

“I’m one of the girls,” he said with a huge smile.

“That’s crazy. You’re joking.” I looked at him, but his face told me that it wasn’t a joke.

“When I finished working with you, I went to a house cleaning company. It was easier and much less smelly and, to be honest, much less gut

wrenchingly bad.” Oliver paused. “Then something I heard made me seek out this company. They don’t advertise. They send out the leaflet you saw only to people who ask for it.”

“You’ll have to explain.” I shook my head. “I don’t get it.”

“Cleaning isn’t a big part of the job. I do a bit of washing dishes here, some vacuuming there, and maybe even get some laundry to do.”

“So there’s not much heavy work.”

“I don’t get my hands dirty and I don’t break a nail.” He held out a hand with perfectly shaped and obviously manicured nails for me to inspect. “Of course when I’m working, these are painted in some spectacularly fashionable colour.”

“And I guess the makeup was left over from work?”

“I was later than I expected.” He smiled. “There was something extra that the client wanted me to do, so I didn’t have time to clean my makeup off properly. I was careless.”

“You were wearing makeup?”

“Look at the leaflet again.” Oliver sighed. “All the cleaners are boys, but they all dress up as girls to do the cleaning.”

“You mean they’re like French maids.”

“There’s a thought.” Oliver laughed. “I’ve only been a French maid once. I can do the accent, look confused as if I don’t understand, and wave a feather duster like the best of them.

“You are joking.”

“No, it was great fun.” Oliver reached for his mobile. “I think I have a picture somewhere. I had on a blonde wig and I remember doing heavy black eyeliner and shiny red lips.”

“Did you have to wear the dress as well?” I asked incredulously.

“The dress was tight and low-cut. The skirts were just to thigh length with several petticoats to make them stick out. The showed my bum and suspenders whenever I moved. Of course, moving was quite delicate. Six-inch spike heels are difficult; don’t let anyone tell you otherwise.”

“I can’t believe this.”

“Here’s the picture.”

“That’s never you,” I scoffed. “She’s slimmer by a long way and she has breasts.”

“What makes you think I don’t?” Oliver’s face was serious. “And a tight corset can be effective even on the slimmest of figures.”

“Now I know you’re kidding.” I shook my head. “You don’t have breasts.”

“I thought you’d discovered my secret ages ago.” Oliver blushed. “I remember that your hand went round me and you could feel something I was wearing under my shirt.”

“I remember,” I said slowly.

“That was the bottom of something binding my breasts flat so that they don’t show when I’m dressed as a boy.”

“But why on earth...?”

“I asked myself that question a lot,” he said. “Then I decided to get some small implants. I thought I could hide them easily but when I wanted to show them off, they’d fit in one of those bras designed to make little girls look like big girls.”

“This is too much to take in.” I was struggling to accept it all.

“You don’t believe me?” he asked. “Let’s go to dinner next week, your treat this time. I’ll be your date and if you think I’m a mess, I’ll go home and I promise not to embarrass you.”

“Okay, I’ll call you.” I wondered what I was letting myself in for as I said that.

I think we’d run out of things to say and we left soon afterwards.

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I’d chosen a bar about half way between Oliver’s last choice and where I lived. I didn’t have the best feeling about what was to come, so I chose somewhere to be anonymous.

It was a nice place; healthy cuisine was the advertising tag and it looked neither too far upmarket nor too far downmarket. It was a place for young professionals and I thought I could stretch to that for once.

“Let’s meet in the bar,” Oliver suggested when I called him with the arrangements.

So there I was, sitting in the bar early for once, watching the time on my mobile slipping past the appointed time.

“I guess he’s thought better of it,” I thought as I turned to the entrance for about the twentieth time in a few minutes.

Then I saw him... or should I say I saw *her*. The hair was unmistakable; very blonde and striking, hanging loosely down her back. She came through the door, waved and smiled my way, then she was walking towards me.

I can still picture her as she looked then. She wore a tight red dress with straps and a square neckline with the tops of breasts showing. The skirt was short and clung to her thighs as she came towards me, walking effortlessly on red spike heels with gave her a height advantage over me.

I could see male eyes turning to watch her as she held out her arms to me. She pulled in for a hug, with her red purse in one hand going round my back. She pulled me in for a quick peck on the lips, then pulled back and smiled.



“You like?” She smiled and twirled ‘round, giving me and everyone else in the bar a view of her tight rear in the clinging dress.

“Yes,” I said lamely, unable to think of anything else to say right then.

“I thought I’d dress to impress.” Her lips opened in a smile, showing those small perfect teeth again.

“I can’t call you Oliver.”

“I’m Olivia of course, and before you ask, Olivia is a very straight girl.”

I didn’t understand that at the time and must have looked puzzled.

“Of course, Oliver’s a very straight boy.” Now I understood what she was telling me.

She pushed her hand through her hair, not because she needed to. It was one of those heir signals that girls give. Gold hoop earrings caught my eye as they fell back into place as her hair settled down her back once again.

“It’s a new colour,” she said, holding a lock of hair. “I decided that since you know, I could be bolder.”

“It’s lovely,” I said. “You have every guy in here looking at you.”

“Well, there’s not a boy in the place who could get away with this colour.”

“That wasn’t quite what I meant.”

“I know but you have to admit that I can scrub up as well as anyone you’ve ever dated.”

“Is this a date?”

“It could be if you play your cards right.”

I know I shouldn’t have blushed, but I did. It was impossible to see Oliver anywhere tonight. She was all feminine and, if I’m honest, way out of my class.

The night was so easy after that. We talked about everything and nothing. I could hardly take my eyes off her, and she knew it.

She put her hand out to take mine and scratched the back of it with her impossibly long red fingernails. She made sure I watched her every move as she re-did her lipstick. She played with her hair as if waving a flag at me. I was lost.

Then I remembered who was sitting opposite me. My eyes were telling me one thing but my intellect was telling me another. I decided to switch off the intellect.

“I think it’s time you took me home.” Oliver’s eyes told me what that meant. “And I’m not taking no for an answer.”

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“Are you sure this is a good idea?” I asked as I opened the door to my tiny apartment.

“Darling, I wouldn’t have asked if I wasn’t sure,” she replied as her arms went ‘round my neck and she pulled me into a deep kiss.

I could feel her tongue at my lips and replied with my tongue. My mind should have been telling me different things but this wasn’t about my mind. It was all about instinct and right then, this beautiful girl was kissing me.

Her hand went down across my chest, then inside my shirt where she made sure I could feel her long nails. Then her hand went lower. The nails dug into my flesh above my waistband.

I kept on kissing her, trying not to react. I have often wondered how different my life would have been if I’d pushed her away, but I didn’t. And I didn’t want to.

Her other hand came ‘round and she undid my belt, then my zipper, and pulled my chinos down to my ankles. My pants followed and her hands stroked

my penis. It was already straining at my flesh and her fingers sent an electric shock up and down my spine as she caressed it.

I looked down to see her looking up at me from under amazingly long and dark lashes. She liked her lips and then started to play with my penis with her tongue at the same timer as her fingers played up and down its shaft. I don't think I was capable of thought or speech as she worked me mercilessly.

"When I was a little girl," she said between licks. "I never thought I'd enjoy a penis like this."

She took it into her mouth. I could only watch as the length slid in between her lips. I could feel the roughness of her tongue and the inside of her mouth. It was as if my penis was being held there in its own warm and welcoming cocoon.

It was inevitable and it was all too fast. I could feel it coming but I did nothing to warn her. I didn't try to pull out, even though I knew I'd be filling her mouth in a few seconds. All I could do was moan, then arch my back to push further inside as I came and came.

I vaguely remember hearing her gag and hearing her sucking and slurping. And then I was shrinking away, all spent, feeling elated, and thinking about what I had done.

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Olivia sank back on her heels and held out a hand for me to help her up.

"I told you I was a straight girl," she said as she slipped into my arms to kiss me again.

I tasted myself on her lips but I didn't care.

"You do look silly with your pants round your ankles." She stood back and laughed softly, teasing me in my deflated state. "I think you should take them off and return the favour until you can grow again."

“I looked at her and understood what she meant. It didn’t strike me as anything other than a normal request then.

“Girls have it much easier,” she said, pulling up her skirt to reveal a garter belt and stockings.

She pulled off dainty and lace-edged red panties. Then with a little more effort, she removed another garment which held her legs tightly as she pulled it down.

“I have to hide my little man away,” she explained and turned into my tiny bedroom with a look in her eye which commanded me to follow.

I’m not a fool, but then again, maybe I am. I kicked off my shoes and socks, then my chinos and pants, and followed her into my bedroom. Olivia was lying on her back on my bed. Her dress was pulled up top her waist and now her penis was standing there in front of me.

“I think you have to return the compliment,” she said.

I think she could see the thoughts that ran through my mind at that moment.

“It’s really easy,” she said. “Pretend you’re me and imagine how good I felt. I was powerful and in control.”

“But you’re...”

“I’m a straight girl,” she whispered, “But there are things which might be different about me. That doesn’t change the fact that I need a strong, straight man to look after me.”

Her hands waved her penis at me. It stood up strong and erect. I knew this was more than a test. She’d done it for me and it was only fair that I should return the compliment. I sank to my knees. She shuffled down the bed and her legs went over my shoulders at each side of my faced.

“I promise there’s a real treat in store for you.”

Her hand ruffled through my hair and slowly pulled my head towards her. I didn't care and opened my mouth. Pulling ahead of her hands, I licked the tip of her penis and slurped on the tiny bit of liquid which had emerged. It didn't taste too bad.

Taking a deep breath, I opened my lips and took as much of the length into my mouth as I could. It hit the back of my throat and I gagged. I leaned back and coughed in an undignified and mood destroying moment.

"Just breathe through your nose," Olivia whispered as her hips squirmed towards me again.

I did as I was told and took her into my mouth again. This time I was able to suppress the gag, although I did feel it coming several times. I was determined to keep it in my mouth and equally determined not to spoil the mood.

I licked and slurped, probably making more noise than I needed to in my desire to show that I was being enthusiastic and enjoying the feelings. And there were real feelings. The veins on her penis; I could feel them with my tongue.

I could feel the swelling just before I made her come in spasm after spasm. It hit the back of my throat. Trying to swallow, to suppress a gag and keep working on her orgasm were all in my mind. I could feel something trickling down my chin and knew instantly what it was but I didn't let go.

I kept her in my mouth until she sighed and pushed my head away.

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I lay on my back beside her on my bed. Our breathing slowed together.

"That was amazing," she said. "You could get a job doing that any day."

"I don't think there are jobs for people to do that."

“You don’t know about mine,” she whispered, kissing my ear and reaching down to play with my penis again.

“What do you mean?” I asked.

“I’ll tell you when you’re older,” she whispered, pushing her tongue into my ear gently. “Meanwhile you’ve a job to do.”

Her hand played with my penis and worked it harder. It responded quickly and grew again.

“Wait a minute.” She let go and stepped into my bathroom with her purse in her hand. When she came back, she was naked and rolled against me. I could see her small breasts for the first time. She put her hand under one and held it to my mouth.

“I think I’d like you to lick my nipple,” she said.

I did so and continued to lick as she changed one for the other. I didn’t have a lot of experience with breasts. I knew that the ones in the porn magazines were probably plastic, but these felt so real, soft, and yielding.

Maybe it was the way Olivia moaned, but I decided her breasts were good.

“It may be easiest for you if I kneel down and you come behind me,” she said, moving away to kneel on the bed.

“Kneel down behind me,” she said.

“There’s a red jewel...”

“It’s keeping me open for you to come inside,” she said, reaching behind to pull it out.

I watched as she did so. Several inches of something thick and pliable came out and she dropped it over the side of the bed.

“Use some of this on your penis.”

She handed me a white tube. I opened it and slathered something clear and slippery over my erection.

“Don’t worry if I scream,” she said. “Push as hard as you can, but take it slowly so that I can feel every inch. Don’t try to be a jackhammer.”

I’d be pretending if I knew what she meant that first time. I only knew that she wanted me to come into her like the girl she wanted to be. I touched the entry and felt her shiver and heard her moan.

“Yes,” she whispered. “Push there. You won’t hurt me.”

What could I do? I did as I was told. It was slow; there seemed to be muscle after muscle resisting my entry.”

“I love this feeling,” she encouraged me. “I wish I could control those muscles easily but its part of the pleasure, feeling you overcome the resistance.”

“Are you sure?” I felt her wince as if in pain.

“I’m sure; believe me, I want to surrender to this.”

I pushed forwards as she pushed back. Inch by inch, I could tell that I was advancing. Suddenly, I could feel something tightening against the head of my penis and then just as suddenly it was gripping further down my shaft. I was deeper inside.

I pushed and pushed hard. There was no more conversation; we were past words, just communicating in feeling and touch. I pushed relentlessly, feeling Olivia squirm and wriggle against my thrusts.

And then I was in. I was deep inside. I could feel my ball sack against her cheeks. There was nothing more to go inside.

I don’t think I rested there but I held still for a moment as Olivia wriggled against me, small moans and squeals coming from her mouth. She pushed still and before I had time to think, I was moving with her.

It was pure instinct now. We moved together and then I knew I’d passed the point of no return. It was all too soon. I didn’t want it to be over but there was nothing I could do.

I think I shouted then and I came and came, deep inside her. I imagined that as I pulsed, something was hitting a sensitive spot deep in her pleasure zone.

Then it was over. I think we both fell back exhausted. My next sensations came with the light coming through my curtains as Olivia's body spooned against me and her hand stroked my penis where it had grown between her thighs.

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"So would you like an introduction to the drag cleaning company?" Olivia asked after she called an Uber to take her home the next morning.

"If I get a job, would I have to be like you?"

"If you're asking if you have to dress up, then the answer is in the name," she replied. "It's not so bad. They pay's good, the tips and rewards are better, and you could get to like it."

"I'm not sure," I replied hesitantly. "I like the idea of more money obviously, but the rest..."

"I may have taken to it more than most," Olivia laughed. "Usually I only show this side of me to my clients but I thought you needed cheering up."

"You only show this to your clients?" I didn't finish what was obviously a question.

"If you're asking if I have sex with them, then yes; sometimes I do and they reward me well."

"How can you do that?" I think my mouth hung open in shock.

"It's easy. I like sex and I can choose who I want to have sex with," she replied. "Don't look so shocked; you seemed to enjoy it."

"But doesn't it hurt?"

"If you don't know what you're doing and you don't prepare, it can be really painful if not impossible."

She picked up her purse as her mobile pinged with the message that the Uber was outside. "I'll call you and we can talk about it."

She quickly pecked me on the cheek. "I'll be Oliver when we next meet in case you're wondering."

After she left, it all hit me. I'd had sex with a beautiful girl who was a man underneath. Not only had I done that, but she'd been the most beautiful girl I'd dated ever.

I couldn't stop thinking about it but I couldn't get to an answer.

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"It's our boys' night out this time." Oliver grinned as we walked from his apartment to a local bar. "Don't look so worried; they've never seen Olivia 'round here. We're just two ordinary guys."

"Can we get a booth rather than sitting at the bar?" I asked. "I really want to talk about things and I don't think we can do that where everyone can hear us."

"I'd like to sit at the bar first. Then we'll go back to my place and we can talk more easily."

"That sounds like a plan."

"It's really because I want to look at the girls," Oliver confided and then he must have seen my look. "Don't think I'm not interested. I am but I have to keep my research up to date."

I wondered if he was serious, but then he laughed and I laughed. Who knew?

From one bar, we wandered to another and then a third. I think I was getting over-served before we headed back to his apartment. I wasn't prepared for what I saw.

"This is amazing." I looked 'round as he closed the door behind us. "Is this really yours?"

“Would I lie to you?” He held his arms wide. “It’s all mine. Come on, I’ll show you round.”

There was a view over all of the city and beyond from the main room; a great view with lights twinkling into the distance. A touch of a button and the drapes covered it.

“This is the master bedroom.” I peered through the door into a bedroom twice or more as big as my whole apartment. “There’s a dressing room and a bathroom to the side. The second bedroom is through there. It’s pretty much the same as this one but it’s where I keep all Olivia’s clothes.”

“You seem to be able to keep Olivia separate from Oliver,” I said. I don’t think I expressed it well but he picked up on what I meant.

“Olivia is me and I am Olivia,” he said. “Tonight is the first time for days that I’ve been Oliver and it feels quite strange, having to alter my mannerisms. Olivia has made all this possible.”

“I’m impressed,” I admitted, looking round again.

“The car in the basement parking is registered to Olivia too,” he continued. “One of my admirers lets me use it. He says it’s good advertising for people to see a blonde in a shiny white Mercedes two-seater.”

“You are joking,” I gasped.

“No, I’m not. If you put your mind to it and work hard, the possibility is there for you to do the same.”

“I don’t think I could have sex with a man.”

“You don’t? What was it all about when we were playing penises together?”

“That just happened. I mean I don’t think I could set out to do that deliberately.”

“Why not? It’s just sex and being the woman in the couple is so much easier. The man’s instinct says they should be strong and virile. As a woman, I can relax and let him make all the moves.”

“What if you don’t like the moves?”

“Then I get out of there quickly.” Oliver laughed and turned to pour two glasses. “I’ve never gotten into that position. Maybe I’m lucky but I’m always careful about who I go with.”

He handed me a glass and I sipped the fiery liquid.

“And you meet these men through the cleaning company?” I asked.

“I think you have to satisfy your curiosity.” Oliver opened a drawer and handed me a card. “I’ll tell them you’re coming and you can ask the questions yourself.”

“But I don’t look like you.” I don’t know why || I said that.

“Don’t worry; Mrs. White will assess you and if you and she decides that you want to try out for their register, she’ll arrange things for you.”

“That’s all going to be very strange.”

“I’m sure you’ll wonder what you’ve let yourself in for but you’ve been a cleaner for ages. You know what to do.”

“But I wear protective clothing and a mask.”

“So what’s the difference and does it matter? Regard a dress as your new protective clothing and the makeup as a mask.”

“What about the protective boots?”

“Heels are more fun.”

“But I don’t know how to behave.”

“Vamp it; be natural and try to mimic anything you like about girls behaviour.”

“Would I get away with that?”

“I’m sure you would. It’s what I do,” Oliver said. “The client is usually as awkward until they get to know you. Once you get used to being treated like you’re the girl, everything will slip into place.”

“You make it all seem so simple.”

“All you have to do is stop worrying, dress for the part, and remember you’re acting, so stay in character.”

I think we talked into the small hours. I don’t remember Oliver leaving the room to go to bed.

I remember waking on the couch with a blinding headache and a crick in my neck.

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“I’ll call you in a few days.” Oliver roused me with a mug of coffee. “Now you can stay and watch me get ready. Olivia has a house call to make.”

I can’t pretend I was taking everything in, or that I was making copious mental notes as I watched Oliver become Olivia. There was no modesty; after all we’d slept together before, but I confess to a little embarrassment as I watched him.

His robe was discarded and I saw how quickly the way his penis was concealed behind an elastic garment, then panties, a garter belt and sheer stockings changed his figure from a skinny boy, into a desirable woman.

I’ve had all my body hair removed by laser.” He must have seen that I was looking. “I got what little beard and moustache I had removed at the same time. The waxing was too painful and too tedious having to go every few weeks.”

“Did that hurt?”

“Not as much as the waxing would. You’re luckier than me anyway. I can see you don’t have much hair other than on your head.”

“I didn’t get that gene,” I quipped.

“Your skin’s smooth too and I think you could be stunning once you’ve mastered the techniques.”

I watched as he started to make up his face. It didn't look much at first but then he explained the shading and contouring. His face seemed to change shape before my eyes, with more definition on his cheeks and a nose that looked more pert and feminine.

It was the eyes on which he spent most time. "I must get some lash extensions," he said as he peered into an illuminated makeup mirror. Olivia's using false lashes all the time. I wonder if | Oliver could get away with them."

"Don't ask me," I replied. "I guess it depends on how much time you spend as Oliver."

"Not much if I'm honest," he replied. "I find it easier to behave as a girl and being Oliver's a bit boring at times." He paused. "But then there are times when Oliver has to appear. There's no easy answer as you'll find out."

"You're making assumptions about me."

"I don't think so." He laughed, turning towards me so that I got a view of his lovely breasts held inside a pretty lavender bra. "You like the idea of it all, but you're wondering about the sex bit."

"It's a big bit." I spluttered at the plainness of him speaking about this but I decided to be plain as well. "We had sex once..."

"And I hope we're going to do it again soon," he interrupted.

"Just once and I was the boy and you were the girl."

"You managed to give me the most wonderful oral sensations." He smiled and licked his lips suggestively.

"That's very different from being the girl in that situation."

"Don't get worked up about it." He shrugged. "It's easier being the girl; you're the one who has to be pleased. It's the man who has to prove himself over

and over again. He has to tease you, excite you and seduce you; that's a burden you won't have."

"But the feelings..."

"That's different but that doesn't mean that they're not just divine."

"You even sound like a girl." I smiled and he laughed.

"There are some words that have to be used; there's no parallel." I think he blushed a little under his makeup. "Mrs. White insists that her clients are clean and that they are gentlemen in the old-fashioned sense."

"But..."

"There are no buts," He continued. "You have to be clean and lubricated. You can never be too lubricated, even if it gets messy."

"Is it that simple?"

"Of course not; it's going to feel strange and it's going to hurt, especially until you learn to relax and do it properly. Like anything else, you have to learn how to do things so that they give the most pleasure."

"You make it all sound so simple."

"It's simple but you have to remember that people have been doing it this way since the dawn of time. Think of the ancient Greeks; think of English public schools for boys only. What do they do in their dormitories?"

"I guess you're right. I am overthinking things."

"That's good to hear." He grinned at me. "Saying it that way means you've thought about it and you're on the way."

"That's a big conclusion," I sighed.

"I'll give you Mrs. White's number and tell her to expect your call."

"I don't know if I dare," I replied.

“Talking’s an easy first step,” he said, turning to his mirror. “Now watch me do these eyes and see how much you can learn. I’m going to have to rush or I’ll be late. I’ve talked too long.”

I watched as Olivia’s face changed into something more beautiful. I decided that I really was fascinated by Olivia the moment she turned to me and asked how she looked.

She insisted on driving me to my door. As I emerged from her Mercedes and watched her drive away, I knew I’d be calling Mrs. White.

After all, talking didn’t mean I was committed.

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I think I was kidding myself as I thought over the way things were going. I’d had enough of the grot and grime of cleaning scenes of fires, crimes and awful accidents. It was time for a change.

I called Mrs. White. I didn’t expect her to sound so pleased to receive my call; neither did I expect her to be so security conscious. I was to take an Uber to a certain public beach, walk to the other end, then wait for another Uber to pick me up.

I didn’t expect it to be a van with blacked-out windows so that I couldn’t see where I was going until I was deposited at the front of a modest bungalow on secluded grounds. I stood looking ‘round as the vehicle pulled away down the drive. When I turned, the door was open and an olive-skinned girl was waiting for me.

“Mrs. White’s waiting for you in the orangery,” she said, leading me through the hallway.

I followed, watching her long black hair swing in time with her cheeks. I wondered if she was another boy but before I had time for another look, I was ushered through a door into a large airy part of the building where a lady of uncertain years was sitting behind a desk.

“I’m sorry for the cloak and dagger routine,” she said as I shook her hand. “Security is always important when I have so many girls depending upon me.”

I sat and answered her questions. Her face showed distaste as I described some of my recent jobs.”

“I can understand why you want to get away from all that.” She wrinkled her nose and shook her head. “You don’t need to describe any more of those scenes. I promise nothing like that will occur in my organisation.”

It was a bit like any other interview I’d ever had but curiously with no mention of what I was expected to do. That came at the end.

“Olivia tells me that you know what you’re here for,” She said seriously.

“I do,” I said, having decided to sound positive and confident whatever course this interview took.

“I value her judgement; that’s why I’m seeing you. I think you may be able to match my requirements but I need to see you as a girl and observe the way you behave first.”

“I understand there needs to be some sort of test.” I tried to stay sounding confident.

“Good, that’s all for today. I look forward to meeting your female alter ego.” She held out her hand for me to take again. “Olivia says that she’ll help and bring you back when you’re ready.”

“When will I be able to start?” I asked. “I’m afraid I gave up my job and I need to make some money.”

“Leave your details with Olivia and I’ll get an advance to you,” she said calmly. “This is an agency; you’re self-employed but we handle your bookkeeping and taxes. The clients pay me, I deduct a commission and send you the rest.”

“That sounds very fair,” I said slowly.

“Don’t worry, I don’t cheat anyone and I invoice for specialist cleaning services. It keeps it all legitimate.”

The dark-haired girl was waiting at the door. She ushered me through to the front where the same van was waiting to deposit me back at the same beach.

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“Mrs. White called me from the agency.” It was Oliver’s voice calling my mobile. “She liked you and wants me to help you into character.”

“I’d like to try,” I said. “But I left my job and I’m fast running out of money.”

“There’s an advance coming and I can lend you some to tide you over.”

“Isn’t it going to be very expensive?”

“If it’s worth doing, it’s going to be expensive, but think what you’re going to be earning afterwards.”

“But will I still be me?”

“That’s up to you.” Oliver paused. “You can be as much as you wish to be; male or female. Things can change over time too. I used to think I was playing at being a girl, now I think that sometimes I’m a girl playing at being a boy.”

“That’s complicated.”

“It’s not as long as you don’t overthink it,” Oliver replied. “Stop thinking is the best advice I can give. I suggest that you hand in your notice on your apartment and move into my spare room. That way, I can help you to change with daily supervision.”

“Do I need daily supervision? That makes it sound like I’m on probation.”

“Yes, that’s a good way to think of it. Give me a call and I’ll come and get you and whatever stuff you’re bringing over here.”

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It took me a week to get out of my rental contract. There wasn’t much of my stuff there; I didn’t have

much. One holdall and a rucksack contained all my worldly possessions. I closed the door, posted the key back to the landlord, and stood at the kerb waiting for Olivia's Mercedes.

"Wow, you look amazing." Her perfume filled the car as I got in.

"I thought you'd like to take me to lunch before you begin your big adventure." She turned to smile at me. "After today, you're going to be working harder than you have for ages. Everything's booked and planned. By this time next week, you'll wonder who you were before."

"Are you serious?"

"Of course; there are a lot of things girls take for granted that boys don't know much about."

"And I'm on a crash course to learn them all."

Olivia smiled as we pulled into the traffic and onto the highway skirting round the town and towards her apartment.

"I have some ideas of the way I want to make you look," she said as she drove. "It's not a rigidly fixed plan so you can ask for something different if you think it's better or more comfortable."

"Does that mean I get my way?"

"Of course not; I only want to sound as if I'm being democratic but really I'm a dictator."

"I guess you know what you're doing."

"Your first stop is after lunch." She patted my knee and looked across at me. "You're going to the dentist."

"Why am I going to the dentist?" I asked as we ate green salads at a pavement bar.

"You need to look like this." She smiled across the table at me. "Girl size teeth, sparkling white and even will give you a purely feminine smile. It's an easy

treatment these days. They file your teeth to fit and then glue the perfect ones over.”

“I never liked the dentist.”

“No one’s asking you to like it but I promise that you’ll love the look.”

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“It wasn’t nice,” I admitted after the dentist’s injections had worn off.

“But the look; you do like the look, don’t you?”

“I think I look like I’ve borrowed my sister’s teeth.” I laughed at myself as I smiled again into the mirror. “But they do make my mouth look different.”

“Admit it; your mouth looks more kissable.”

“Alright, if that’s what you want me to say.”

“I want you to say that you’re excited to be on your way to being a girl.”

“Excited? I’m quite terrified but I’m going to see it through.”

“Something had to be first on your list of treatments,” Olivia replied. “Some things seem to be out of order, even to me and I drew up the list.”

“There’s a list?” I asked.

“There’s a lot to do. Mrs. White is very particular and I think you have great potential.”

“I’m getting scared,” I admitted. “I’ll have to do things with men. I’m not sure that I can face that.”

“Don’t worry; there are a lot of things we can do to make you feel easier,” Olivia replied. “Remember that I told you how the girl’s role is easier. You have to look pretty, learn the right signals, and then you can lie back and let the guy do all the work.”

“It’s the lying back that worries me. Will I ever be able to do that?”

“I think you’re going to surprise yourself.”

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“It’s time to wake up.”

Olivia bustled into my room, pulling back the blinds. She was dressed in tight blue jeans with an even tighter white T-shirt, with pink sneakers and her hair tied in a high pony. She hadn’t done her makeup except for some black kohl around her eyes.

“Ugh, what tortures have you lined up for me today?” I sat up and looked for my clothes which had been left on the chair.

“Your new clothes are in that drawer.” She pointed out which one. “Hurry up or you’ll be late for your first appointment.”

“Where am I going?”

“You’re going to love this.” She smiled. “It’s your big body waxing.”

“I don’t have much body hair,” I protested.

“And when they’re finished, you won’t have any.”

“So why should this be one called a big one?”

“Your next visits will only be to clean up any re-growth. With that and the laser hair removal, you should need very little treatment afterwards; just an occasional hair will be brave enough to show.”

“These aren’t my jeans,” I said as I pulled the clothes out of the drawer.

“They are now, and that’s your T-shirt, your panties and your bra,” Olivia replied. “Your old trainers will have to do for now but we’ll throw them away when we get some sneakers like mine.”

“Are we dressing alike?” I pulled on jeans as tight as she was wearing.

“It’s a sort of uniform,” she explained. “Your T-shirt is different and your bra is a cup maximiser.”

“I don’t have anything to maximise.” I laughed at the thought.

“Every girl has to start somewhere.” Olivia shook her head. “Don’t worry, you’ll get there.”

“What about breakfast?” I asked as we were in the Mercedes again.

“You could do with dropping a few pounds.”

“You’re going to tell me that a girl can never be too rich or too slim next.”

“Just because it’s an old saying, that doesn’t mean that it isn’t true.”

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It was an awful experience really. I don’t mean that anyone was nasty, or that they made it more painful. It just hurt more than I was prepared for.

I did as I was told; I lay on my back. I screamed in pain and shock as the first waxed strip was pulled away. I never knew I had so much body hair or that it would cling on so tightly. I think I let them do most of it when I had my eyes closed.

If the crack between my cheeks was a minor embarrassment, then the cleaning up of my front was worse. It was the one place where I had a tangle of hair. It was trimmed away carefully; I didn’t look, then thinner and shorter wax strips were used to clean it all away.

“They’ve left a little tuft of hair just above my penis,” I said as I was getting dressed again.

“That’s the fashion,” Olivia told me.

The laser treatment on my face was much simpler. I didn’t have to shave and only grew a few thin downy hairs on my top lip. With a few zaps and a slight scent of singed hair, they were gone quite painlessly and easily, with lotions to soothe the skin afterwards.

I don't know what I expected to be done to my eyebrows. I knew they weren't really girl shaped. I'd been looking and girl's brows varied so much. I didn't know what to expect when mine were examined and discussed.

I needn't have worried, In comparison to what I'd gone through, mine were tidied into a shapely full style with what seemed like endless plucking. In reality it didn't take long.

It did pass through my mind that the shape was so well-defined, without a hair out of place, that I'd look a bit strange as a boy. Then I reminded myself of something that one of the investigators said when I was cleaning crime scenes. They said that most people aren't really observant and they see what they expect to see.

"I never would have guessed that it would take most of the day," I said when Olivia picked me up and we were on the drive home.

I flopped into a chair as soon as we got back to the apartment.

"You can sit for a few minutes and have your diet shake," Olivia said. "Then I'm going to give you your first makeup lesson."

"Can't I just rest?" I replied. "You don't know what a painfully difficult day I've had."

"Look who's talking," she laughed. "I may have gone through a few of those rituals myself. The sooner you learn to love makeup, the easier it will be."

Half an hour later and we were sitting side-by-side in front of the vanity in Oliver's bedroom. The lights were shining and no shadows fell on our faces. Our hair was held back by headbands. I think mine was slightly longer than his although he was blonder, with super glossy hair thanks to a good hairdresser.

He had cleaned off Olivia's makeup and was sitting there arranging pots and tubes, pencils and brushes in front of us. His face was glowing from the cleansing

cream he'd used. He gave it to me and instructed me to clean off the way he had done, so that my skin was prepared and as clean as his.

"Moisturising is essential," he explained. "Next comes the primer, to even out your skin and make your makeup last longer."

I watched and copied. "I've never done this before."

"Don't worry about remembering all the stages; it's soon going to be second nature." He held out another palette. "This is a light concealer and colour corrector. It's for the darker areas of your skin, like under your eyes. It makes your skin look more alive and gets rid of the shades of grey that we all have. We follow this with a slightly heavier concealer to make sure that the areas under your eyes are really even."

"Tell me if I'm using too much or too little," I said.

Oliver stopped and turned to me. With a hand gently under my chin, he turned my head from one side to the other.

"That's looking good. Don't be afraid of it. If you use too much, you can probably sponge it off." He handed me a sponge and another tube. "This is your foundation. There are lots of shades and when you get used to it, you may want to try a different shade. This is a medium one and it goes all over your face and down your neck, blending it lighter as you go."

I sat and watched as he demonstrated. His face took on a different look quite quickly. As I watched, the colour evened and really looked more alive. I could see what he meant about it blending easily as he sponged over the previous layers.

"The primer and the concealer help it to blend," he emphasised, as he inspected himself in a hand mirror.

"The next step is contouring. First you use a lighter shade under your eyes and in the middle of your forehead; you're working on the central area of your face. This softens the features again and gives your face a more feminine shape."

I did my best to follow the example. He seemed to be working much faster than I was, which I guessed was only to be expected. I tried to speed up and found that I was smoothing the product better. I blended and blended until there was no visible mark of where one shade started and the other ended.

“Blendable products are essential,” he said. “That’s why all these can be applied with a sponge, to give the best finish.”

I found that I was holding myself stiffly in front of the mirror. My shoulders ached. I stretched, pushing my shoulders back and sighed to release the tension. Oliver stood and came to examine my progress again.

“I think you’re doing well,” he said.

“It feels different to be wearing makeup,” I replied. “I didn’t expect it to feel like this.”

“I guarantee that in a few weeks you’ll be feeling naked or undressed without makeup.”

“I’ve noticed that you seem more relaxed and easy when you’re a girl,” I confided. “Being a boy makes you somehow less comfortable and a bit on edge.”

“It’s probably because I’m small for a boy. You are too. As a girl, I’m an average height. I’ve got good hair and a reasonable chest and I think I adopt a girl’s body language easily.”

“That must have been hard to do; I mean the way you use your hands, your gestures and your facial expressions.”

“I sometimes worry that if I needed to go back to being a boy, I’d still be acting like a girl.” He laughed. “But the idea of being a boy full-time again is frankly ridiculous.”

“Is that true when you only get to have sex with men?”

“If I told you that some girls are turned on by a boy like me, would you believe me?”

I looked at him trying to fathom out if he was for real. The look in his eye said that he wasn't lying.

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"You may think that's enough contouring and shading, but there's more." He held out a white tube. "A little more white under your eyes and below your chin adds to the effect."

He dabbed some in both those places. I tried to copy; I didn't want to use too much or too little, then blended with the sponge again. It all seemed to be easy thus far but I knew that there was a long way to go. I nearly said a long way to go to glamour but right then, I had no idea what the result would be.

"For the next step, I like to use a big flat brush." He held it out for me to examine. "I use this with a darker shade to colour the top of my cheeks, being careful not to overlay the highlighting we've just done."

I followed his demonstration, getting an approving nod. He went around his hairline and then under his chin with the same colour.

"It gives some sculpting look on your cheekbones and reduces the appearance of under your chin," he said. "You can use a smaller brush to put a little on your eyelids to act as a base for your eye makeup."

"This is getting complicated."

"I'm showing you the full makeup." He paused. "You have to know how to do this perfectly but for everyday wear, it's much simpler."

"Thank goodness for that!" I sighed. "If it wasn't, I don't think I'd ever be out on time."

"Next is a loose setting powder, all over the cream products that you've blended." He demonstrated and I followed once again.

"Next comes something that you're probably going to find hard until you get used to it." He held out a

smaller brush, cut at an angle. “Eyebrows can be really tricky.”

“I’ve been looking at the different shapes, ever since they started plucking mine this afternoon.”

“Today’s fashion is for heavier brows. Some years ago, a really thin, high arch was everywhere. Now it’s more natural, although the eye makeup is heavier.” He was pointing with the brush handle as he went along. “All you need to do is add a little definition to the shape you have.”

“Now add some white highlighter under your brow bone, then follow that with this bronzer over the rest of your eyelid and carefully under your bottom lashes,” he said. “These are powder products and hold fast on top of the various creamy ones you used already.”

I watched and then followed, as he did these steps and then added a darker shade along his lash line. I watched carefully as he drew black eyeliner along his lash line, with a small wing on the outside.

“This is where you need a really steady hand,” he said. “Don’t try and blob it all on at once; take some time, and build it up. Remember it has to be the same on both sides.”

I found that I was holding my mouth open as I tried to keep my hand steady. I wasn’t really sure that I’d got it right but Oliver pressed on to the next step.

“This is where personal preference and experience comes in. When you know what you’re doing and where you’re going, you can add some more highlight and some more blush to bring out the sculpted or soft look.”

“Phew,” I sighed and relaxed. “I never knew that there were so many stages.”

“We’ve not started on your lips yet.” Oliver relaxed too and we sat back for a moment, looking at ourselves.

“Next is a lip liner. This is to draw an outer limit to your lips; we’re trying to make them look bigger and more luscious.” He started to demonstrate. “I haven’t any lip filler yet. I think that may be a little easier but I don’t want a pout that I can’t switch off.”

“I know what you mean,” I smiled. “I remember some old clients who had overdone it. It wasn’t pretty.”

The lip liner was so difficult; I think I got it a little uneven but Oliver continued with a nude lipstick.

“The final touch is a dab of this pink pigment in the centre of your lips. Blend it in gently and you should see a little of a pout there.”

I sat back and admired myself. I was pleased with how I looked and certain that there was nothing shouting that I was a boy underneath it all. That is as long as you didn’t look at what I was wearing.

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We took a break then and Oliver went over the stages and let me ask questions. Many of them must have seemed stupid but he was patient.

“All we have to do now is add some false eyelashes, brush out your hair and you can see the finished look,” he said and paused to look at me. “I think you’d get a better sense of how you look if you put on a nightdress.”

“I don’t think I have one.”

“There’s a really extravagant baby blue one in the back of my wardrobe with a gown, all frills and lacy sleeves. You can try that.”

“Are you going to do the same?”

“I have some silk pyjamas,” he replied with a straight face. “And there are some mules to match the blue one.”

I went to my room with the nightdress and put it on slowly. I didn’t want to smudge any of my makeup.

When I returned, he was standing at the opposite side of the room as if waiting for my grand entry. I curtsied as best I could and spun round, making the gown billow out and fall back.

Oliver came and hugged me. Before I knew it, his lips touched mine and then he was turning away, back to the vanity.

“I’m getting in a wonderful mess,” I complained as the false lashes I was trying to get into place seemed to have a mind of their own. “Please help. I know I’ve got to do it myself but please help me this time.”

Oliver’s lashes were perfect, long seductive and sweeping. His eyes looked deep as I gazed into them. I had an excuse to keep gazing into them as he deftly replaced the lashes on my eyelids. I blinked a few times as I adapted to the unaccustomed weight. I looked in the mirror and I don’t know how to describe how I felt that first time of seeing my face.

I think I fell in love. I loved the way I looked, so feminine and so complete. It was as unexpected as my winning the bank at a casino, or receiving millions on a lottery. I wanted this moment to last forever.

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Oliver watched me as I looked in awe at myself, then at him. I think he saw something in my eyes that I couldn’t explain. I still can’t explain. He came and took my hands and looked at me.

“I think you’re feeling so beautiful and so feminine at this moment,” he said, leaning in to kiss me on the lips.

“Is this what girls feel like?” I asked, then I realised how stupid that sounded. “Is this what it feels like to be a girl?”

It was just as stupid but I was feeling giddy and light-headed.

“I think this feeling calls for a celebration.”

Oliver turned and went to the kitchen, returning a few moments later with two glasses and a dark bottle which popped and fizzed extravagantly when it opened. We sat together, hand-in-hand, sipping and toasting each other. I didn't want this moment to end.

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As we sat together, I was so full of excitement. I didn't stop to think was this what a boy should really be feeling.

"Imagine if we'd really had time to dress you up," Oliver said softly. "Imagine yourself with some bangles that tinkle on your wrist, some earrings like mine, and some other jewellery; a necklace and maybe even a piercing somewhere else, like your tummy button."

"Aren't the piercings a little permanent?" I asked, silently thrilling at the idea that I could do that.

"They're as permanent as you want them to be," he laughed. "I'm not suggesting you go in for earlobe stretching, or tattooed makeup, or even a tasteful feminine tattoo anywhere."

"I didn't think I'd like that," I said, thinking of the pain.

"I don't think you would either," he replied. "You want to be able to look good anywhere and not label yourself." He paused. "I do think a little lip filler would be good though. You'd love the Russian lips."

"I've no idea what you mean."

"They could make your lips fuller, though not in a wide pout. The filler is more in the middle so that your lips have a heart shape. It's more natural and puts more volume on your top lip. I think you'd love it."

"Have you had it done?"

“It’s on my list.” His finger went to his lip and he pointed to the centre. “It only fills here, so there’s no unnatural spreading of your lip shape.”

“I’m so excited at how you’ve made me look tonight that if someone walked through the door with the filler, I’d probably agree. Tomorrow, I’m not so sure.

“You must be feeling more feminine; you’re contradictory already.”

His hand had slowly slipped down to my thigh and as I sipped my drink, I became conscious that he was slowly stroking my penis which was responding to every touch. A glance told me that his was already strong.

“There’s only one thing that I need to do to show you that I want to be woman like you,” I whispered, reaching for his penis. “You said it would hurt but I’d like to try.”

“It will hurt and it’s probably going to be messy.”

“I’m used to messy; think what I used to do at the crime scenes.”

“I’ve warned you,” He said, standing and holding out his arms to pull me to my feet.

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In the bedroom, the lighting was low. He held my hand and gently moved me to the edge of the bed and then lowered me to my back.

“I’m going to take you like a real woman,” he said. You can look into my eyes.”

“Yes,” I whimpered, so buzzed on the wine we’d drunk and the thought of what was to come.

“It’s going to hurt you really badly unless I lubricate you and open you up slowly.”

“We have all night.” I wanted him to get on with it instead of talking.

“Here’s the first lubricant,” he said and I felt something enter between my cheeks and slip and slide inwards. “Ready?” he whispered and then I could feel something spreading deep inside me like warmth creeping through.

“Now I’m going to play a little.” His finger followed, massaging and stretching me. I pushed against it, trying to increase the pressure and the penetration.

He played with me; toyed with me for ages, slipping out occasionally to pump more of that warming liquid deep inside me. I could feel that it was oily and very slippery as his hands worked me.

“Hold still.” He had slipped his fingers out. “This is going to go further than I can reach and it’s going to make you gasp.”

I could feel something start to enter and reach further. I clenched against it and tried to relax. The pressure was insistent and he kept on talking, encouraging me to relax and take it further inside. I forced my mind to think of openings; I tried to picture things deep inside opening. Then with a sudden pang that I wasn’t prepared for, it went through some sort of barrier.

I relaxed and he held still. He leaned over and kissed me hard on the lips. I needed that. Our tongues played with each other and although the pressure was deep inside me, I forgot about it pushing some more.

He pushed and I resisted; I didn’t want to but some muscles do their own thing. I knew it wasn’t a penis inside me. It was something pliable. I guessed I knew how far it was inside me but I had no sensation of how wide it might be. All I knew was that he was kissing me and that I was moaning and squirming as the pressure continued.

He relaxed and started nibbling my ear which made me giggle. I knew I was writhing my hips but I think by then it was instinct rather than anything conscious. His hand massaged my penis again. It

was so big that it was almost bursting but I knew I didn't want to explode into his hands. Not yet.

I felt the warmth deeper inside me. I guessed that whatever had penetrated me was also being used to lubricate even deeper inside me than before. I heard myself moaning but it was more like a whimper of pleasure than a protest.

He held something to my nose and a strange smell, not too sweet, not too bitter, entered my nostrils. I had no idea what it was but when he held a hand over my mouth, I knew that he wanted me to inhale.

I took a deep breath and it was as if my mind exploded. I can't describe the sensation. Everything felt different for a few moments as whatever it was assailed my senses. At the same time, whatever was inside was withdrawn and a new feeling replaced it.

Oliver was straddling me. My knees were drawn up high and he was putting his weight forwards. That was the second I understood that his penis was inside me for the first time. I think I wept for joy at that moment.

He pushed and I pushed. Then all too soon, I could feel my penis begin to spasm, followed by his penis, deep inside me, filling me. I closed my eyes and imagined it. It was shooting a jet at a target deep inside me and hitting the centre.

I didn't want it to end. I could feel tremor after tremor rushing through me. I reached for his shoulders and pulled him more tightly to me. I tried to open my legs wider and pull him deeper at the same time as I pushed down towards him.

Then it was ending. I really wept then. I could feel the tears running down my face and into my hair. I couldn't stop. I couldn't help it.

"Hole me," I whispered. "Don't let me go."

Oliver slipped out of me. I felt something trickling over my cheeks. I knew what it was, but I didn't care.

He held me and that's when we fell asleep.

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“I think I crossed a line last night,” I said as I came into the living room with only two towels; one wrapped around my hair like a turban and the other wrapped around me under my shoulders, concealing the breasts that I didn’t have.

“And did you like it?” Olivia was already made-up and dressed in a spaghetti strap sundress which was tight to the waist and then floated out in a soft skirt to her mid-thigh.

“I’ve never had feelings like those,” I replied truthfully. “I felt as if I was flying in a dream.”

“That sounds like you’ve got it bad.”

“I’ve got *what* bad?” I was puzzled.

“Femininity; it can be like a drug.” Olivia came across and hugged me, before we kissed gently.

“I didn’t expect this,” I said, holding onto her arm. “I thought I was simply changing jobs and dressing in some sort of uniform.”

“Instead you’ve found out something about yourself.”

“It’s really scary.” I knew some things frightened me. “I have no idea how to act around women as one of them and I’ve even less idea how to act around men.”

“Your instincts will kick in soon enough.” Olivia handed me a coffee mug. “Now get dressed, there’s a lot to do today. Mrs. White wants us both to be working as quickly as possible.”

“You could go to work any day.”

“Not while I’m busy nursing you along.” She laughed. “And I wouldn’t miss watching you for anything.”

“What’s planned today?”

I thought you'd like to get your ears pierced like we discussed."

"That sounds nice." I liked the idea. "How many can I have?"

"You only have two ears."

"Don't be silly. How many earrings should I wear?"

"I think three sets. It may hurt a little because Mrs. White wants you to have large hoops, not just small studs. She thinks you should be full-on girl before you go to work."

Should I get my tummy button done as well?"

"That's for you to decide. She's told me where to take you. It's somewhere she has an account and she thinks is safe and clean," Olivia replied. "She's very keen to keep her girls healthy and well-cared for."

"You never said how many of us there are."

"I don't know," Olivia replied. "Occasionally I meet another, but not very often. My impression is that there are about twenty of us, but then girls come and go all the time."

"It's not a lifelong career?"

"Of course it's not. Some drop out and go back to being boys, others go on to different drag things. I've known two who've gone to live with a partner, one male and the other female."

"So you weren't joking about some women liking one of us as a boyfriend."

"Would I joke about that?" Olivia asked. "I like to be available both ways."

"I never really got far with girls." I remembered all my failures. "Maybe my luck will change, although I don't know that I want to after last night."

"Don't speak too soon," Olivia replied. "Sex is sex, but a relationship is something else."

I went to dress and to dry my hair. I put on the bra which was supposed to maximise my breasts. As I didn't have any, it failed, but I knew Olivia would expect me to wear it. I carefully tucked my penis inside a strong elastic thong and put panties over it.

She'd put out a blue long skirt with an elastic waist which was easy to wear. The shirt was in shades of blue with a dotted pattern. It was tummy skimming and had ties which I fastened in a bow at my waist. It almost fit down to the top of the skirt. Blue sandals with no stockings completed my outfit.

Remembering what I'd learned the day before, I used a black pencil to outline my eyes, some mascara to define my lashes, and a pale lipstick.

I was ready to face the day.

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The piercing place was across town. Olivia had called ahead and by the way she was hugged and greeted, I guessed that she was a known face there.

"They can do your nails as well," she told me. "There's a gap in the schedule."

I hadn't really thought about my nails. I should have. They weren't long or elegant or even trimmed tidily, let alone coloured like the women everywhere.

My ears were swabbed and then a freezing spray turned my lobes numb. I didn't feel a thing as I watched three holes being marked, then punched through. The twisting as a heavy golden hoop was pushed through the lower holes was a bit painful but smaller hoops in the second holes slipped in, as did sparking studs in the third set.

"I like this," I said, looking in the mirror and feeling the weight of my new earrings as I turned quickly to make them swing.

"I'll tell you how to look after them," Olivia said. "Now are you brave enough for the tummy button as well?"

“I think so.” I gulped but kept a brave face.

I lay on a couch with my skirt loosened so that the area was exposed.

“This is going to hurt,” the operator said. “We aren’t allowed anything to freeze the area other than the spray we used on your ears. I’m going to pull some flesh with these surgical tweezers and quickly use a bit of freeze spray.”

“Okay,” I agreed, trying to sound brave. After all, they knew I wasn’t a girl, and I had to pretend to have all that male courage, or so I thought.

“This is the silver ring that’s going in.” She showed me a small ring with a larger one attached. “You can’t change them as easily as earrings, so leave it alone for a couple of months.”

I held the rings in my hand, feeling their weight and turning them over.

“The small ring is the one that’s going in the piercing and the larger one will hang from it. It’s detachable,” she said, showing me the concealed fastener. “You can put all sorts of jeweller onto the larger ring and we’re giving you a small chain which will hang down over your tummy.”

She turned back to her instruments and I saw her wiping each one with an antiseptic spray which smelled pretty powerful.

“Now I’m going to use the tweezer; you’ll feel me pulling and when I tell you, take a deep breath in and hold still. That’s when I’ll be inserting the needle.”

“Will it bleed?” I felt a little panic. What had I agreed to?

“Just a little, but don’t worry. Prepare yourself for the shock and the stab as the needle does its work.”

I did as she said and tried not to look. I knew she was using a curved needle with a plastic sleeve. The pain was sharp, then faded to nothing. I saw the needle come away; even though I was trying not to look, I

saw the silver ring threaded through the sleeve, then felt a tug as the sleeve was removed.

I watched her close the fastener on the ring and place the second one through it with the dangling chain with a little ball at the end. I didn't get much of a look though. She wiped the area with an antiseptic tissue and put a piece of lint over it, secured with a sticking plaster.

I made to stand but felt quite faint. I lay back and took a few deep breaths before I could stand.

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"Why am I having my toenails painted?" I asked as I sat with my sandals to the side and my feet in some warm water. "No one's going to see them most of the time."

"But *you'll* see them and you'll know that they're painted even when you can't see them," my manicurist explained. "It goes with being a girl all over and all the time."

My feet were dried and then I sat at a table with a bright light to shine on my hands.

"These fingers have been neglected," she scolded me. "They look like a mechanic's nails."

My nails were filed down with an electric device and the cuticles were cleaned away and various liquids followed. She secured some stiff material over each finger with a shape extending from the end.

"This is where the magic starts," she said. "I've been told to make them long enough for you to really know that they're there but not too long that you can't get used to having them."

"What does that mean?"

"I think about three-quarters of an inch." She saw my face fall. "That's from the nail bed to the tip on your largest finger."

“That sounds easier than three-quarters of an inch from the tip.” I smiled in relief.

And your nail polish is a super strong gel in a traditional deep red.” She held up a bottle to show me. “I think your hands are going to look completely different and probably for the first time in your life, they’ll look elegant.”

I watched as she worked, smoothing an acrylic paste over each finger, then extending it over the shape which supported it. Filing and smoothing followed before priming; three coats of colour and a final topcoat.

“I have to agree; they do look elegant. They don’t look like my hands at all.”

“Don’t worry; in a couple of days you’ll hardly notice that they’re there.”

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“Stop admiring your nails,” Olivia said as we waited for a waiter to take our lunch order in the small bistro near the nail salon. “They’re not going to fall off.”

“I’m more worried about me tripping over them when I use my hands,” I replied.

The waiter appeared before we could say more. He was slim-hipped and tall, with black curly hair and a moustache trimmed fashionably. He took our order for green salad and fish.

“He was flirting with you and you didn’t even smile,” Olivia chided me as he walked away. “The least you could do was make eye contact and smile a little.”

“Would that have been some behaviour I should have known about?”

“It’s polite to smile, even if you don’t say anything.”

“I was afraid he’d talk to me.”

“That’s silly. You’re allowed to talk. Just don’t tell them that you’re a boy playing dress-up.”

“Is that all I’m doing?”

“Of course it isn’t but I’m sure that your instincts will kick in without even thinking about it.”

“What’s the next item I have to master?” I changed the subject and noticed that I was idly checking that my earrings were still there.

Olivia noticed and smiled. “Bags and purses; you need to carry one at all times and so far it’s been a glaring omission.”

“Okay, what do I need to know?”

“Very quickly; a clutch purse is small and you clutch it in your hand. A shoulder bag, usually something small like a satchel, is either carried or worn over the shoulder; a larger bag is either carried, or tucked under your upper arm with the handles over your shoulder.”

“That’s seems simple enough,” I said. “I guess you decide which one depending on where you’re going.”

Yes, and you always have some makeup and essentials with you,” she said. “Mascara and lipstick are there, along with some tissues. You should carry your favourite perfume, a couple of condoms, and a tampon or some other sanitary wear.”

“I get the condoms; safe is always good and we haven’t been observing that rule.”

“You’re right but I’ve tested clean and I know you’ve not been with anyone.”

“The story of my life is a big blank,” I agreed. “But maybe things will change. Why do I need sanitary wear?”

“It’s there to use in case of leakage,” Olivia said and pointed downwards. I understood at once.

An hour later after I’d been nice and smiled at the waiter, we walked back to the car. I had a large bag

tucked under my upper arm and the two handles were over my shoulder.

Somehow, I felt instantly more comfortable. I think it was because I had something to do with my hands instead of them being more awkward.

And I had a makeup bag with the essentials too.

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“That was Mrs. White on the phone.” Olivia came into my room with a serious look. “She wants to know when we’ll be ready to take on some assignments.”

I turned from my mirror, one eye wearing a false lash and the other waiting. “What did you tell her?”

“I said that I’d be ready the day after tomorrow and that you’d be ready the day afterwards.”

“And am I going to be ready?”

“I think so.” He came and sat beside me, leaned in, and nuzzled my ear.

“Don’t spoil my makeup.” I pushed him away playfully.

“Can I spoil it later then?” He smiled wickedly. “You’re at the hairdresser tomorrow and the day after, I’ve a few tasks for you, then it’s back to cleaning houses, but not as you’ve known it.”

“What do you mean by a few tasks?” I asked.

“It’s only a few things to help you get used to being a girl in public,” he replied. “You’re going to see Mrs. White in the afternoon but in the morning you have to go shopping.”

“I’m not good at shopping,” I replied. “It’s probably because I never had any spare money.”

“You have to learn.” Olivia inspected my makeup and nodded approval. “A girl’s hobby is shopping, especially when you’ve an image to maintain and you’re going to be earning real money.”

“I do hope you’re right.”

“Would I lie? Look at this place, look at the car I drive...”

“You said an admirer lent you that.”

“But even so...” he shrugged it off. “Look at the wardrobes, the shoes, the accessories. I’m doing far better than I ever dreamed and all I have to do is pretend to clean a few things and pretend all the sex is the greatest sex since the world began.”

“You pretend; what about me?”

“You’re mine and you’re learning.” He smiled. “All sex is a bodily function; sometimes it hits the spot but when I’m being paid, it all hits the spot. You’re not paying.”

“Okay, I get the difference.” I leaned forwards and let his lips touch mine.

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The salon looked intimidating when I was in the car looking at the glossy façade.

“Go in like you own the place,” Olivia said. “Give them my name and they’ll treat you like their best customer.”

“But what do I ask them to do?”

“You don’t need to ask anything. They know.”

“But I don’t know.”

“They’re going to lighten your hair. I want it to be a colour that looks perfect but one that a boy could never wear without looking too gay to be for real. Then you’ll get a treatment that will make it swing and sway, resist any tangles, and fall into place.”

“They’re not going to cut it!” I yelled. I loved my long hair and I don’t think I really registered the bit about colouring it.



“They’ll trim it to get rid of any split ends and any unevenness. Believe me, you’ll love it and you’ll never know that anything’s been cut.”

“Are you coming in with me?”

“No, you’ve got to start doing things on your own.”

“But what if anyone spots me for a fake?”

The salon girls know you’re a fake but they won’t show it.” Olivia started the engine again. “No one else will ever know unless you tell them or do something stupid.”

“That’s what I’m afraid of.” I opened the door and swung one leg out, thinking that I wished I’d practised getting out of such a low car in heels more often. I slung my bag over my shoulder, quietly pleased that I’d remembered to pack everything in there, and listened to my heels clicking over the path.

Once in the salon, I was ushered to a chair. Before I knew it, my hair was being washed and then sectioned as two girls treated each strand and wrapped foils round them, after brushing a blue smelling gunk over each strand.

A magazine was placed in my hands as a drier on a stand rolled across the room and was positioned behind me. The heat was pleasant and between my flicking through the pages and dozing a little in the heat, I was soon at the next process.

I didn’t really understand what they were doing but they were clearly working through the instructions Olivia had left. I was really pleased when the final towel was discarded and the drier appeared. With brush and drier, my hair took shape. The colour lightened as the water evaporated.

“Is that really me?”

I gasped when I was allowed to stand closer to the mirror and inspect the result. I watched a red nailed hand touch my hair and stroke through the shiny strands.

“You’ve made me look beautiful.”

I hated myself for sounding so vain but from the weedy boy I'd been a few weeks earlier, this was a metamorphosis. I knew I'd be doing things that people might frown on and that my future lifestyle might not be the most respectable but at that moment, I felt so good.

I rummaged for my purse and handed out some dollar bills. I didn't know how much was right, but then I didn't know how much Olivia had put in my purse anyway.

I tossed my head back, feeling my hair brush over my shoulders and headed to where Olivia's car was waiting."

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"I'll drop you at the mall but you'll have to get an Uber back." Olivia's said next morning as we headed to the car. "Here's your shopping list."

"I didn't know I had a list."

"You do now. Think of it as a learning experience. There's a gold card in my name in your purse. I expect you to have bought the best, not the cheapest."

"There's a lot of lingerie on the list," I said, looking down. "And how will I know which shades of makeup to buy."

"You can ask the girls at the counter; they'll help you."

"And you tell me to have lunch on my own." I looked across in horror.

"You can do that," Olivia said. "You'll be doing far more dangerous things before long."

The car pulled into the mall and after a quick peck, I was out and watching the Mercedes turn onto the highway.

It wasn't as difficult as I feared. The lingerie was surprisingly easy. I knew my size from looking at the labels as I dressed.

There was darling light lavender set on a display near the window. The price was horrendous for such a wispy thing but there must have been a lot of work involved in the decorative lace. I added the garter belt and some stockings and that was my first purchase.

I knew where there was a big cosmetics department in one of the huge stores and headed in that direction but then I remembered that I was supposed to browse. I slowed my steps and began to look in the boutique windows.

On an impulse, I went into one. It was smaller than most and only one girl was in attendance.

“Can I try that little black dress in the window?” I asked with my heart in my mouth.

She didn’t bat an expensively made-up eyelash. I think she guessed my size which was a good thing because I’d forgotten that I had no ideas what size of dress to ask for.

I went into a changing room and unzipped my denim skirt and unfastened my blouse. I wriggled the dress over my hips, delighting in the way it settled once over my widest area.

“May I help you with the zip?” the assistant called. I think she’d been watching my feet under the curtain of the cubicle so that she knew where I was up to.

I turned and opened the curtain and stood as she fastened the zipper. I fastened the thin leather belt and stood back to look at the dress in the full length mirror. I paused there and wondered briefly if this was really me. Was I being silly admiring myself in a little black dress?

I looked at the demure neckline, the fitted bodice and the way it flattered my non-existent breasts where some little padding looked plain and insufficient. My thighs were tightly enclosed but the hem was above my knees. It was lovely and I decided I had to have it.

“I’ll wear it out,” I said; I couldn’t bear to take it off.

“You could use a scarf to soften the image,” the girl suggested, holding out a sky blue patterned silk one.

I took it too and wore it loosely over my shoulders as I stepped out into the mall. I was feeling more confident by this time. I’d been in two shops, made purchases, and hadn’t attracted any of the wrong attention.

I was still congratulating myself when I walked up to the cosmetic counter.

“I would like a new lipstick,” I started. “I prefer lighter shades but something in this season’s range would be good.”

The words jarred. I’d no idea how women described cosmetics to each other. I had a small moment of panic as the beautifully made-up assistant turned and returned with a selection. She held out her hand in a gesture which I guessed meant that I was supposed to place my hand in hers.

After a moment’s hesitation which I hoped she didn’t spot, I did so and watched with attention as she drew a stroke of each one on the back of my hand. There wasn’t a great deal to choose between them but, feeling that a decision was expected, I chose the palest.

Another item on my list was ticked off so with my heart in my mouth, I approached the wine bar tucked into a corner by the escalators to the next level. I felt as if everyone was watching as I stacked my purchases in their bags onto the seat next to me. I sat and studied the menu.

The waiter was quickly in attendance. A young guy, full of friendliness and a bright smile, took my order. This time I recognised that he was flirting with me and did my best to be nice back. I ordered a green salad with some mineral water. As I waited, I looked through my purchases trying to avoid attention.

“Excuse me, didn’t we meet at the Emersons’ party?”

A man, horror of horrors. I knew he was hoping he could pick me up. I studied him and was surprised that I thought him good looking in a sort of smooth and polished way.

“I don’t think so,” I replied politely. “I’m waiting for my fiancé.”

“I’m sorry,” he smiled. “You look so familiar. I’m sorry too. Good luck to your fiancé.”

I sighed with relief as he walked away. I could see him with his friends on the other side of the bar. I think they were commiserating with him on a failed pickup. I laughed to myself. He’d have been disappointed if he’d succeeded anyway.

I paid my check and called an Uber. I’d had enough and when I got back to Olivia’s apartment, I breathed a sigh of relief.

It wasn’t difficult to be a girl in public but being so alert and guarding against the obvious errors I could make was exhausting.

But I decided that I liked it.

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Olivia was really tired when she arrived home late. She’d brought some pasta which we ate with a small glass of wine. I didn’t ask about her day.

“We’re both booked to work tomorrow,” she said as I cleared the table. “I haven’t the details so it’s smart business suits, skirts and heels with a plain silk blouse and black heels.”

“Is that like our uniform?” I asked.

“When we don’t know where we’re going, it covers most eventualities. Makeup should be precise and full on, but nothing excessive. I’ll help you to tie your hair back in a severe bun.”

“Do I use false lashes?” I asked.

“Yes, but not the super long ones. I think we should both get lash extensions next time we go to the salon.”

“That sounds fun,” I said brightly, trying to disguise the nervous feelings in my stomach. “It would save time too.”

We slept together in Olivia’s big bed but I think we were both too tired to do more than cuddle together. I woke in the morning to find her penis huge and ready between my cheeks. When I started to play with it and she woke up, she made it clear that there wasn’t time to make use of it.

An hour later and we were standing in Mrs. White’s office.

Olivia, you’re going to Pacific Heights where Mr. Laurence is holding a lunch reception and he expects you to stay afterwards.”

“I’ve been there before,” she replied, heading out of the door. “I may be late home, *very* late home.”

“Now we’ve never gotten you a working name,” she said to me. “I was thinking about something purely feminine; no Lesley or Carson, but how about being called Ruby or Sophia?”

“I’d like to be Sophia,” I said, looking at Olivia for approval; she nodded slightly.

“Then Sophia you shall be.” Mrs. White looked at her screen. As you’re new, I’m going to send you to some of our regular clients, where the risk to you is minimal. I’m told that you’ve worked for a cleaning company before.”

“Yes, we did crime scenes, fires, and all kinds of disasters. I think after that I can face anything, no matter how smelly or stomach churning.”

“Fortunately, we don’t have that kind of customer.” Mrs. White smiled. “It’s purely domestic cleaning and, to be honest, some of our clients would rather look at you and talk to you.”

“Do you mean that there’s no heavy lifting, just light dusting and that sort of thing?”

“Perhaps a little washing dishes or loading the clothes drier; that sort of thing’s likely to be the heaviest work you’ll be asked to do.”

“Do I have to wear a uniform like the last job?”

“We have no uniforms; all we expect is that you’ll dress nicely, in feminine clothing. We don’t want you in overalls or dungarees and we’d prefer you to wear a skirt or dress, with nice hair and makeup. You’ll get the idea better when you’ve met a few clients.”

“I’ll do my best.”

“And as a word of warning, some clients may ask you to dress as a maid. I’m told it’s a male fetish although I never understood it myself.” Mrs. White smiled as if I should understand what she meant.

“So do I agree or refuse?” I asked.

“You agree, of course.” She smiled. “We must do our best to please the clients and keep them paying or we’ll all be out of a job.”

“Make sure you call an Uber or another cab on our tab for all your journeys.” Mrs. White handed me a card with telephone numbers on it. “Your safety is important. Remember, if a client asks you to do something that you’re not happy to do, you can refuse, but make sure I know about it as soon as possible.”

“So where am I going first?”

“You’re to see Mr. Dale out in Longwood,” she said, looking at a card. “He’s a nice old-fashioned gentleman. He’ll probably ask you to dress up like I said. He’s not going to ask you to do much. I think he pays for two hours just to watch one of our girls.”

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The Uber took me about fifteen miles to an old turn-of-the-last-century townhouse, looking very



grand and well-cared-for. Before I got to the door, it was opened by an elderly man.

“Mr. Dale?” I said. “I’m Sophia. Mrs. White sent me.”

“You’re new. I always like to meet her new recruits.” He stepped back for me to enter. “I took the liberty of putting your uniform in the guest bathroom.”

I didn’t bat an elegant eyelid as he showed me through.

“I’ll leave you to it and when you’re ready, I’ll be in my library.” He indicated a door down the corridor.

“He may have an old mind, but his imagination must be working,” I said to myself as I looked at the formal maid’s uniform he wanted me to wear.

Quickly, I slipped off my denim dress and took the black one from its package. The material was fine quality, not some Halloween dress-up thing. When I got it on, the neckline of the tight bodice was too low and obviously designed for a show of breasts, which I didn’t have.

“It’s a good thing that my legs are one of my best features,” I told myself, seeing the garter belt and the black stockings on the chair.

The skirt was short and as you might expect, there were petticoats to make the short skirt stand out and show the garter tabs. There were black stilettos too, fortunately with sling back straps which I could adjust for they were far too big for my feet.

I looked at the small white cap, like a mob cap but designed to be pinned on rather than to cover my hair. Reaching for my purse, I pulled out a big crocodile clip that I used to tie my hair up sometimes. I bundled as much of my hair into it, and pinned the cap on top.

“It looks a bit messy and that clip isn’t going to hold my hair up for long.” I saw myself shrug in the

mirror. "Perhaps that's what he wanted to see as well."

With that thought, I put on my best maid's act, and minced along the corridor to knock on the library door.

"Where would you like me to start, Sir?" I asked, hoping that I sounded correct.

"Perhaps you could dust the library shelves; they've not been done for a long time. You'll need the steps from behind the door to reach the upper levels."

"Certainly, Sir." I curtsayed and picked up the feather duster from the top of a bureau.

I knew that he didn't expect much dusting. He only wanted an excuse to look up my short skirt. I knew that and I'm sure he knew that I did too, so I hammed it up. I put the ladder close to his chair and climbed up.

My rear was towards him and I made a show of bending from the waist and leaning forwards. I think he got a lot of time to view my panties. I did my best to make certain he was getting his money's worth. I'm not certain that I moved much dust though.

He watched me for an hour or so, then asked very formally if I'd take a cup of coffee with him. Of course, I accepted with feigned delight and followed him to a large modern kitchen.

He sat at a wooden table as I tried to figure out how to use his new-fangled all-in-one coffee grinder and maker. It was simple; all I had to do was push one button. Eventually I pretended to have figured it out after acting dumb for a few minutes. He liked that. I saw him smiling.

I set two cups on a tray, with a jug of cream from his fridge and a sugar pot, set the brewed coffee pot on it, carried it to the table, and put it in front of him.

"Would you like me to pour, Sir?" I stood primly behind his shoulder and waited for him to nod. "May I offer cream and sugar, Sir?"

“Thank you, my dear,” he said. “Please regard yourself as off-duty now. You may change if you wish.”

“May I stay as I am, Sir?” I asked in my best maid’s voice. “This is such a lovely dress.”

“Of course you can but please be natural with me now. Your work is over.”

“I think you know that there’s not much natural about me.” I saw the twinkle in his eye as he looked me over; my legs were deliberately spread to the side so that he couldn’t help but look.

He was nice and polite. He asked about me, and what had made me decide to be a girl. I recycled some of the stories I’d read in the books lying around Olivia’s room. I told him about running away from my evil stepmother, being taken in and abused.

It was all baloney of course but it sounded more interesting that the truth and he seemed to like it. He enjoyed asking me if I was going to go “all the way” and have surgery. I told him that I was considering it. You can guess that I said what I thought he wanted to hear.

“I think I’ve made you over-run your time.” He pointed to a clock on the wall. “I’m sorry but it’s been so nice to meet you.”

“It doesn’t matter; I’ve no other jobs today,” I replied. “I’ll finish this lovely coffee and then change, if that’s alright?”

I kept smiling and doing my best to please. If all the jobs were this difficult, I could live with it. I changed and hung up the costume, looked in the kitchen which was empty, then went back to the library where he was sitting with a book on his lap.

“I’d like you to take this before you leave,” he said, handing me an envelope. “Make sure you don’t tell Mrs. White. I’ll call and tell her how wonderful you’ve been.”

I called for my Uber and he escorted me to the door. I leaned in for a goodbye hug and felt his hand exploring my rear for a moment. Then I was in the car and on my way.

I looked in the envelope, blinked at how generous it was, and stuffed it at the bottom of my purse.

“You’ve done well,” Mrs. White said when I reported back to the office. “Mr. Dale thinks you’re wonderful.”

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It was work but not as I knew it. The next week and the one after were filled with clients like Mr. Dale. Most were men but I went to a couple of single women. They were more demanding and a lot more probing in their questions.

Some of the men wanted nothing more than to sit and talk. Olivia suggested that they were sublimating their own desires by having a real life ‘girl’ like me in their homes. Sometimes they had an outfit which they wanted me to wear for them, ranging from a full-on Southern belle dress, to leopard skin pattern jumpsuit which clung to my every curve, or lack thereof.

The women were different though. They wanted to ask about my feelings and my emotions. They asked what made me do it. Of course, I couldn’t just say that I got a job with a cleaning company. I improvised and vamped stories like I’d done before.

My social life was non-existent. I spent time with Oliver and Olivia. We walked in the country and took a trip to a beach. We ate out a few times; I was getting used to waiters flirting. We slept together, almost taking turns to be the instigator of our nightly activities.

We didn’t socialise until one weekend when I really went off the rails. That’s another story but it has to fit somewhere, so it might as well be my next confession.

Once we started to go out regularly, we started to drift apart. I got invited to parties and usually went alone.

“Be careful,” Olivia cautioned one Saturday evening as I was preparing to head out. “You discovered sex and now you’re letting it get out of control.”

It all came to a head one evening. I don’t remember anything about it, except the awful headache which lasted days after, but I’ve seen the pictures. They’re still out there on the web. Thank goodness no one videoed it all.

One shows me, almost full face to the camera. I’m kneeling on something, with my rear cheeks being penetrated by a tubby guy and I’m sucking a penis with my lipstick smeared all over the place.

The penis is attached to a guy in a pretty dress hiked up showing that he wasn’t wearing panties. Something is spilling out of my mouth and dripping from my chin. My hair is all over the place and my eyes look so glazed over, it’s no wonder I can’t remember anything.

I do remember that Olivia collected me. I was sprawled on the floor of a bathroom. I knew I’d been awfully sick several times and I felt like the end of the world. She took me home and left me in the shower with the warm water cascading over me.

I don’t know how long I was there or why I didn’t drown, but I didn’t. My head was awful, and stripping out of my wet clothes took ages. Eventually I was able to wash myself thoroughly. With the awful tastes in my mouth, and wrapped in a towel, I almost crawled into bed.

I stayed there for two days.

Mrs. White wasn’t pleased with me. She made that very clear when I reported that I was fit to resume work.

“I’m sending you to Mrs. Zanetti; you’ll like her. She’s an elderly eccentric and what she wants is someone like you to talk to.”

“She’ll probably want you to wear some of her old clothes and serve tea in the garden,” Olivia added. “She’s a nice old lady but loves the idea of boys like us.”

“She’ll probably want you to prove that you’re not a girl. but I’m sure you won’t have problems with that.”

Mrs. White sounded so matter-of-fact as if it was all normal. I suppose it was in her world.

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An Uber took me through the winding roads in the hills behind town, until we arrived at a colonial styled house where I was to get out near the front door. I stood and looked at the façade as the car pulled away.

The door opened. “Welcome. You’re Sophia, the new girl.”

Mrs. Zanetti was a small lady, over made-up for her age, and dressed in extravagant patterns of long skirt and blouse which clashed. She carried a walking stick and had flat sandals on her feet. If I guessed she was over seventy-five, I don’t think I’d be wrong.

She looked me over for a few moments ,saying nothing. She may have been elderly but my first impression was that she was razor sharp. I thought she was looking critically as if I’d tucked the back of my skirt into my panties but then she smiled warmly.

“I don’t have any cleaning to do, dear,” she said, taking my arm. “There’s a tray in the kitchen. It would be lovely if you could make some tea and bring it into the garden.”

I smiled to myself and watched as she threaded her way between the chairs in the conservatory and out into the garden.

“I do like to meet girls like you whenever I can. Since I don’t go out as much as I used to, Mrs. White has been lovely,” She said after a few remarks about

the garden, the view and the weather. "Are you really a boy?"

"I was warned that you might want to check," I replied with a smile, thinking we'd better get this over with.

I went to stand beside her chair, wondering what she would do. She smiled up at me as her hand climbed up my skirt, up my thigh. She gently verified that I possessed the right parts.

"You must be awfully uncomfortable in that suit," she said as I smoothed my skirt down over my thighs. "Did no one tell you where you were coming?"

"I was told that business dress would be good."

"Oh how silly." She made to stand and I leaned an arm out to help her. "Come with me. I have something far more suitable for sitting in the garden in my wardrobe. It may be a little out of fashion but there's no one else to see and I do want to sit and talk to you"

I followed her through the house and stood back as she opened a door. The room beyond was lined with cupboards and shelves.

"I've never thrown any of my clothes away since I got married," she said, sliding back a door to reveal a hanging rack of dresses. "There are more in the other cupboards. I even keep a note of where I've worn something so that I didn't turn up at a party in the same thing twice."

"Gosh, you've so many choices." I gasped at the sheer number.

"My husband always insisted that I was well-dressed. He said it reflected how well he was doing."

"He must have done *very* well." Perhaps I shouldn't have said that.

"He did and now the clothes are merely an old lady's memories." She lifted the hem of a light pink patterned dress. "This is fine silk; would you wear it for me?"

“I don’t think...”

“Please, it would make me very happy. I couldn’t wear any of these clothes any more. You can come and change in my bedroom while I find the accessories to go with it.”

I dressed quickly. The dress was the finest I’d ever worn. It was an older style with a slim waist and a soft falling bodice with half sleeves. The skirt was just below my knees.

“Black shoes don’t go with that dress.” She frowned. “I wonder if I have some shoes that you could try. My husband always said I had the biggest feet of any girl he knew. I think it was because I was never a good dancer and kept treading on his toes.”

She pulled out a shoe box from a different cupboard.

“Try these.” She held out a pair of heels. “I think I wore them with the dress but it was so long ago.”

I slipped off my black heels and wriggled my feet into the new pair. They were a little tight and possibly stiff from storage but they weren’t uncomfortable and the nude colour went nicely with the dress. I fastened the straps round my ankles and stood.

“That’s lovely,” she said. “Would you indulge an old lady and let your hair down as well?”

My hair tumbled over my shoulders. She touched it and pushed a strand away from my face.

“I can understand why you wanted to be a girl.” She took my hand and together we went back to the garden.

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“Mrs. White wants to see you in the office first thing tomorrow.” Olivia said as soon as I got in from my day with Mrs. Zanetti.

We'd made our peace since that awful night. I'm not sure that she could forgive my indiscretions but we resumed our relationship.

"Have I done something wrong?" I was alarmed.

"Rather the opposite, I think. I don't know any details but you've pleased one of her best customers and she's got a proposal for you."

"That sounds intriguing," I replied. "I don't know that I did anything special though."

She looked at me. "That isn't the dress you were wearing this morning." Olivia ran her hand against the material and lifted the skirt to read the label. "You're wearing a vintage dress. It probably cost hundreds of dollars when it was new and it's probably worth five times that now."

"She said I should wear it home to show you." I stopped and turned to the mirror. "It was in her closet and she asked me to wear it for her because she wanted to see someone wearing it."

"I'm guessing, but she probably wore it about forty years ago; it's a classic design."

"And you don't think I'm in trouble?" I asked, suddenly feeling a bit of panic. "Maybe she's regretting saying that I should wear it home."

"I'm sure that's not it." Olivia took my hand. "I've only been to see her once but I know that she may be old but she's not stupid."

"I can't help worrying."

And I kept on worrying through the evening. I couldn't rest and wandered from room to room and back again. Hoping it would give me a different feeling, I lubricated myself and slipped one of Olivia's plugs inside me. It gave a different feeling but didn't stop my mind churning.

It wasn't until Olivia took me to her bed that I forgot about it. Well, I nearly forgot about it. It was still at the back of my mind. Olivia was so sweet. She took me through to the bedroom and slowly stripped me,

with lots of stroking and lots of kissing. By the time I was undressed, I was in Seventh Heaven with all the sensations.

She sat me down on the edge of the bed. I was wearing a very short babydoll; black and almost transparent. I sipped from a glass of red wine she'd opened and left to come to room temperature on the vanity.

She leaned in to kiss me and took the glass from me. I knew what she intended to do and I wanted her to do it too. She eased me onto my back, then gently pulled my legs apart. She kissed up the inside of my legs, from my ankles to my thighs.

When her hand slipped 'round to where you can guess it was going, she discovered what I'd done earlier and her face showed it. In a few moments, my legs were over her shoulders, the plug was removed, and she'd lubricated her penis.

It was as if she was possessed by an urgency that couldn't be denied. I felt her tip slip between my cheeks and then, without hesitation, she began to enter. Her thrust was irresistible, as I knew it would be. I'd prepared the way and opened myself, hoping for something like this.

I think I expected something gentler but this was okay with me too. As she started penetrating me, I wanted it to be urgent and rough. I wasn't disappointed. She thrust mercilessly, making me moan with every push forwards.

It hurt; I can't pretend it didn't but it was a hurt that I needed and wanted right then.

I tried to signal that I didn't want her to come inside me too soon but I remember that I was rolling my head from side to side and moaning incoherently as she thrust and thrust as deeply inside me as she ever could have been.

She pushed hard and then held still, her thrusting changed to a steady pressure inside me. Then it was

happening. I was having an orgasm. I could feel her filling me. I think I cried.

I don't remember when she slipped out of me. I don't remember much about the minutes which followed. I knew that whatever she'd put inside me was trickling out of my cheeks, soaking the sheet underneath, until she pushed a towel under me.

I felt like I'd really experienced something wonderful; I needed to feel like that.

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It was morning; Olivia's penis was stiff between my thighs as I spooned against her. It felt so good that I moved very carefully, hoping to get her inside me before she awoke properly. I hardly dared to breathe as I took her shaft and fed it a little way between my cheeks and into my entrance.

As I slipped her further inside, she seemed to move in her sleep; maybe it was something instinctive. She pushed and I was so well-lubricated that she was further inside before I realised just how far she'd gone.

I think she woke then.

"Do you know that you're the devil, a temptress and a witch all in one delicious body?" She thrust hard then and I think I clenched against her.

"Sorry," I said, not really knowing if I was apologising for my character failures or for clenching.

I don't think it mattered. She pulled me into her tightly and thrust again and again. I felt my penis reacting and coming in spasms across the sheet, as she started to fill me again.

I didn't care; this was what I wanted.

"You devil," she whispered, falling limply back, all spent and sweaty. "How did you learn to do all this so quickly?"

"I think I've finally discovered what I'm good at."

She slapped me playfully and then realised the time. "You have to see Mrs. White this morning."

"I've been hoping it wouldn't have come round so fast," I replied. "I don't want to be fired after one day."

"I'm sure it's nothing like that," Olivia replied, heading towards the bathroom. "She wouldn't tell me why she wanted to see you, but she wasn't mad or anything."

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Two hours later, I was still sitting in Mrs. White's waiting room. I had Mrs. Zanetti's dress neatly folded and wrapped in tissue paper, inside a big paper bag.

Olivia had kissed me quickly as she departed for her day and some of the other girls had been friendly as they passed through. At last it was my turn and I was summoned in. I sat primly in my business suit and tried to look calm and collected.

"I'm sorry...." I started to speak but she held up her hand to stop me.

"There's nothing to be sorry about." Mrs. White smiled; a genuine smile I thought, so I relaxed a little. "It's Mrs. Zanetti who called."

"I hope I didn't offend her."

"Not at all, she wants you to spend some time with her. She knows my usual charges but she's made a generous offer on top of that, to be paid to you if you'll agree."

"She was kind to me; of course I'll agree," I replied.

"You don't know what the offer was yet." She chided me and I realised my mistake.

"I guess... I'm sorry, I'm new to all this."

"She wants you to help her sort her old wardrobes. They go back years and years I know and some of her pieces are exceptional. She was delighted that a

dress fit you and she thinks a lot of the garments and costumes she used to wear would fit you too.”

“You said she wanted me to sort things; why should that matter?”

“I think she wants you to model them for her; to dress as she did when she was much younger.” Mrs. White handed me some photographs. “These pictures are of her when she was younger. She says you look a lot like her.”

I looked but I think I was a little confused. I didn’t see the resemblance and handed them back.

“Look again,” Mrs. White said. “I can see a strong resemblance. Your hair is darker and your makeup isn’t anywhere near that style, but I agree that it’s a lot like you.”

“If you say so,” I mumbled assent, not knowing where this was going.

“Good, then it’s settled.” Mrs. White took it as concluded. “She wants you to go and live in her mansion. She says you can have the guest wing and you can come and go as much as you like.”

“I’m not sure... Olivia...”

“I’m sure Olivia would tell you to take the opportunity while you can.”

“I don’t know. When would I start?”

“As soon as possible; you don’t need to take much, she says that there’s everything you need there.”

“Would I be taking work from the other girls?”

“No, she’s clear that she wants you to have friends of your own age. She says that she’ll continue to book one a week and they can even stay over with you for an odd night, but they can’t move in with you. You’re free to come and go as you please as long as you’re there every day.”

“Can I talk to Olivia and give you an answer tomorrow?”

Of course. I'll talk to her as well." Mrs. White put the pictures back into a folder and smoothed the package. "I'll see you tomorrow morning for your reply."

It was a long evening and a longer night as Olivia and I talked back and forth about the offer. In the end, she persuaded me that I should take it.

It wasn't a falling out, or a final parting, more a realisation that we'd come together in one set of circumstances and that our futures may lead us in separate ways. She wanted us to part as friends. I cried a little but by morning I could see the sense in that.

Olivia helped me to pack my things and went with me to the office where we hugged and kissed as if parting forever. My mascara ran all down my face and I had to clean and re-do my face again.

"I'm sure that you've made the right decision." Mrs. White beamed when she heard me say that I'd decided to accept. "I'll call Mrs. Zanetti and let her know."

Olivia and I shared a final hug, then she was gone to whatever her assignment was for that day.

"To use her exact words, I have to bundle you into the nearest cab and send you right away."

With that, I set off on the next phase of my strange life.

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I was really nervous as I got out of the cab and walked towards the doors. The cab setting off with a squeal of tyres did nothing to calm my nerves.

"I'm so pleased to see you again." Mrs. Zanetti opened the door and reached to take my hand.

"I brought your dress back," I said, holding out the bag and feeling tongue-tied at the warmth of her welcome.

“That doesn’t matter; what matters is that you’re here.” She held my hand as we walked back towards her sitting room. “I hope you don’t mind but Mrs. White told me a bit about things that had been happening to you recently.

“I think I’ve learned,” I replied. “I got a little out of control and did a few stupid things.”

“We can all do that.” She gestured for me to sit opposite her. “My name is Gabriella. You can call me that or Ella, but never ever call me Gabby.”

“Thanks you, I think I shall call you Ella. You’re so elegant and that seems to suit you.”

“I like that,” she replied. “I so wanted you to come and help me.”

“I don’t see how...”

“You’re the first one from Mrs. White that I really feel comfortable with.”

“I don’t know why. As you said, I’ve been a little chaotic recently.”

“But you said you’d learned.” She smiled so genuinely that I hoped it was true. “I really want you to catalogue my wardrobe. I’d like to send some of the best pieces to be auctioned for charities.”

“I’m sure I can do that. I’ll have to do a lot of research though. I’m a newcomer to fashion.”

“I don’t care; I’d like to see you wearing some of the gowns that gave me so much pleasure. I can’t wear them anymore but I’d love to be reminded of those glorious days when I was a little chaotic too.”

“I can’t believe that you were ever chaotic.”

“Oh, but I was. Father threatened to cut me off several times. He hated my boyfriends and didn’t speak to me for three years after I married Luigi, but then when our businesses prospered, he came ‘round.”

“Did you have a family?” I asked, fearing that I’d have to contend with sons and daughters all around the place.

“No, we didn’t although we tried,” she replied. “It didn’t seem to matter until I lost Luigi. Now my nearest relative is my nephew Paulo. He runs the family businesses now. I’m sure you’ll like him.”

“I’m sure we’ll get along fine,” I replied, although I doubted that.

“That’s good,” she said brightly. “We’re having dinner with him later this week.”

My heart sank. How do I deal with this? I didn’t have time to dwell on it though as she took me through to her guest wing and announced that I was to treat it as my home and that I could come and go as I pleased. She seemed to delight in showing me the small kitchen with cupboards and chiller stocked with all kinds of good things.

“The BMW’s in the garage and there’s a little Honda if you prefer,” she said, waving towards a separate garage through the window.

I thanked her profusely but didn’t tell her that my driving experience was restricted to the old cleaning company’s vans.

“I’ll leave you to settle in and perhaps you’ll join me for a late lunch. I’ll be in my kitchen about two.”

Mrs. Zanetti left me alone. The guest wing was far bigger than anywhere I’d ever lived before. It was comfortably furnished and so clean and prepared that I knew some help would have been required.

I didn’t have much to unpack; a few clothes and shoes, my makeup of course and a few accessories. I was wearing all the jewellery I possessed, which consisted of my earrings and a couple of bangles. I’d avoided packing anything of Olivia’s.

For the first time in my life, though, I had some savings. I had all the cash from the tips and some in a checking account from Mrs. White. I may have been

reckless and hedonistic but it was mostly on other people's money.

I changed into my denim dress, which was about the best thing I had. I cleaned off my makeup and after sitting and thinking for a while, I redid it all, creating a much more precise and flattering look.

I couldn't settle and having wandered round the rooms for a while, I went down to Mrs. Zanetti's kitchen.

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Her face lit up when she saw me and she beckoned me to sit at the wooden table which filled the centre of an alcove. Soon bread, cheese, and fruit appeared.

"I think it's a special occasion," she said, opening a bottle of white wine. "I'm so pleased you accepted my invitation."

"Thank you but I have to ask, why me?" I was really curious. "You know I'm living like a girl but I'm not for real. I've been very out-of-control and done stupid things. I don't understand why..."

"It's simple. I liked you from the moment I saw your picture on Mrs. White's website," she replied. "I thought you'd bring a little fun into my life and I knew we'd get on."

"That's very kind..."

"I saw that you looked good in your pictures and I thought you'd enjoy going through all I've accumulated," she continued. "I hoped that maybe you'd like to wear some of my old things and remind me of my youth."

"I'm delighted and flattered that you think of me that way," I replied, feeling a tear coming to my eye. "I don't know what I've done to deserve this."

"I think you're a kind person," she replied. "Maybe you're a little confused at times but underneath, I think I can trust you."

And from there, our days took a pattern. We'd breakfast together, later rather than earlier. I'd drive out to get whatever hadn't been delivered. Then after lunch, Ella would select some of her wardrobe for me to catalogue. I used a replica card index system on her laptop.

At first, she'd occasionally ask me to model one of the costumes. I had to do my hair and makeup in a modern version of the appropriate period. I was getting really good at that and her face told me that she was delighted.

Each Wednesday, she'd send me out for the day on some pretext or other. When I returned, my bed had been changed and my rooms were spotless. My washing had been collected and last week's was returned, neatly packaged and ready for me to wear again.

It was the day for the cleaners and that she didn't want me to be there as she dealt with them.

Weekends were different. We drove out for lunch and I would escort her 'round a museum or an exhibition; we'd go shopping or simply walk in the park and watch the world go by. I was learning to relax as a woman and her elegance was starting to rub off on me.

Had I really found my purpose as a rich old lady's companion?

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I'd been there for four weeks, settling into the routine and for once finding some peace of mind. I'd hated cleaning crime scenes and had settled into the female life but I hadn't settled into the female life with Olivia. I thought I had, but as I looked back, I understood I'd been playing a part that was expected at the extremes.

I thought it was my choice but maybe I just drifted there because I didn't know otherwise. Now I felt that I was changing from a female impersonator into a woman.

Ella helped me along; no, she encouraged me and indulged me far too much but I couldn't put her off. I couldn't resist when she goaded me into being more and more feminine.

"I've always loved getting my nails manicured," Ella said as I drove her to what she told me was her regular appointment. "I've booked you in too; full manicure and pedicure with super strong extensions."

"You shouldn't," I replied.

"Don't pretend you don't like the idea. I hope you don't mind but I've chosen the reddest red for you. It's the most feminine colour always, never mind these modern shades."

"Okay, you've convinced me." I smiled across the car and saw her look of smug satisfaction.

"And they're going to be longer too," she said. "I think it's time you learned to use your hands with something extravagant."

She went to one nail station and I went to another. When I was finished, she was waiting for me. She examined my hands and smiled her approval. Then we went to a coffee shop.

"You're probably getting bored with being around an old lady all the time," Ella started to say one day after breakfast. "You've had no social life since you've been here."

"It's soothing to be calm and easy for once," I replied. "I think I could get used to being a lady of leisure."

"I think you need to meet some younger people, some more normal people than you used to know."

"I'm happy as we are," I replied, feeling a panic at the thought of anything interrupting my idyll.

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I should have been forewarned. A couple of days later, I drove Ella to the Clarissa Hair Salon. I'd heard of the place. I hadn't ever thought of going there; it was far too fashionable and far too expensive.

"I've booked Clarissa herself to supervise your hair today," she said.

"You're doing it again." I tried to sound angry but I failed. "I can't go in there. They'll know I'm a fake and they're far too expensive."

"They owe me a favour and they're not going to embarrass you," she replied. "I own the shop; they wouldn't dare upset me or my friends."

"I'm scared; they're far too upscale."

"I don't want any protests," Ella said firmly. "I've made the appointment and they're going to do my hair at the same time, so I won't be watching."

I didn't expect to be going into the salon. If I had, I'd have dressed a little more suitably. My white T-shirt was too tight and too short. My denim skirt was likewise too tight and too short. The white sneakers on my feet didn't help my image and my makeup had been rushed and largely limited to too much black kohl and mascara around my eyes.

My hair was loosely bundled up in a black velvet scrunchie and my nails were the worse for wear. It had been two weeks since my last manicure. Was I getting slovenly or was I so used to being Ella's companion that I was letting my appearance slip? Maybe a girl can't be glamorous all the time?

With my heart in my mouth, I followed her through the door. She was clearly expected, and so was I. Before I could hesitate, we were separated and I was sitting in a gown in front of a huge mirror, with Clarissa herself running her fingers through my hair.

"You have it in a surprisingly good condition," she said. "I think Mrs. Zanetti has chosen your style wisely."

“She hasn’t told me anything,” I said. “I didn’t know I was coming here until we were parking the car.”

“I’m not allowed to tell you anything either before we get to the final styling. Of course, she only gave the outline of what she wanted me to do. She said I should use my skill to make it spectacularly feminine.”

I felt a quiver of fright, or maybe it was excitement, as she said that last word but I didn’t say anything more. I was in far too deep to hesitate now.

“I don’t want you to cut it,” I said. “No matter what she’s said, you mustn’t cut it.”

“We’ve been told not to take any length,” she said, holding strands of my hair which were past my shoulder blades in length. “We will have to trim some ends where the hair is damaged but you’ll never notice a difference.”

“Are you sure?”

“I promise that you’ll love the feel and the way it sways and swings. It’s going to look fuller, and if you’ve lost half an inch of unhealthy hair, the end result will look even better.”

“I guess you know what you’re doing and I’m being an ungrateful cow but I’m a little scared.” I smiled hoping to excuse myself.

“Believe me; girls will look at your hair with envy,” she smiled back.

I think we were friends from then on. I knew that anything to make me look more feminine was what I really wanted. That thought surprised me. I used to be worried that my behaviour would give me away but those doubts had gone.

Maybe it was simply the months that I’d been pretending to be a full-time girl, or maybe something else. Mrs. Zanetti; she always encouraged and reminded me about, well, everything. I think she’d

adopted me as her special project and there was no doubt that she was enjoying herself.

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So I sat back patiently as my hair went through all the processes. I wasn't allowed to look but I knew from the scents and sounds that my hair was being lightened again and, later, that it was receiving a deep conditioning mask.

As I sat with a wrap over my hair, a girl appeared at my elbow. "I've been asked to give you a facial while the mask is treating your hair," she announced.

I smiled my agreement and sat back as my face went through several stages from cleansing to toning and moisturising. It was all really relaxing. I began to understand what "pampering" really meant.

"I'll be back to do your eyelashes and your makeup later, when Clarissa tells me you're ready." She wiped her hands on a tissue and looked at me.

"I think you're very lucky to look so good without makeup," she said. "I'll enjoy your doing makeup."

After a couple more processes and careful scrutiny, Clarissa decided that my hair could be roughly dried.

"It's to keep it from tangling while you have your makeup done."

"I've been ages though. Surely Mrs. Zanetti must be tired of waiting for me."

"Don't worry; she's gone to have coffee with her nephew and we're to call her when you're nearly ready," Clarissa replied. "She wants to be here when we let you see how beautiful you are."

With my hair loosely wrapped, and still wearing their gown, I went to sit in the makeup chair. It tilted back so that I was almost reclining. I thought it was a normal part of the up-market process, but I had another surprise.

“I’m going to do your maxi permanent lash extensions first,” my makeup girl said. “They should last two or maybe three weeks, then you can come back.

“You said permanent and then three weeks. Does that mean they’re not permanent?”

“It means you don’t need to take them off at night,” she replied. “They’re glued to your natural lashes, so gradually they’ll fall out. You’ll adore them and you’ll be back regularly, I promise.”

I didn’t say anything about being shocked, but I was; and thrilled of course. This was another step away from being a boy. I lay back and made small talk about movies and music we both knew. Of course, I wasn’t allowed to watch. With my eyes closed as she worked, I couldn’t complain, but I was wondering about my hair. It had been such a long time and Clarissa herself was supervising.

I think I went from curious to excited to scared all in a moment, then repeated it over and over.

But I loved it all. I think I was in love with my new self!

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I knew I was ready when Ella appeared with Clarissa. They were talking animatedly until Ella caught sight of me. I sat quivering with excitement as I waited to see myself. She did a double-take and then her face broke into a smile.

“You can look now,” Clarissa said.

I stood and, free of the salon’s gown, I saw myself walk towards the floor-to-ceiling mirror at the side of the salon. Somehow my T-shirt and denim skirt looked right now. I was slightly hippie-looking in a bohemian rich girl well-groomed sense.

I just re-read that and it doesn’t make much sense but you can get the picture.

My hair was the first and most obvious change I noticed. It was pale blonde, paler and lighter than I'd ever been, with some light grey tones running through it. It couldn't be mistaken for anything natural, yet it looked entirely believable as a colour.

My makeup matched the hair. What a great artist she had been; my eyes were as darkly shaded as ever. The permanent false lashes were long, luxurious, and as thick as the false lashes that I used almost daily.

I saw my hand touching my hair, as if to test that it was for real. My new nails got there first and made me pause. They were now longer than ever before and about half an inch beyond the end of my fingers.

I know that pop stars have longer nails in their videos but I wasn't in a video. I had to live with them and I wondered if I could do it. I had to dress and undress, shower, and do my makeup. It was going to be a challenge.

"I do hope you like my treat," Ella said tentatively, bringing me out of my reverie.

"Darling, I love it all," I gushed, putting all my doubts behind me. "I feel like a new girl."

Then I realised what I'd said. I saw Ella and Clarissa look at each other. Then they smiled and then they giggled.

"Okay, I know. I *am* the new girl." I hugged Ella. "Thank you; I think you've shaken me up and I needed that."

"I hope that means you're ready to start living again, instead of staying home all the time with me." Ella took my hand as we walked back to the car.

"Yes, I think I am, but don't expect me to abandon you for the life you rescued me from."

"I don't think you're that girl anymore."

"I don't think I am either," I replied. "I want to be real."

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“I’ve asked my nephew Paulo to take us for dinner on Saturday evening,” she said. “We’re going to one of his restaurants and I’d like you to dress up in something really special.”

“I think all your things have been special,” I replied.

“I have a really slinky silvery dress which I used to love.” She reached across for an old magazine photograph and held it out to me. “I don’t think the style is too out of fashion.”

“It’s breathtaking.” I saw the figure-hugging shape of the dress clinging to a much younger Ella like a second skin. “I love the way it looks to flow as you walk and the heavier pattern as the dress falls from those thin shoulder straps to a mid-calf hem.”

“I still have the accessories too.” She pointed to the photo again. “Those earrings were quite heavy and they fall almost to my shoulders. They weren’t solid although they look it in the picture. They were flexible and moved with me. I do love them still but I’m too old now.”

“I’m sure you’re not.” She gave me a look which said I was being stupid.

“I didn’t have much bust then.” She took the picture from me. “That was long before implants were everywhere. Thin shoulders were fashionable and mine were just right for that dress.”

“I don’t have any breasts either,” I said. “No implants. I didn’t want them although I do remember being told that I should have them.”

“I’m sure that some young man will change your mind before too long.” I saw the mischief in her eyes and laughed with her. “I have the silver heels in the picture and you’ve already proved that you can fit into mine so they shouldn’t be a problem.”

“I guess there are some advantages in being small as a boy. I remember wanting so much to grow but I never did.”

“Good, then that’s settled.” Ella sighed contentedly. “You shall wear that dress when Paulo takes us out. We shall have such fun organising your hair and makeup. I feel quite young again.”

“You could never be old.”

“Oh, but I have no control over that so don’t flatter me.” Ella poured more wine. “But I shall enjoy seeing how well we can turn you out.”

“But won’t Paulo be disappointed that your companion is a boy in a dress?”

“I don’t think he’ll mind at all,” she replied. “In fact I think he’ll be rather amused.”

Suddenly I felt as if I was slipping into a silken trap. The strange thing is that I didn’t mind a bit.

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I loved that dress from the moment I saw it. When I stepped into it and pulled up the back zipper, it was delightful. I felt it hug my body down to the middle of my thighs. I watched how the dress moved and shimmered as I walked back and forth across the mirror’s image.

When Saturday afternoon arrived, Ella retired to get ready. “I think you’ll have more than enough time to be really special. Paulo said he’d send a car for us about seven.”

I took my time; a long luxurious bath in scented water, followed by my favourite hair products. My hair dried like a dream. Whatever product had been used in the salon, my hair was as soft and sleek as when I’d left.

My makeup took time as I sat in front of the mirror in my robe. The nails weren’t as difficult as I feared they would be but I was grateful that I didn’t have to

glue false lashes to my eyelids. I took my time and carefully graduated the shadow on my eyelids and my brows. Black eyeliner and mascara seemed to be so easy and so instinctive that I hardly had to think.

Then I reached for my lingerie. Ella had bought something new for me. I had a matching bra, panties, and garter belt set in a colour which almost matched the dress. It was a silvery pattern and lace on a warm white background.

The bra said it was a “maxi-miser” and it felt really comfortable. For the first time, I regretted not having something to put in the cups other than some cotton wadding artfully shaped.

I slipped into the shoes. As Ella had predicted, they fit and were comfortable if a little too high for walking any distance. I knew I could slink across a dining room in them, so that was okay.

I brushed my hair carefully, spraying the front to keep it in place and so that my earrings showed. I hadn’t taken them out since my ears were pierced and I’d got used to feeling them move with me.

Ella was waiting for me when I came down the stairs to wait for the car.

“You look lovely.” She held both my hands and leaned so that our arms were at full length. “I’m sure Paulo will be pleased to see you.”

“He’ll be pleased to see you too, looking so young and alive.”

“Don’t flatter an old lady,” she chided me. “I’m old enough to know my place. I remembered the earrings I wore with that dress if you’d like to try them.”

She handed me a box and when I opened it, there were two sparkling gilt-coloured earrings. They’re hard to describe; long articulated drops, heavy and shimmering with tiny white stones spiralling round. I removed my hoops and put them in. They almost reached my shoulders, just as she had said.

“Are you sure that you shouldn’t be wearing them? They’re so pretty.”

“They’re not appropriate for my dress or my age.” She pretended to slap my hand.

“You’re wearing more rings than you usually do,” I noticed.

“It’s just a few favourites and I get so little excuse to get them out these days. Look at my wedding band and the engagement ring Luigi gave me,” she replied. “He gave me the engagement ring on our second date. He put it on my right hand and told me that when I was ready to marry him, I should wear it on my left ring finger. He was so sure I’d accept him.”

“How long did it take for you to decide?”

“On our fourth date, it had changed hands.” Her eyes twinkled. “He was a lovely man. I brought this ring for you. I hope you don’t mind but I know you haven’t any.”

“It’s lovely too,” I said, looking at a square cut sapphire surrounded by diamonds on a gold band.

“It’s a Princess Diana copy that he bought for me when we went to London to see the wedding. It was our last holiday together.”

She took it from me and slipped it onto the ring finger of my right hand where it was too loose, so she switched it to my middle finger.

“I promise to take care of it and make sure you can pack it away when we get home.”

“Just wear it.” She waved her hand dismissively. “It’s useless in the box; it’s better giving pleasure to someone.”

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The car arrived and whisked us to a brightly-lit restaurant. As we walked to the door, the scents of cooking made me feel hungry. The doorman bowed

as we entered and then I saw him. I'd seen him before and didn't expect to see him again.

"This is my nephew Paulo." He took my hand and shook it gently, looking with a curiosity which didn't reassure me.

"It's a pleasure to invite you to my restaurant," he said. "Aunt Gabriella has said so many wonderful things about you; I feel I know you already."

"I'm sure she's been more than kind," I said, hoping that he didn't remember that he knew me from way back.

I averted my gaze. I knew exactly where I'd seen him before. He was at those parties when I was at my most out of control. That picture of a penis in my rear and one in my mouth; I think it was his in my mouth.

"Please don't let him remember," I prayed silently to myself and to whoever might be listening, not that I was religious in any way.

Our meal was perfect; Italian cuisine at its finest, with exquisite wines to match each course. The conversation was easy too, despite the fears churning in my stomach. As the cheese course arrived, Ella excused herself and left me alone with him.

"I can see you're worried. Please don't be." Paulo touched my hand. "I know you remember where we met, but I think we've both grown since then."

"I've changed beyond all recognition," I replied. "Except that you did recognise me. That doesn't make sense."

"It makes perfect sense." He poured some more wine into my glass. "Can we start again and forget our youthful extravagances?"

"That's putting it tactfully." I couldn't help but smile. "I'm happy to do that. Ella's been like a second mother to me."

"Or has she been an indulgent aunt?" His eyebrows raised in a question that wasn't answered as Ella came back.

“I hope you’re going to get along well.” She looked from Paulo to me. “You’re my two favourite people.”

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A week later and I’d been on my first date with Paulo.

“I don’t really want to go,” I said that morning to Ella who’d done all the arranging. “He can’t be serious about wanting to date a girl like me.”

“Don’t make judgements,” Ella told me. He’s a good businessman but underneath it all he’s lonely. It’s such a shame because he’d make someone really happy.”

“I’m sure you’re right but I don’t think that someone should be me. You know all the reasons why it shouldn’t work.”

“Maybe those are the very reasons why it may work.”

“Okay, I’ll go, but don’t read anything into it,” I said, slipping off the sapphire ring which I still wore. “I’d better give you this to put away safely. If he sees it, he’ll know it’s yours.”

“I don’t care; wear it. A girl needs good jewellery sometimes. It reminds her that she’s worth something.”

I thought of that later and wondered what she was really saying to me.

So he picked me up in his Jeep and took me to the lake in the hills at the back of the town. He edged through the trees to a secluded beach where from the back of the vehicle he produced a table and two chairs, a big picnic basket, and a bunch of flowers as a centrepiece.

The day was fun. He was a charming host and there was no mention of our past acquaintance. Neither of us mentioned the past we’d shared, until the end when he was dropping me off.

“You know somethings about me,” He said awkwardly, hesitating as if searching for the right words. “I only know a little of you and all of that is from my Aunt Gabriella. I know nothing else.”

“That’s a kind thing to say,” I sighed.

“The other thing you need to know is that I’ve been hoping for a relationship with a girl like you.” He looked at me as if searching my face for something. “Now after meeting you properly, I hope that it is with you.”

Impulsively, I leaned across and kissed him swiftly on the lips, then jumped out of the vehicle and into the safety of the house.

My emotions were all over the place.

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Our second date followed a week later. I was still wearing the sapphire and this time my dress was one of Ella’s treasures. It was a vintage tea dress in baby blue, with a tight bodice and a flared skirt, short sleeves and a modestly scooped neckline.

I’d found a chest of drawers at the back of her dressing room which contained lingerie of all styles that seemed to be from all periods. Sets were packed neatly together so that I didn’t have to search through to get a match.

I chose a pale blue set and following Ella, there was a garter belt. I think she must have been late to discover tights, or maybe she simply preferred the feel of the stockings and tabs. I think I could agree with that.

The bra was beautifully designed. It made me feel extra feminine to wear it. I even put a little more padding into the cups than I normally would. I excused myself on the grounds that it made the bodice fit better. She even had matching heels for me to wear

Paulo took me to a movie but I’ve no recollection of what it was about. There were scenes of mountains

and snowstorms, a few bangs, and an extended scene in a bedroom which was very tasteful or so it seemed from the bit I saw.

Paulo may have been emboldened by it. His arm worked its way round my shoulder and then the tops of our arms were touching. I turned to look at him and he kissed me. He kissed me! It was firm and deliberate, lip to lip, then tongue to tongue.

It was at that moment that it hit me. I'd missed being kissed and held. I'd missed the thrill of it all. He kissed me and I kissed him. I've no idea what was on the screen. His other hand sneaked over my skirt and started to play with my crotch.

My penis which I thought I had tucked out of harm's way started to react immediately. It grew to a strong size and girth. I liked my penis even though I knew it wasn't the biggest or the most impressive around.

"I think we should go," I whispered to him as his hand worked up and down my shaft.

We left and hurried to his Jeep. Once in the seats, I leaned over and kissed him again. I didn't want to stop kissing him but this wasn't the greatest place to do it.

"Should we get a room?" I asked in my best sex kitten voice.

"We could go to my place, it's quicker."

"I can't wait to start your engine." It was my sex kitten voice again as he slipped the vehicle into drive.

His place turned out to be a large apartment over the restaurant. The parking was underground and there was a private elevator to take us up. I kissed him as we ascended and made a point of feeling for his penis. I was pleased to feel that it was ready too.

I can't remember how we got through the door into his living room. I don't remember taking his chinos off, or how my panties were flung over a vase on a shelf. I do remember that first taste of his penis on

my lips and running my fingernails along the underside of the shaft to make him squirm with pleasure.

I remember kneeling on his couch and presenting my rear cheeks to him as if to satisfy a need that was growing in me. I remember too that he stood and left for a moment. I felt despair until he returned and started working some lubrication into my vacant and expectant rear.

At the first touch of his penis, I arched my back and lowered my head. I pushed back against his forward thrust.

It hurt; oh, how it hurt.

I put my head lower, as low as I could and raised my rear as high as I could. I thought I was preparing for his next thrust but I wasn't ready. It had been too long since I'd been taken. It had probably been longer since I really wanted to be taken.

I forced my muscles to relax as best I could. I couldn't relax my penis which was standing as strongly as it possibly could; feeling like it was ready to burst. Paulo was whispering to me. I knew he was whispering but I wasn't taking in a word.

It sounded nice and encouraging. It sounded as if he was enjoying the feelings as much as I was as he pushed forwards and I pushed back, relaxing and pushing over and over again. I knew I was panting and making sounds. My breath was coming in gasps.

He slipped through those first muscles that I could never control. It was a familiar feeling, yet one that I'd quite forgotten. A waver of relief; a wave of pleasure rolled through me. I knew that he was going to get all the way inside with a little more effort.

He pushed and I pushed. We pushed and eased together; pressure and release; pressure and release. Then he was as far as he could go. It was as if his balls hitting my rear were acting as a depth limiter.

We relaxed together then, each feeling that something had been achieved: complete penetration. I knew now that I could take my time. I could go with

whatever he wanted to do to me and I hoped it was plenty, long and strong.

I imagined the tip of his penis deep inside me. In my mind's eye, it was seeking its best pleasure, its comfortable relief.

"Take me, oh please take me," I heard myself saying over and over again.

He started to move inside me. He took time and I think he was delighting in my impatience and making me wait, making me wait and beg. He seemed to stay in me forever. I couldn't make him come and give it all to me.

Then I could. A spasm, then another; I could feel him filling me. Spasm after spasm; I knew what it meant. I knew my own penis was doing the same thing, pointlessly and into the air.

I didn't want him to fade and slip away. I held still long after he'd finished, willing him to stay there even though I knew the inevitable would happen. It did. He slipped out of me, followed by a gust of liquid down the back of my thigh.

What a mess! We lay together, basking in the warmth of our feelings.

"I'd better get you home before your fairy god-mother turns me into a toad for corrupting you," he said, stirring from my side.

"If she does, I'll kiss you and turn you back into my prince."

I don't think Ella was surprised when I was late back. I knew she'd read the expression on my face and didn't need to ask any questions.

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Our third date was a few days later. Paulo took me to a private dining room in his restaurant. The lights were low and the music was soft. The food was excel-

lent and the wine perfect. But I wasn't concentrating on the food.

"Aunt Gabriella confided that she'd told you the story of Uncle Luigi courting her. He gave her a ring and put it on her right hand." Paulo dropped to one knee. It was a little theatrical, I thought.

He took my right hand and I could feel that he was slipping a ring onto my ring finger.

"When I see you wear that on your wedding finger, I shall know you've accepted my proposal."

I looked down and saw a sparkling diamond solitaire on my finger, next to the one with the sapphire. I looked at it speechlessly. I hadn't expected this.

With him still on his knee, I held out my hands and removed the solitaire and transferred it to my left hand. I held it out for him to see.

"Is that the answer you want?" I asked.

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