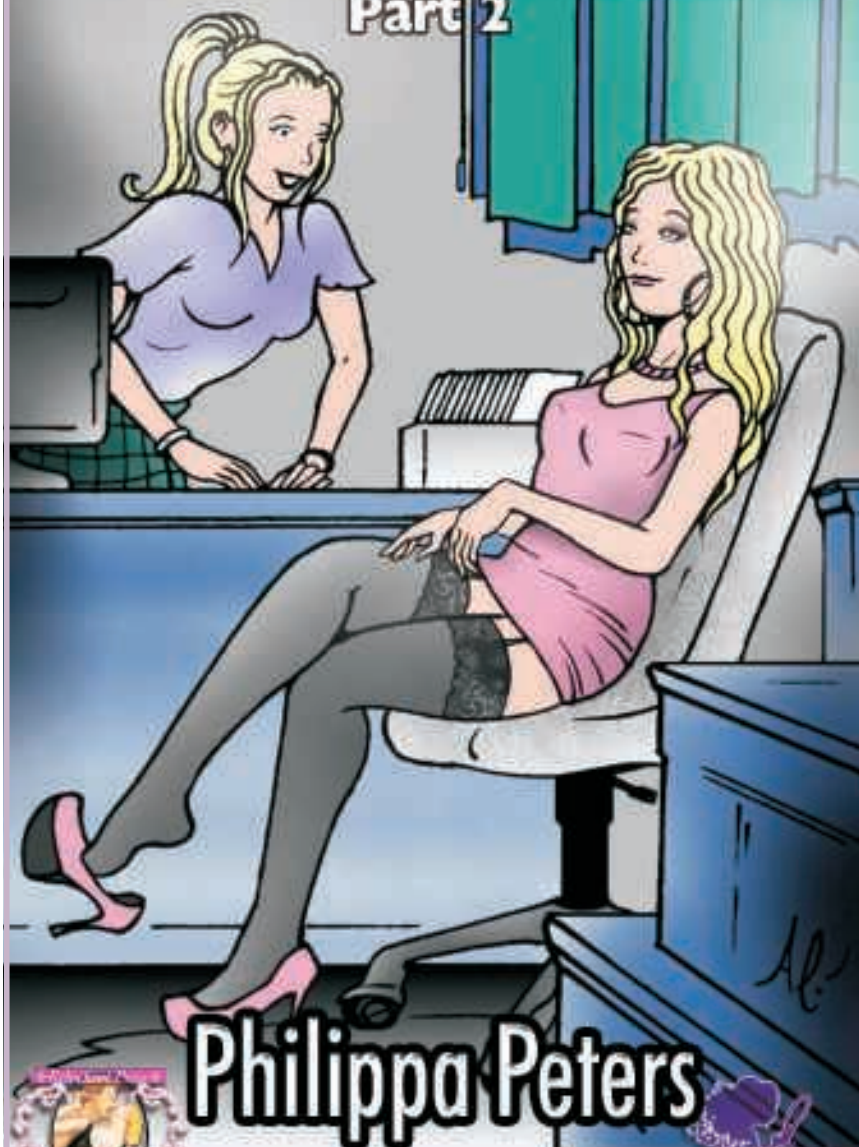


# Identity: Noelle Mercier

Part 2



Philippa Peters



An "Adult Tv" Novel



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# IDENTITY: NOELLE MERCIER II

by **Philippa Peters**

**\*\*\*1. Tell me what went on in Paris\*\*\***

“Noelle Mercier is more dangerous than we were led to believe,” Section Chief Virginia Shepherd said crisply to the assembled committee. “A year ago, she killed a Section Chief, Jackson, in Paris. Two weeks ago, she was identified as the assassin who killed the Barrouqi brothers, just when they were about to accept a proposal that would assist the peace process in Central Asia.”

Not an eyelid fluttered over the recitation of that ‘fact,’ Virginia noted.

“A week ago,” she went on without a change in cadence, “she returned to Paris. This is a recording of her speaking to Thierry Bouchard, her control when she worked for Jackson.”

There was a stirring and sparking of interest at that, probably because everyone in the room was

high enough in clearance to know that Jackson had been assassinated in Paris, his section dispersed as a result.

“Yes, Virginia,” said a man’s voice in French from the audio at Ginny’s desk. Only Ginny, her deputy, Jack Reynolds and possibly Ezra March, poker-faced as always, would have known the voice as that of Thierry Bouchard, an American, despite the name. He’d been Noelle’s last control when she had been known to be working for the agency.

“Have you marked her yet?” murmured a light, feminine, seductive voice, or so Ginny Shepherd thought it.

There was a slight drawing of breath as if the listener was startled by what he’d heard. “She hasn’t seen you yet,” the male voice whispered. Some had to strain to listen. It was hard to tell it was the same man, Thierry, responding to the woman speaking to him as if he recognized who she was.

“Quite a reception when all I came back for was to kill you,” said the light, girlish voice, the amusement in her tone very evident to Ginny but she’d heard the passage a hundred times.

“Anyone with a gun and a cyanide ...” said the man’s voice, picking up in volume as if he heard the words and didn’t believe them.

“Cyanide pill,” interrupted the girl with an infectious giggle. “Yes, I remember. Give my regards to Jackson’s replacement and tell him to go fuck himself.” Several of the listeners in the room with Ginny frowned at that. But the girl was going on. “I don’t need Jackson or him any more. I went over his head.”

“Noelle!” exclaimed Thierry but the cellphone clicked audibly as Noelle cut him off. “Jackson’s dead!” Thierry yelled into the phone, his end of the conversation still being recorded. “Noelle!” he shouted. “Jackson’s dead! Remember? Noelle!”

“Apparently she doesn’t,” Virginia’s voice responded, sounding far away as if she wasn’t behind

Thierry as he yelled into the phone. It was cut off as Virginia Shepherd stopped the computer program that held the recording.

“So, we know she arrived in Paris,” said Virginia, “but the rest of the conversation is something of a mystery. Why, for example, was she sending a message to Jackson’s replacement to go fuck himself? Well, I won’t,” she said with a grim smile. “She’s the one who killed Jackson. We have to take her to account for that. Then there’s this.”

This’ was a second recording, this one a video. Ginny did exactly what the techie had told her to do. Up on the screen came a recording of an American officer approaching the camera.

“The voice identification program says that this voice is the same as the one in the first recording,” said Virginia Shepherd. “So, don’t be fooled, gentlemen, as my agents were. This purported male courier is none other than Noelle Mercier, not the man that you think you are seeing.”

There were gasps from several of those on the committee. “She was placed in a cell as her orders requested. I suppose I should say ‘he’ was placed in loose detention,” Ginny went on in the same controlled tones. “I can show you an hour or two of nothing happening near to the cell in which this courier, identified as Lieutenant Stephen Nixon, was held.

“What I can’t show you is how this was done.”

There were more gasps as the camera panned through what had been left of the supplementary interrogation center in Paris. The alarms were sounding and flashing but the metal portcullis that was supposed to protect the facility was smashed into a metallic desk, bending it, a gap to allow entrance and exit visible beneath it.

The cameraman panned about several rooms, one clearly for interrogation. There was Jack Reynolds, out cold on the tiled floor, another of Ginny’s operatives beside him. Several more men were lying un-

conscious throughout the facility, medics beginning to resuscitate them.

“This is what Lieutenant Nixon, a man with Noelle Mercier’s voice, did to my interrogation squad,” said Ginny, ignoring the men who wanted to ask her questions. “Who you don’t see in these pictures, besides Noelle in her disguise as a man, is Thierry Bouchard, who was the person being questioned extensively in the main interrogation room.

“Yes, both Nixon and Bouchard vanished despite the speed with which the embassy responded to this attack. It’s clear, isn’t it, that Nixon was, is, Noelle Mercier. Jack and I think she’s teasing us with the ID as that’s who her fingerprints identify her as, in Jackson’s group. All his operatives had other identities that their fingerprints lead to. It was standard in his section.”

“So who’s this Stephen Nixon?” asked a frowning Section Chief, his rank equal to Ginny’s.

“A helicopter pilot killed in Iraq,” said Virginia. “Quite a hero who probably worked on black ops for Jackson.”

“Where’s this Thierry Butcher now?” asked the same questioner.

“We don’t know,” said Virginia. “Not a whisper about him, nor Noelle Mercier. She may have killed him as she said she would. Or she might just have bled him of information he had about us which is why we haven’t caught a sniff of her Chanel perfume anywhere in Europe since she broke her ex-lover out of our welcoming clutches.”

“And she is most dangerous because ...” the same, persistent questioner went on.

“Because she’s killed one of us, a Section Chief, Jackson, a year ago,” snapped Virginia Shepherd. “Maybe she killed more. Another agent died in that screw-up. She killed the Barrouqi brothers. She’s probably killed Thierry Bouchard. She’s not working

for the agency any more. We have to find her and take her out, as we think Jackson went to Paris to do.”

“I don’t know this woman,” cut in a new speaker. “Is it true all files on her are just gone? How can that be? And we were employing her over here after she’d taken out a Station Chief?”

“It seems,” said Ezra Marsh, in his frostiest speaking voice. He’d said to Ginny that he didn’t want to talk at all in the meeting, “that Jackson kept her off the record. We didn’t know that she was working for us in Paris.”

“Didn’t we close Jackson’s section because he’d lost control of his packs of killers?” Browning, the ‘Loyal Opposition’ on the committee, asked. “Wasn’t that approved after Jackson started terminating assets all on his own?”

“Noelle Mercier completed twenty missions in Europe with her control, Thierry Bouchard,” Ezra went on again. “And Jackson was just going to close her down. We don’t exactly have a thousand female assets we can call on when we need a woman, you know. At first, we thought Noelle had been given the mission of terminating Jackson. She came back to the States and was debriefed here. Only very recently have we been able to verify that no one gave an order to terminate Jackson. Noelle has a skill set we could use but, as of now, she’s gone off the reservation.”

“Can’t we terminate her by using the packs we already have?” another frowning questioner wanted to know. “They all have assets as good as she seems to be. Set a wolf to catch a wolf, or its bitch, I suppose it would be in this case.”

Virginia wanted to slap the old, chauvinist warrior. “We could,” she went on, “if only we had a pack here in America.”

“She’s here?” gasped another of the older, snowy-haired fossils. “But you promised us,” he turned to Ezra Marsh who’d sat stonily, “that no asset like her would ever be allowed to set foot over here.”

“We don’t know for absolute certainty that she’s put a high heel on our native soil, Bob,” said Ezra. “But it does seem likely. You heard her say she didn’t need Jackson’s replacement any more because she’d gone over his head.”

“Someone in the agency is working with her?” asked the first, persistent questioner in surprise.

“When we find out who he or she is,” said Ezra Marsh, his cold expression chilling everyone in the room, “we won’t be announcing it. Like the late Thierry Bouchard, he or she is just going to vanish.”

## **\*2. Nylons and cacti do not go together\***

“I’m sorry, lady,” said the Mexican people smuggler, grinning as if he’d done something clever. “I tol’ you. You gotta wear pants out here, even a woman as pretty as you!”

I could have told him I didn’t own a pair of pants. A blonde airhead like I was playing wouldn’t have worn them. She’d have worn the vividly red dress I was wearing, with deep, frontal cleavage, showing off her perky, girlish breasts. She’d have worn too much makeup, heavy about her eyes, and scads of cheap jewelry. She’d have hitched up her dress all of the time to show off her stockings and shapely, tanned legs. Yes, since I’d approached Ramon Suarez in the bar in Sonora, I had been the sexy, girlish Alicia Marques, a woman wronged.

I’d told Ramon I’d married my husband, an American, in El Salvador. He’d left me to go home to see his ailing mother. Of course, I’d found out that the lying, no-good cheat wasn’t known at the American Embassy, he wasn’t a citizen of the US. My marriage certificate was fake and I was on my own.

But another American who’d liked me – I wiggled my tush suggestively for Ramon, swishing my skirts,

getting a real female kick out of it myself - had recognized 'Rod' in the few pictures I had of him, and the city in the background. Ramon had had his arm about me then, panting for a woman like me.

"Later," I told him, patting his hand on my thigh away. I showed him Rod, standing in front of his mansion, or suburban house, his house number visible. I could track him down through that, couldn't I? If I could get someone to help me, I'd added coyly.

I doubted Ramon believed my teary, womanish, emotional story. "Ten thousand," he'd laughed at me. His face had been a picture when I put that amount of dollars on the table in front of him.

"Now," I told him, moving close enough to let the Chanel and my perky breasts\ have their usual effect on a mere man like him. "We go across the border now."

"I got arrangements to make," Suarez blurted out. "Come see me next week, Monday; it ain't so busy then."

"I got that deal from Gonzalo," I told him, getting up and preparing to wiggle femininely away from him. His head had jerked when I'd mentioned his chief competition in getting people across the American border illegally. He stopped me, his hand covering the wad of money in front of him.

"I'll give you another ten thousand dollars, American," I purred at the man, "when we get across the border tonight."

"Tomorrow," Ramon Suarez said. "I got things to do tonight!"

I reached over and bent his thumb back. With my other hand I scooped the money back into my purse. "I guess I'll try someone else," I said to him with a girlie smile.

I sashayed towards the door, knowing that more than one man was watching my tush move in the tight skirt I'd chosen to wear.

“Wait, señora,” hissed Ramon, coming up behind me. I could have killed him easily if he’d pulled one of his knives, the stiletto from his boot or the flip-knife from the extra sleeve in his leather jacket.

“Señorita,” I said girlishly, to him with a smile, letting him see how white and even my teeth were. “That’s what the Americans say I am, still.”

Suarez followed me outside before he put his arm about my shoulders to restrain me. I let him. I let him get another whiff of my Chanel perfume. It spoke of riches and money. I could almost sense the ‘coyote’ sniffing around me. I wore mid-size, ‘kitten’ heeled shoes to let him be taller than me. I was a woman, in his eyes, pretty and all alone, which meant I wasn’t too smart.

So I’m sure Ramon reasoned, he didn’t have to get his usual crew involved with him. He’d take my money, and anything else he wanted. It would all be his. He wouldn’t have to share anything, not even me and the love I’d give him, with anyone.

“Let me see the other ten thousand,” Ramon said with his attempt at a charming grin.

I opened my purse. He saw that I had several packs like the first one.

Ramon made one of those exasperated Spanish expressions that are pretty meaningless to me. What does ‘ay caramba’ really mean, anyway? I did understand him when he said, “Lady, don’t show anyone else what you got in that purse or there’ll be a big fight right here, over your dead body.”

“Oh no,” I said, lifting my lacquered, shiny red fingernails to my red, shiny mouth as if I was very frightened. I shook my long hair down my bare back. Ooo, that felt so good, so nice, so womanly.

Ramon smirked. “You’re quite safe, señorita,” he said, stroking my soft skin, probably deciding whether to take me somewhere with him to make love to him. “You’re with me, Ramon Suarez, you know.”

I knew that. I'd already learned that this man was one of the best at finding routes across the American border, routes without any American border patrols sniffing along them. Thus, they were routes on which I wouldn't have to leave a trail of dead bodies behind me. The only problem with the affectionate Ramon Suarez was that he was known to betray his partners and his clients, particularly if he thought they were holding out on the money they were paying him. Oh, and he loved to screw the prettiest girls in any party he took across the border.

"Expensive but good," several of my inquiries had led me to believe. "But make sure you go with him in a large group or he'll rip you off."

But I didn't want to go in a large group that would remember me. I didn't want other refugees telling the US Border Patrol who had slipped over the border with them. No, I needed to cross all by myself.

"I, I have to go tonight," I whispered to Ramon, his hand stroking my tush, fondling the line of my panties. He steered me into the shade at the side of an old ramshackle store, tourist trinkets everywhere in its dusty windows.

"All right," said Suarez, leaning into me, his breath awful enough to gag a maggot. He wanted to kiss me. I let him, knowing that his hands caressing me, around my breasts and tush were checking me for weapons. I didn't have to carry any to deal with a flea like Suarez.

Just so long as Ramon didn't actually put his hands inside my panties and find out what I really had in there. No, he couldn't do that. I couldn't let him. I wiggled against him as if I was enjoying his caresses. Yes, he kissed me again, his tongue trying to insert itself in my mouth. Yes, he did think still that I was a woman.

His pickup truck was behind the bar. I cuddled up to him on the long front seat, torn in several places. That was where I caught my stockings for the first time. Well, I'd buy more feminine clothing in the US, I thought, once we were across the border, actually

getting a little hot as I thought of myself in *Victoria's Secret*, buying new panties and a bikini.

The last ten miles we drove without headlights even though the night was dark. It took us almost an hour to complete that last distance to the border before we abandoned Ramon's truck in what appeared to be a well-worked, fairly well hidden alcove in the side of a hill.

"Now, we got to scramble," said Ramon, taking the time to swirl me about him, to kiss my cheek and fondle me. He almost crushed my breasts to him. "Only take us an hour to get up to the border but a couple more to avoid the patrols they got out these days. They catch you, you know," that was said with hands exploring my skirts, garter belt and panties, "you'll be lucky if they just turn you back this way."

"And then I'd be at the mercy of all the predators out here," I said, batting my false eyelashes, still doing my dizzy blonde impression.

"Yes, predators," said Ramon, liking that word, rolling it around on his tongue.

I covered my hair with a dark scarf, pulling it back enough to leave my ears free.

"You look good enough to eat," said Suarez, lifting me out of the cab and putting me right down beside a saguaro. I backed away and met cactus for the first time.

Yes, my stockings were quite ruined by the time we slipped out of the rough undergrowth after nearly an hour. We came out on a cleared section that ran east and west.

"Thas' the border," murmured Ramon, spinning me into him for another awful kiss. "I get my money and you can walk across."

Did he think that I was a crazy woman? I could smell the tobacco on the wind that came from the north. I was just to sashay blithely across this

cleared space and, whoever was there, could have me?

“You, you’re going to come with me, aren’t you?” I begged him in the little-girlish voice I seemed to have used forever, running my red-painted nails seductively over his chest. “You said ...”

“For all the money in your purse, pretty girl,” Ramon said with a leering smile. “Yeah, this is the payoff time, you little bitch.” The knife came down his sleeve easily to his hand. He flicked it open, grabbing at me, slashing with the knife as if he intended to cut the strap of my purse or duffel bag I’d had to carry all the way. Ramon was no gentleman.

He couldn’t believe it. He knew he’d swung but it seemed he’d missed me completely. Ramon stood there looking stupidly at the knife in his hand as if was the knife’s fault he’d missed. Only when he attempted to slash me on his return did I take his wrist, snap it easily, hearing both the noise of bone breaking and a wild shriek coming from his mouth. I immediately flipped him on his back, cutting off his noise by burying his face in the earth.

“Bitch!” Suarez still screamed at me from the side of his mouth.

“Shush, Ramon,” I whispered to him, my dress about his face, my stockinged leg on his ear. “You don’t want those guys up there to hear you, do you?”

He’d lost his hat in the dark. I could see the whites of Ramon’s eyes as he stared up at me. He moved for the knife in his boot. I drove my shoe, it had the thin tip of a kitten heel, which I’ve always found useful when dressed as a woman, right into his groin.

He tried to scream but nothing came out but a dry sort of gasp. “Good boy, Ramon,” I said to him softly as I picked up my purse and the heavier bag I’d let slip to the ground. “I think you earned this much,” I told him as I dropped ten thousand on him.

I misunderstood how greedy Ramon Suarez was. I thought with his broken hand, his bruised male

equipment, probably torn, and his lost weapons, as far as he knew tossed into the brush, he might have lain back and let nature take its course.

But he didn't. I'd wiggled across the open space into more undergrowth, hitching up my skirt to allow me to slide easily, low to the ground, behind what I'd smelled first, beside a diesel-fueled pickup. By the butts beneath the windows, two men were in it. Nothing moved. There were no red lights from smoking cigarettes to tell me there were men inside the cab but I presumed they were.

"Carney! 'Nesto!" Ramon screamed from out of the darkness well to my right. "She's right behind you!"

Almost immediately, the door of the pickup opened, light poured out and a mustached man with a shotgun jumped out. He turned in my direction but couldn't see me with all the light. But he did fire, right into the bush beside me. I saw him move the angle of his fire towards me..

Ramon's knife, the good stiletto I'd kept, only glinted over the last two or three feet as it took the shotgun wielder in the throat. He went down, not even saying a word. I could hear Ramon screaming, "She's taken 'Nesto down!" I knew that the 'she' must be me. Ooo, I loved it when men called me that.

That was when I heard the slight click behind me. I knew I couldn't outrun whatever gun was trained on me.

"Walk up into the light of the truck, lady," said a man, speaking English with a slight drawl. I hadn't spoken English for so long that I didn't move at first, having to work out what he wanted me to do. I lifted the bag I had with me as well as my purse.

"No, lady," drawled the voice behind me. "They stay on the ground. You walk up into the light or I'll shoot you now."

So I walked up into the light, where an enraged Ramon tried to come running but all he could do was limp hurriedly right at me. The fist on his uninjured

hand was raised to pound on me. Well, I didn't have to stand for that. I grabbed his hand, my Special Training Class 101, I thought, and broke Ramon's other wrist, which really made him howl. I also had him as a shield between me and whoever was out there in the darkness.

"Interesting," drawled Carney, as I supposed the man was called. "So what do I do now, lady? Blast the worthless piece of sh ... sugar in front of you to pieces before I blow your head off as well?"

A gentleman, I thought, what a fine time to meet one, a gentleman with a shotgun in his hands who wasn't going to shoot wildly and give me any kind of chance to change the odds against me. Nice of him, however, to speak so gently to a pretty woman, as he thought that was what he saw.

"You could just blast him," I suggested in English. It sounded so weird coming from my mouth. I was sure I must be speaking it with a French accent. I should as it was the only way I'd spoken it with Thierry, he saying I sounded more like a girl when I did that, than when I tried to speak English as 'Johnny,' the assassin I really was.

"You could take the money I paid him to get me across the border," I went on, hearing myself, Noelle, saying 'zee bord-air' which was a giveaway to any of the people I didn't want to know I was in America that the girl who'd crossed here was me, "and then I could pay you more. I have some other money in my purse. I can get more from any bank with some of the cards I have."

There was a grunt from the darkness of a mound, of rock and trees, I guessed, behind where I'd been crawling. "Mighty interesting," said the voice. It had moved further to my left, cutting off the possibility of me diving behind the front of the pickup. No, I'd be open to a shotgun blast if I did that now. Besides, my petticoats would make such a lovely, swishing noise, he'd know right where the blonde 'girl' was.

It took a while. A whimpering Ramon had to be the one to crawl over using his broken arms to pull the

purse back into the light. “Kill her,” he kept shouting at the man in the dark with a gun trained on me. “Kill the fucking bitch. Can’t you see what she’s done to my wrists? I can’t drive any more!”

“Then I shouldn’t kill her,” said the drawling man, having moved more quietly than I thought possible, further past me. “She might be the one who has to drive you back to Sonora. Maybe she’ll only charge you ten thousand for the trip.”

“How did you know Ramon was bringing me across?” I asked the gunman. He’d asked Ramon to check out the other guy with the knife sticking out of his throat.

“We’ve got our ways,” the man murmured. Probably one of the times Ramon was fiddling with his cellphone. Maybe when Ramon was a ‘gentleman’ and went off to pee in the woods. “Now, lady, this is going to be difficult for you. You gotta tie yourself up.”

“You’re kidding me,” I gasped to him.

“I saw those moves you made, lady,” the voice said. “They were done by a special ops commando back in ’Nam. Showed us how to take prisoners as well. ’Nesto left some shot cord on the seat. He was playing with it, case we needed it. Pick it up, lady, and wrap it around your wrists, in front of you. That’s it, and you tie it with your teeth.”

I knew the drill. I’d done it in training many times. Just my luck, I thought savagely, to meet the one man on this frontier who recognized my skills and thought, too, that he knew how to nullify them.

Carney was an older man, white-mustached and with level, blue eyes. But his expression was cold. “So I get to tell my daughter some bimbo from Tijuana killed her husband, do I?” he asked, covering me all the time with his shotgun. With one hand, he lassoed me with a rope from the back of the truck. That held me against the truck cabin while the old man set the shotgun carefully across the engine where he could reach it easily. He began to search my purse and my

bag as Ramon went on sniffing, cursing and moaning about what 'the bitch' had done to him.

"Very nice panties," the old man said as he emptied my duffel. "A whore's panties, ain't they? No real woman wears underwear like that. You search this woman, Ramon?"

I stiffened a little as Ramon swore he had.

"I'll do it again," said the man, grinning and moving closer to me. He drew a revolver from his pocket and had it close to my head where I couldn't catch it as he did a thorough search of me. He tore down my swishy skirt and hooked it about my legs so that I couldn't stride away easily; then my panties came down as his hands played with my thighs and garter belt.

"Well, lookee here, Ramon," said the old man. "All the time, you thought you was playing with a hen and you was playing with a rooster." He grinned awfully at me. "A mighty pretty rooster though."

Ramon couldn't constrain himself. "You're a whore! An effing faggy queen!" he screamed at me in Spanish, stumbling over towards me. I almost giggled as I was tempted to ask him to get my gender correct and use one description or the other. "And I was going to fuck your brains out, all night long!"

Ramon aimed a kick at my exposed male parts which was wonderful as he was so unsteady. He bumped into the man who was threatening me with his revolver. I grabbed Ramon's foot with my thighs and kicked upward at him with both my legs, dropping out of line with the gun. At the same time, I used my connected hands like a club and decked Carney, his white mustache becoming bright scarlet as his broken nose poured blood down him, the revolver skittering away into the undergrowth.

They each tried to fight me but I was already out of the rope, not caring about the burn along my arms as I dropped so quickly to the ground. I sawed through the cord that bound me with the knife I'd rolled over and taken from 'Nesto's neck. Carney saw what I was

arming myself with and went scrambling for his fallen shotgun, the revolver lost in the blackness. It did him no good as I slit the skirt about my legs.

What I must have looked like! I was naked from the waist down. My little black slip did conceal the top of my thighs. My manhood, like my dancing garter belt, however, wiggled as I kicked Carney at will with a shapely, girlish leg. He went down again as I trod the shotgun from his hands. He cursed me, calling me a whore, I think.

Carney's voice wasn't too recognizable after I kicked his neck and jaw mercilessly. I used what was left of my shoes on his face, pulverizing his features, before I stomped on his neck and held him down, hearing a gurgling as his body stiffened. By then I had my hands free and control of Ramon's knife.

Ramon saw what I'd done to Carney and pleaded for his life, saying he'd fuck me any way that I wanted it, but I couldn't leave a witness, could I? After all, he'd intended to kill me. Yes, I slit his throat from ear to ear, thinking as I did that it wasn't a very ladylike thing to do. With three bodies to toss into the undergrowth, it was just a matter of cleaning up, and dressing as the lady I was posing as, which really meant putting my lacy, black panties back on. Carney had been really attracted to them. I might have let do me, as long as his hands were tied to something like bedposts.

I should have taped myself properly as I really was acting the part of a 'travesti', as the French call transvestite actors and dancers. I'd been going 'out,' hadn't I, to give a 'performance' as if I was on stage as a woman. It was what Thierry and I used to say about what I was doing whenever I had a job to do as a woman, enticing a man into doing what we wanted him to do.

"What a perfect travesti you are, Noelle," Thierry would say to me, kissing me, caressing my waist and tush, particularly when he saw the body I'd left in some hotel room after a 'perfect' seduction.

I made sure that my fingerprints weren't on the knife I returned to where Ernesto had worn it so elegantly through his neck. I took the shotgun with me, my duffel, my purse and all my money, the ten thousand I'd have given to Ramon Suarez as well as what I'd offered to Carney. I only had a wide, grey skirt left from the clothes they'd scattered all over the ground. Everything else, stockings, panties, blouses, felt wet and dirty.

My shoes were broken. I tossed them in the back of the truck, leaving me to wear high heels as I sat behind the wheel of the pickup. I eased it away from what Ramon had said was the border. No, I didn't know where I was going, or if I really was on the border. The track Carney and his son-in-law had left seemed to be headed east and not west as I would have wanted.

But there was a track to follow. I worried, as I turned on the lights, that there might be someone out there to see me. But, if there was, I didn't see them and they didn't interfere with me. I drove very slowly but, as dawn began to break, the wilderness ended. I came out on a gravel road.

I turned Northwest and joined civilization at a stop sign. I smiled and waved to a school bus with just a driver and one occupant who didn't wave back. Maybe they recognized the truck but not the blonde driver. So, I got out of there fast. No, I didn't want witnesses. I didn't want to leave more bodies behind than those who deserved it.

The road changed, pot holes and old tarmac indicating I'd soon find a place for breakfast. I needed a lady's bathroom where I could repair my makeup. I'd tossed Ramon's jeans into the back of the truck. Yes, I'd have to dress down a lot if I wanted not to be noticed until I got to the city where the Barrouqi brothers were now living.

### **\*3. Tell me what's wrong with this picture\***

“So I told them everything you wanted me to about Noelle Mercier,” said Virginia Shepherd to the silver-haired man across the table from her. “Now, Ezra, I’d like to have you tell me why I didn’t tell them the truth.”

“In our business, Ginny?” asked Ezra Marsh in mock amazement. “Tell the truth? Since when have we ever told the whole truth to anyone, least of all to our own colleagues? They’d think there was something wrong with us if we did!”

“I don’t like being played, Ezra,” said the elegant, middle-aged woman to the man who was nominally her superior.

“You’re not being played, Virginia,” said the older man gallantly, gesturing to the waitress to bring him more coffee.

“Bullshit,” said Virginia Shepherd firmly as the woman reached the table and filled both of their coffee cups, a smile fighting to stay off her lips as she circled the silent couple. She picked up the empty plate where the muffins had been and left the pair of them to continue their argument.

“Not a word a deputy director has directed at him very often, Mrs. Shepherd,” said Ezra, lifting his cup, peering through his glasses at the tight-lipped woman across from him.

“Did you send her, Noelle Mercier, to Paris to kill Thierry Bouchard?” Virginia asked him directly.

“Why do you ask me that?” asked Ezra Marsh, his face impassive.

“Tradecraft,” said Ginny Shepherd succinctly, watching the frown come to her boss’s face. “She used a credit card to announce to Thierry she was arriving in Paris. She didn’t know he was no longer in



the chain of command. If we, Jack Reynolds and I, hadn't set up a team to catch her, we'd never have caught the message. Then, there's what she said to Thierry."

"She said she was going to kill him," said Ezra calmly. "She probably did."

"She did," agreed Ginny. "She also talked about Jackson as if he could be alive. And she killed him? She spotted us and Roland's thugs waiting for her ..."

"Because she was disguised as this Stephen Nixon," interpolated Ezra, the thinnest of smiles on his lips.

"Why her surprise?" asked Ginny frankly. "It's as if she didn't expect the French to be waiting for her after making such a straightforward declaration that she was coming into Paris to her former lover. She'd killed two men there just days before."

Ezra made no answer to that, sipping a little more coffee. "If she'd tried to kill Thierry right there," Ginny went on, surprised that Ezra didn't challenge her on her time line, "Roland would have had her. She'd probably be dead, whether she killed the Barrouqis or not, case closed on the brothers. We get a black eye but not completely as we did co-operate with the French to stop her killing again."

"That's a pretty far-fetched story," said Ezra Marsh mildly. "All conjecture with not a certain fact in there."

"I talked to the elder Barrouqi before I went over to Paris. I sounded him out again to act as an agent for us," said Virginia Shepherd. "He and I laughed about how gullible the French were. How they'd miss him when he was gone and no longer working for them. He mentioned the lovely air hostess, his words, whom he'd met when he was over here in New York. He seemed to think I knew how that was connected to him."

"I asked him how he felt about working with me, a woman. That's when he said, 'Ah, so you are not in

the loop on this one.’ Then he shut up but not before he said he and his brother would see me sooner than I thought possible.”

“And what great conclusion did you come to about that?” asked Ezra, a grin on his face. “If that lovely air hostess,” he stressed the words in amusement, “was Noelle Mercier, isn’t it more evidence how she got so close to the Barrougis, close enough to enter their Parisian home, probably be fucked by them and then to kill the pair of them.”

“Noelle said that she didn’t need Jackson because she’d gone over his head,” said Ginny. “Did she? Jackson was a Section Chief. Who’s over his head but a deputy director?”

“Like me,” said Ezra Marsh grimly.

“Like you,” agreed Ginny Shepherd.

Ezra Marsh smiled. “I don’t like what you’re implying, Ginny,” the agency’s deputy director said slowly.

“I took a look at the Barrouqi assassination pictures, Z,” she said, using the appellation that Ezra Marsh had used when they had worked together and slept together in Eastern Europe. “The faces were torn up so well, weren’t they?”

“Modern warfare,” said Ezra with a shrug. “Pistol shells are so powerful ...”

“So much that they even turn crescents into crosses,” said Virginia Shepherd. “It took us a lot of work to bring up that glint on Ahmed’s chest, to see what it was through all the blood. Why is a man like that wearing a cross on a chain, Ezra?”

“A disguise, I suppose,” said Ezra. “He traveled through many countries in Europe. Tradecraft, Ginny, tradecraft, as you said.”

“Or perhaps it isn’t him,” said Ginny, watching the man she’d once been so close to that they’d been lovers for a while.

“That might take some proving, Virginia,” said Ezra lightly.

“Answer me one easy question,” said Virginia, pushing a photograph of a pretty, shapely woman in a flight attendant’s uniform. “Is this a man or a woman?”

#### \*\*\*\*\*4. An Affair to Remember\*\*\*\*\*

I really missed Thierry Bouchard after that last mission with Belanger. He told me that Jackson and the man who’d died outside our apartment were causing a huge brouhaha between the French and us. I should go away and do nothing for a while until I heard from him.

Oh, how I’d cried, yes, just like a girl, in his arms when he said that to me. I’d kissed my wonderful lover, Thierry, and he’d kissed me back. I’d put my arms about his neck and pressed my womanly body into him. That was usually enough to make him stop whatever else he was doing and make love to me. That time, though, it didn’t work.

“I need to be debriefed by my control,” I whispered between kisses as my breasts were on fire. Well, I’d been so aroused when I’d killed Belanger, watching his eyes bulge as I finished off my striptease for him, twirling my panties on my finger as he was clutching at his throat, knowing he was dying. Still he had a massive erection. When he reached for me, I didn’t know if he was imploring me to help him or to love him.

Of course, since I was supposed to be the perfect girl for him, I danced out of his reach and twirled around, bouncing my breasts for him. “You like this?” I’d teased him, pinching my nipples as he liked to do, but from my own antics, I got more of a charge than when he’d penetrated my pretty tush, me

squealing constantly and begging him to stick it into me harder, my big, strong man.

Belanger had gargled something at me then. "Oh, you want what's between my legs!" I'd said to him, pouting at him, swishing my long, shiny-black hair over my shoulders and breasts. I was holding my panties in front of me as he reached again for me, gargling as he was unable to speak as Thierry had told me he wouldn't.

"Well, darling," I'd cooed at him as I slid my panties and revealed to him what he'd never have expected to see between a woman's legs, a male organ that was only half the size of his as well as my scrotum and the hardening testicles as I aroused myself in front of the horror in his ever-widening eyes. That is when he had seemed to burst and thresh around on the couch.

"What is it, my darling Edouard?" I'd asked him in the little-girl voice I could fake so well. "Don't you like me any more?"

But my lover didn't answer me. In fact, he didn't speak another word for the rest of his life. I was all alone with him, having to re-dress and admire my really lovely body, lovely for a woman or for a man, I remember thinking smugly. I watched myself all through the reverse strip, getting really aroused. I caressed my lovely legs as I fastened my stockings to my garter belt.

Oh yes, I went through all the motions of being a hysterical prostitute then whose john had just had a massive heart attack and died in front of her. I did all the things that Thierry and I had planned and practiced. I flooded my eyes with the water dropper I'd brought with me. I was in quite a state, everyone said so, when the real medical examiner finally arrived.

I was still overheated when the cops told me to get lost. I wanted my reward from Thierry. He always made love to me after I completed a mission. I always dressed in a new costume from Paris's finest lingerie shop, rousing him to a masculine frenzy in making love to my perfect tush.

Thierry did me ferociously in our hotel room. Ooo, I thought I was in for a night of ultimate, womanly rapture, but he wanted to talk about Jackson and what I'd done with another man. I wanted to know about all the lies he'd told about me to Jackson. It had been so obvious when Jackson was there, finally, after fucking me, that he was appalled at me being still dressed as a woman, having breasts and hair like a girl.

But all of that could wait, I'd decided, until the lust that stripping and dancing like a showgirl to entice Belanger into caressing me, working up his temperance until the drug I had given him, finally took over. He'd sunk to the floor, his hands caressing my thighs lovingly, not having the strength to pull my panties down as he'd intended.

I didn't even think, "Poor Edouard." Oh, I reveled in thoughts of how I'd shimmied and danced about my would-be lover, taking off one piece of female clothing after another, the poor guy getting such a hard-on after I let him open my bra and pry my fingers from my lovely breasts. Ooo, I was such a tantalizing woman, too much for a simple, adoring man like Belanger.

No, I didn't think of Belanger as I waited for Thierry to set me free from jail. All I could think of was how he, Thierry, the only man I loved fully and physically, as an orgasmic woman, was going to make love to me all night as soon as I was in his arms and in our bed, once more.

Thierry, however, only pushed documents into my purse and into my hands as I clung to him and kissed and kissed him, rejecting all my urgings, even when I lifted a stocking leg up about his so that he could pleasure me as a woman by stroking my upper thighs.

"You have to run," Thierry told me. "Jackson is so annoyed with you and me. He thinks that you are some kind of tranny, while I'm worse, a pervert and tranny-lover."

I'd heard Jackson calling me those names and worse, words that completed mother- and -sucker being so awful when screamed at a girl like me in my long, glittering gown.

"Just love me," I'd begged the man who'd had me in his bed as his woman for over two years.

"You have to go," Thierry insisted. "Jackson's minions are all over the city. The other kill teams are after you and me. I'm to Africa and you're to England first and then, where you want. I think you should head to Australia or any part of Asia. You've identities there to use, my darling Noelle. I want you to live, so get out of here."

My bag was filled with all the different clothing, all female, that I would have needed. It had all the hair coloring and bleaching aids with precise instructions that I would need.

"Don't go near the States," had been Thierry's last words as he ushered me into the waiting cab that a frowning Cec was driving. "Assets with your kill-sets are not allowed back in the States. You were told that when you were a man and in training but you don't remember, do you? You need a special passport with a special clearance to get back in the States. You're shoot-on-sight without it."

"But how ..." I tried to ask him. Thierry pushed me into the cab. I went, numb, my passion for my lover only growing as I stared back at him from the cab, imprinting his outline on my mind.

I followed the plan Thierry had laid out for me. I went to England. I went and lay in my lonely bed, in the slinky nightdresses he'd bought and packed for me, for almost a week. I dreamed about him making love to me.

In the second week, I began to think about all the ways Thierry had manipulated and betrayed me. Jackson had been so surprised to see me as the gorgeous woman I'd been to entice Belanger into mating with me. That's sometimes how Thierry and I talked about the missions I had to do.

“Do I have to mate with someone this time?” I’d ask him.

For a long time, Thierry would smile and say, “Only me, my darling.” I’d squeal like a little girl, climb all over him and make glorious love with him as if I really was his woman. He, of course, really was my man.

But Jackson had been astonished that my breasts were real, I recalled. I’d guessed then the ‘improvements’ in me as Noelle Mercier weren’t being ordered from America as I thought they were. They were done to me to make me more attractive as a woman to Thierry. I was some kind of fantasy of his. I felt really angry, up to a point. Up to a point because I still wanted him, avidly. I wanted a man to love me all the way. I wanted to be adored in my pretty dresses, on the street or on a stage, as the woman Thierry had made me into.

I couldn’t just pick up a man on the street. Well, I could, but at some time in our love play, I’d have to stop him, maybe forcibly. Inevitably, I’d be left unsatisfied, unsated, and longing for a man who wanted the kind of orgasmic woman I was. And the only man I knew who filled the bill for me was Thierry Bouchard.

So I went to America. I could say that I came back to America with all that I found out while I was away from Thierry. I was away from him but I thought about him every day. I thought about him as I did what I had to do and tracked down Jackson and his bosses in the States, finding out so much about myself as well as I delved into the agency at low levels first, gradually reaching higher as any good, attractive, feminine secretary would who was ambitious.

**\*\*\*\*\*5. The land of plenty\*\*\*\*\***

Did I mention that I missed Thierry terribly? I missed him so awfully as a woman. Yes, I was thinking of myself that way. I was avoiding men, even though many of my co-workers were very persistent in trying to get me to date them.

I missed Cec and Frank whom we'd worked with a lot but I really missed Thierry and not just because I'd become his woman as he had wanted me to.

Thierry could plan out the missions so well. I wouldn't have had the trouble I had in deciding what I had to do and where I had to go in the United States if Thierry had planned the operation. It would have gone much more smoothly than it did. I wouldn't have had to fake an application to the security firm, a front for the agency, that I did. I wouldn't have had to make sure I was employed there as a receptionist, having access to files no one would have suspected that a girl like me would.

And yes, I learned that if I dated certain men and let them go just so far with me, I could rob them of keys, files, and other intriguing documents I needed to find out all about me and about Noelle Mercier.

I made sure I was promoted properly to the real agency, taking the oaths that were necessary, even for a lowly file-clerk girl like me. I smiled and flirted with the bosses who came by, reading all kinds of women's magazines as homework so that I'd be the most up-to-date and attractive girl I could be.

I was a blonde again. I worked for the agency by day. At night, I was back in the building, gradually working my way through the files that led me to new buildings and finally to a section headed by a man named Jackson. It had been closed down, Jackson suddenly ended.

I thought I'd taken care of every alarm in the medical building which covered one of the agency's outlets when I heard the sudden change in the air pressure system that told me someone else was in the building. I laddered one of my prettiest pair of French stockings slipping through the air ducts but it was well worth it.

That late night foray not only alerted me to the silent alarms I had only partly disarmed but I was able to listen in on men talking about the system, why it was in place, and where the most sensitive records were kept.

That was where I found the first charts that showed Jackson and his place in the organization and that his superior was one Ezra Marsh, one of a number of deputy directors in the agency.

“You shouldn’t be getting your beauty sleep here in the office,” Alan Roberts, a tall, athletic guy told me as I could barely keep my eyes open, not after a long foray through the secret stacks I’d done the night before. I’d played cat and mouse with some eager security guy as well. I heard him tell another, through one of the vents I’d bugged, that he’d heard someone walking through the file room, someone in high heels, a woman, he thought. He mentioned the *Opium* perfume he’d smelled.

I’d thought I was caught until the other man laughed. “You know what the day staff call those file stacks?” he asked the eager beaver. “Takeout City! I usually cough before I go in there, even at night. I’ve heard all kinds of giggles and clothes rustling in there! You probably did hear high heels, man, and probably a few whispered curses from some married guy who didn’t get what he was supposed to get last night!”

“This was way later, after midnight,” the eager beaver was going on.

“So?” laughed the second guy. “You want to find out who you heard, you just look at the overtime pay requests at the end of the month. How d’you think some of the old geezers on the fifth get laid? Luckily, this isn’t Grosvenor or Sparrow, man, or their asses would be grass.”

“Hi, Al,” I said to the guy who’d caught me yawning, though it was still morning, thinking of the lessons the Madames in Paris had taught me. I was still being teased by many of the men in the office over my French accent which I said I’d worked for years to ob-

tain. Everyone in the place, of course, spoke any number of foreign languages.

I pretended that I only had French. It was fun and disconcerting to hear Spanish and Italian speaking men watching me and saying all kinds of naughty things about my tush and breasts and what they'd like to do with them. At times, I became rather hot, just listening to someone saying where he was going to do me. I almost answered one guy back in Russian and asked him to meet me in the stockroom to which he'd told his friend he had a key.

"Say, Al," I said, swaying as I spoke to him, making my hair and earrings move. "Do you know of a place on Grosvenor that we ..."

"Shush," whispered Al, actually putting his fingers to his lips. "We don't mention things like that around here." He glanced fearfully around.

"Oh," I said and smiled as sweetly as I could at him. "Only, a girl friend wants me to apply for some job at, at that place," I added as his eyes went wide in fear of me naming it. "I just wanted to know what I was getting into." I lowered my voice. "They do some extra kind of security check there ..."

"Come on a date with me tonight, Linda," said Al, beginning to smile. "And I'll tell you all about that place."

That was quite a date. I'd thought that Al was such a quiet, nice guy. He wasn't. It wasn't that he was obvious and all hands. Well, he was that but he was persistent. I was so glad that I'd taped myself before our date as he doled out his information so slowly. I was in bed, in my nightie and panties, doing what I usually did for men when I was a call girl, before I finally discovered that covert operations were centered on the Grosvenor import and export cover company. A deputy director always presided over the Section Chiefs who had offices there. And the deputy director who'd been there the last four years or so was one Ezra Marsh who had quite a reputation as a womanizer.

“Oh, yes,” gurgled Al Roberts as I made him a very happy man, placing his manhood between my breasts and bringing him to a very energetic and pleasant conclusion, even for me.

Two nights later, I was in Ezra Marsh’s office. I cleared all of his files, computer and otherwise, onto flash drives for myself, before heading out to the fortified mansion in which he lived.

I’d found almost everything I’d wanted when I heard him coming down the stairs, complaining to himself about leaving the lights on in his study and the electric bills he was running up. He walked in, and just didn’t see me, even though I was sitting in his chair, behind his desk, reading his files.

Ezra was halfway across to the fireplace, getting down on his knees to turn on some heat, when he suddenly whirled around and stared at me, dumbfounded, as I smiled at him.

“Hello, darling,” I cooed at him.

“What the hell!” he screamed at me, scrambling across the floor to the locked cabinet where he had a gun. The drawer opened at his touch. His face was a real picture as he turned fearfully to me.

I pointed the gun at him in languid fashion as if I was Mae West or someone like that in an old-time movie. “Is this what you’re looking for, darling?” I purred at him, wiggling and sitting on his desk so that I could pout at him over my shoulder.

“Who ... who ...?” he began. I could see the thought processes begin to work but Ezra didn’t recall who I was right away. I had to help him. I stood up and swayed over to him in my tight, straight skirt, looking every inch a secretary, um, administrative assistant, with my hair carefully held in its French braid, my makeup considerably muted from all the glamorous pictures and recordings of me that filled a large part of his personal files.

“You’re Jackson’s boss,” I said to him, keeping the same seductive tone that I had used before. “I worked for Jackson in Paris.”

Ezra Marsh’s face went white as he struggled, even though he was sitting on the floor, to back away from me. “N-Noelle M-Mercier!” he gasped at me.

“Oh, wonderful!” I said with a giggle, clapping my hands together excitedly like a little girl. “I don’t have to spend any time, do I, explaining to you who I am and how I got here?”

“You, you,” Ezra Marsh was gasping at me, staring at me so wide-eyed that I thought his eyeballs might pop out at any moment, “you, you’re not a woman! You shouldn’t even be in this country!”

“No, you’re quite right,” I told him sweetly. “Oh, don’t be such an idiot, Ezra darling. If I had wanted to kill you, I could have come up to your bedroom and taken you out with a pillow. And you don’t need to keep on looking up at your security eyes. You, or someone like you, taught me how to put those onto a preprogrammed loop years ago. No one is going to interrupt us.”

I gave him back the gun and watched the murderous thoughts pass across his face. Then, he weighed the gun in his hand. “You took out the clip,” he said, beginning to regain his normal, icy composure. He got to his feet, an inch or two taller than me, even though I was in high heels.

“You don’t give anyone a loaded gun,” I said to him softly. “You should know that, being in charge of training once upon a time. Now, shall we sit down, Ezra, and talk about why I’m here?”

“You’ve changed your hairstyle,” said Ezra. “That’s why I didn’t recognize you right away. I’ve seen you, though, haven’t I, and not just in Jackson’s files. You’re one of the girls ...” He paused and stared at me. I think a shudder was passing through him as he stared at the man in front of him who didn’t look like a man at all.

“You’re one of the girls we’re bringing across into the Grosvenor office,” he finally went on, sitting down in his armchair while I sat across from him, making a little show of crossing my legs and making my nylons rasp, one against the other. “Did you think you wouldn’t be noticed when you showed up there, in my office?”

“I’d have changed my hair again, the color,” I said with a smile at him. “I’d have changed my voice. You know how girls like me can do that. I had such good teachers, didn’t I? You must have seen the payments Thierry made for them.”

“Terry?” Ezra asked blankly.

“My control,” I told him sweetly.

“Oh, yes,” said Ezra, regaining his composure by the second as I sat and talked to him like a normal woman, a normal woman who’d invaded his house, supposedly one of the most secure in America. I should know because I’d worked with Thierry in setting up the plans for such back in Paris. And on the plans for defeating all of the devices that could be cooked up against our entry into a home like this. It wasn’t easy. Thierry was the one who was the genius with electronics. Compared to him, I was just an amateur, complaining girlishly when I broke an acrylic nail on one of the jobs he had me do.

“Some day,” Thierry had laughed at me as he re-wired the electronic lock I’d messed up and torn apart in frustration, “you’ll thank me, my darling Noelle, for making you do this until you’re perfect at it. No man in the world, not the sexiest of Hollywood actors, will ever be safe from you now.”

“Ooo,” I’d laughed at Thierry. “In that case, my handsome loving man, I’ll learn all of this, just for you.”

I’d kissed Thierry. The lesson went as I thought it would. He finally had to abandon it to chastise me in the bedroom, telling me what a bad girl I was. I whimpered and snuggled beneath him, helping him out of his clothes as he did the same to me, much more

slowly. He aroused me to fever pitch with his kisses and fondling my breasts and my smooth legs. I was the one to finally seize his rampant manhood and insert it into my so eager, quivering tush. Oh, that had been a lovemaking session I'd always remember as I wiggled all over that bed in ecstasy, pursuing my lover to make him arouse the orgasm inside me again and again.

And thank you, Thierry, I thought, as I sat with this man we'd only conjectured must exist somewhere in the organization we were working for. I felt a little flushed as I remembered what we'd done as Thierry taught me so patiently how to take over a secure house as I'd now done with Ezra Marsh's.

Thinking of Thierry was doing that to me all the time, giving me hot flushes as if I really was a woman. I really must stop taking the hormone pills he'd foisted off on me as vitamin pills that were in containers that proclaimed them to be a woman's birth control pills. I was supposed to take them, just to put off anyone else like me who was ever on my tail.

"No one's going to be on your tail but me," Thierry said to me whenever I used that expression. "I don't want anyone touching your lovely tail but me." I kissed him and squirmed into his lap, flipping my dress and lowering my panties for him for saying that, rewarding him for compliments to my femininity as I always did. The Madames had made it a rule for me. I learned to love the rule in the time I was with Thierry. He'd remind me of it and so I had to do it.

"You know that persons like you can't be here in America," Ezra told me, staring at my breasts as if he'd never seen a woman's breasts before. Perhaps he hadn't, not on a man, anyway.

I smiled at him and indicated my womanliness with a manicured hand, my fingernails long, feminine and my own, shining with dark pink nail polish.

"I don't mean your, your perversion," said Ezra, giving me the insult to figure out how I would react to such a slur, I thought. I looked back at him, smiled, and raised a thin, thin eyebrow.

“You’re an asset with a deadly kill-set,” said Ezra Marsh slowly, studying me as if he was trying to find out why I wasn’t responding to his barb. “We made a promise that persons like you ...”

“Would never be allowed in the United States of America,” I finished for him. “Yes, I read your letters to the Director. I think you should have been honest with him and told him that you couldn’t keep a person like me from going wherever I want to go, whenever I want to go. Perhaps I should tell him myself. He has a cottage in Cape Cod, doesn’t he, that a blind man with a paper clip could break in to.”

“I see that you’ve been acquainting yourself with my most secret files,” said Ezra Marsh, looking at the three computers I’d assembled on his desk. He paled at the paper files and documents I’d piled on the other side.

“What do you want from me?” asked Ezra, looking up from my face to my re-arranged features, my nose I’d had bobbed a little and thinned. Thierry said I needed it done to attract the guy I was after who liked his girl friends to be ‘perfect’ women! Ooo-ooo, I hooked that guy, a real narcissist, who thought I should adore his perfect body. I only had to touch him with my soft fingers and he was spurting all over me. Worse, he was asleep in minutes after he climaxed. I’d never known what female frustration was with impotent men until I met Lorenzo. I did women everywhere a favor by drowning him in his bathtub, laughing as my perfect, feminized body was better at killing, anyway, than his perfect, naked body.

“I need to go back to my office and get some other files,” said Ezra, after I told him that I wanted all the files, originals and copies on one Lieutenant Stephen Nixon. I knew by then he was me. “You can come with me as one of my new assistants. I’ll introduce you around if you tell me what name your files are under.”

“You won’t need any files from your office, dear Ezra,” I told him, pointing to a stack on the table that he hadn’t noticed. “I think I got them all from your

desk and both safes, the decoy and the real one in your office!”

Yes, that got to Ezra. He was shuddering as I suggested that he call in sick for the day, supplying him with the codes he needed to satisfy the underlings he was notifying that the messages from him were genuine.

“Whatever was Jackson thinking when he let a, a man like you ...” Ezra began, not attempting the icy manner he’d tried on me before.

“... a girl like me ...” I interrupted him.

“... into the organization we were building so well,” finished Ezra. “You do know that we’ve had to close it all down, the kill squad you were on.”

“So you shouldn’t object to me finding out who I am,” I said to an astonished Ezra Marsh then. “I get what I want and I’ll be out of here. You’ll never see me again once I know who I am and that I’m invisible to your, not my, organization.”

## **\*6. The prodigal daughter returns\***

Did I mention how much I missed Thierry? Did I mention that he made the details of a job so easy to plan? Did I mention how hard it was to find the simplest things I wanted in big cities where Thierry had always been so much at home? He’d have had a wonderful, logical plan for finding the men I wanted to find. He’d have found them in a day or so and worked out the bare bones of a plan of how I’d contact them.

Now, having crossed the border at last, I had to do all of that kind of work for myself. It was as bad as it had been when I’d been trying to track down Jackson’s boss and not known who I was. That took me forever, it seemed, that first time.

Likewise, linking up with the men I'd targeted would have taken much less time and gone even more smoothly if I'd only had Thierry to help and direct me in what I was doing.

I think I wore out a pair of high heels tracking the subjects around, fending off all the men in Las Vegas who thought I was a hooker. I had to break a few bones in back alleys I was dragged into. All that did, really, was to incapacitate one, or at most, two idiots. I still had to find and mark my targets as well.

I should just have gone to the richest, most secluded private suites in the city, I realized, when I finally found the men I'd been looking for. But, even so, they had enough security about them to insulate themselves from the public, and me. I still had to find a way to track them to the clubs they frequented and to the escort services they were using to access them when I wanted.

That's what Thierry always did for me. It seemed so wrong! I got the shakes looking at myself brushing out my hair and seeing how my corset shaped me so femininely and suggestively, thinking how I was supposed to be doing all this to find out who I really was, getting back to being the real Stephen Nixon again.

I kept telling myself that as I swallowed some more of my 'birth control pills' and stared at the soft-skinned, rounded woman that I had to look at in the mirror. Oh, yes, Thierry would have approved of me and the way I looked. He'd have wanted me in his bed and I'd have gone with him. I would now, I knew, if he'd been there with me, only he wasn't.

I had to swallow hard, not seeing any kind of Adam's apple in my throat, as I made myself pretty, just like a girl, as I could do so well now after living with Thierry and being his woman for so long. Yes, I still burned in rage at him that he had taken advantage of me, told me all the lies about me wanting to be a woman, that I loved being his feminine lover. He'd coaxed me into becoming just what he wanted, a sexy-looking woman whom he could take out anywhere, to any club.

Thierry had treated me entirely as a woman. I'd believed eventually I really did want that. I believed it even as 'she,' Noelle, the girl who I was, was usually getting ready to use her womanly skills on some man who she would kiss and roll around with in his bed before she, that is me, killed him.

It would be so much better, Thierry always told me, as I kissed him and let his hands wander all over me, arousing such sexy, womanly feelings in me, if I did enjoy myself with the man I was with, no matter that it wasn't him. I was such a gullible fool. I did try even though it was hard sometimes. But, sometimes it wasn't. Sometimes, it was incredibly delightful like with Vernon in the airplane, as we flew over southern France. He'd made love incredible love to me, chorus girl and model, Simone.

If Vernon had only treated me as he had before he found the manhood in my panties - after he'd touched me - and hadn't reacted in such horror! I might not have killed him. I certainly would have gone on and made love to him for much longer, as I did with Thierry. Vernon and I could have had hours more of being a man and a woman together if only he hadn't been such a prude.

Thinking, though, of the way I'd felt in San Remo, that I wasn't a girl at all, no, I probably wouldn't have made love with Vernon. I'd been so confused with dressing as a woman, wasn't I? It was Thierry who'd been the one to explain to me that I really loved dressing like a woman, making love as a woman and having him as my boyfriend every night. Ooo, those were the most vivid of all my memories, he seducing me and persuading me to be his woman. Even in Ezra's mansion, I could still get a really wonderful, feminine thrill, just thinking of my 'first' times as a woman with Thierry, the liar!

Here in Vegas, Thierry would have put me on the roster of the right escort service. He'd have bribed someone to make sure that, when the target I had in mind asked for a girl, he got me. Now, I had to do that myself. I'd shivered all over when I'd finally made the call to *Heaven on Earth*, the service that supplied my target with beautiful girls, usually ex-dancers.

I'd manipulated the number of girls the service had on staff, so that they were very short. Mr G, whoever he was, when I faxed him a picture of me, took one look of me in my golden bikini and told me to come in. He'd look me over.

The office wasn't sleazy, which I'd feared by the gruff voice on the phone it would be. There was actually a pretty, blonde girl behind a desk, for all the world a secretary-receptionist like that in any other business.

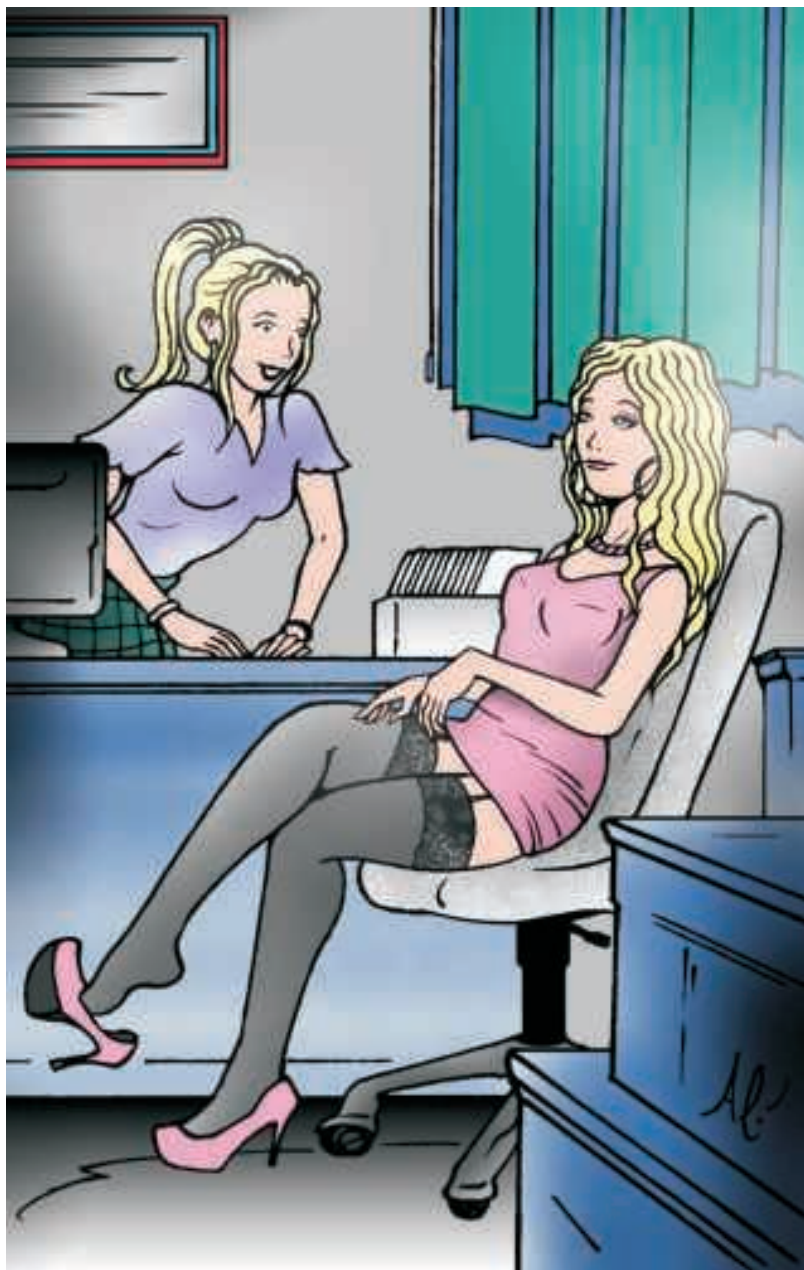
"Looking for work?" she asked me with a sly, knowing smile.

I was dressed for the work. The uplifting bra did its part as did the form-fitting, tight corset. I'd bathed in scented water for a morning and had scented my breasts, my shoulders, my wrists and my neck with a musky perfume, presuming that I was going to be 'interviewed' by some gorilla.

"I have an appointment with a Mr G," I said in the high, little-girlish voice that I had practiced so long and hard with Thierry to acquire. I smiled at the woman as I wiggled in my short miniskirt across to the chairs opposite her desk and sat down, leaning forward so that my rounded breasts could be seen to their best advantage.

I'd spent almost an afternoon on my makeup. It was as perfect finally as I could make it. My lips were soft, full and pink. My eyes were darkly outlined and my eyelashes thick and black. My blue eyes were set off by the eye shadow and natural curve of my eyebrows.

My fair hair was altered. Now it was platinum blonde, waved and curled by one of Las Vegas' most pricey hair dressers and tucked behind my ears in a very feminine style so that my long, tasseled earrings could be seen. I had jewelry that matched just about everywhere, at my navel and ankle as well as all the obvious places. I crossed my legs as the woman studied me, her hand motioning me then to raise my skirt a little and so I did, revealing that I did wear panties, two pairs if she did but know.



I knew I had pretty legs, and in dark hose they were even finer than fine. I swung my high heel on the end of one foot and smiled back at the receptionist. Yes, let's have a femininity contest, I thought. There's no way that your boss is going to turn away a shapely, busty girl, so young and so fine as I was.

The phone rang and the woman picked it up. "*Heaven on Earth*," she murmured sexily into the phone. Then it was 'Where,' 'When,' and 'How many girls would you like us to send you?'

There were a whole lot of 'uh-huhs,' 'oks,' and 'that's understood'. Then she began to telephone different girls and describe a job which seemed like it was going to be an orgy in some convention room. "Derek will get your three hundred up front," she repeated several times to whoever she was talking to. "Then we'll settle with you on Monday."

I couldn't just walk into this place and say I wanted to date the Barrouqi brothers. Thierry would have arranged it that I'd only have had to deal with my target. I could hardly tell this woman that I only wanted to be assigned to the Barrouqis, could I? They weren't using that name anyway. They were known as 'Kumar' at their residence, and 'Patel' by this escort service, although to my mind they didn't look like citizens of India at all.

No, I was going to have to go along with some jobs for *Heaven on Earth* that would make me cringe. I knew now that I was Stephen Nixon and not Noelle Mercier at all. Well, I was a lot of Noelle. I should admit that. But as soon as I got Stephen Nixon's records Ezra Marsh had removed from all files at the agency before I got to him, and those from the army, which Ezra promised me he'd have when I returned from Paris, I'd become me, Stephen Somebody-Else again.

I would have to change my last name, I knew that, to be anonymous. But I wanted, I *needed*, to find out if I had family who were grieving for me. Did I have a mother, alive that is, or a father, brothers, sisters, cousins, perhaps even an old girlfriend? Yes, it was all a complete blank to me. That's why I'd done the little jobs that I had for Ezra Marsh. I'd even prom-

ised him I'd go back to Paris and eliminate Thierry Bouchard, whom Ezra said had been the one who'd killed Jackson.

I'd promised to eliminate Thierry. Ezra had thought I'd meant, as he had, that I'd kill Thierry. But it had all been a double-cross. He'd just wanted to get me there in Paris where another kill-set, French or American, could assassinate me. Then, Thierry told me about the Barrouqis and how I'd been framed for their killing.

Yes, I had to 'talk' to Ezra about what he'd done and why he shouldn't do that. I had to have something to hold over him as well, which is why I was here in Las Vegas, crossing my legs like a girl and giving the woman on the phone my gleaming, lipsticked smile.

Finally, a party arranged, the blonde woman who'd been watching me even as she answered call after call, came over to me in a lull and gave me an application form! It was if she wanted to me to apply for a job in a restaurant or something.

"That's the contract between us and you," said the older woman with a smile. Yes, I'd misjudged her age. She was old, around forty or so, not part of the 'active' business as I'd supposed when I'd first seen her. "Sign it with whatever name you want to use. The escort fees your handler collects is just for you showing up and holding onto the client's arm and making him look good for his friends.

"What other fees you ask for and what you do with the guy is your own affair. We take our cut from the escort fees; your handler gets his next, you can tip him on Mondays, above that, when the week is over. You get what's left over and whatever else you've negotiated out of your customer. You just make sure — we say this to all the girls, we still get troubles about this — that you get your money first. We don't chase guys who've cheated you. Complain about that and you don't work.

"And when you do work, you are the best at what you do, whatever, whatever you do, Brittany." She'd

obviously recognized me as the girl who'd called Mr G. "Don't do anything that disgusts you and makes you leave an unsatisfied client. Call us for a special act you don't want to do. We'll send a girl to take your place. We'll find out your specialties as we go along. Understand? Good. Sign the contract."

I signed with a shudder as I thought about what specialties I'd bring to this service as a woman. I didn't tell her about the knockout pills I had in my purse, readily available in an outside pocket where I could get to them easily.

"Welcome to *Heaven on Earth*, Brittany," said Jen, taking the paper from me and putting it in a drawer which she locked. I'd have to come back for it soon and remove it. It not only had my signature on it, but also my fingerprints, and a copy of the picture I'd sent to Mr G. I'd have to blow up that file in the computers I could see scattered about the office.

"I've got a job for you tonight as well, Brittany honey," said the woman who wanted me to call her Jen and not Jennifer. "Laura and you, you go with Greg. Let Laura set you up with the guys as she knows the ropes. It will take a couple of nights to bring you up to speed. Next week, you can stay home and I'll call you from here and tell you where I want you."

"I had to talk to a Mr G," I said in the little girl voice again. "He might not want to ..."

"That's Greg," said the woman as she walked back to take the phone again. "He sometimes catches the phone for me when we're really busy. And we are busy, Brittany Dubois," she said, reading the name again I'd written on the application form. "And if you haven't figured it out already, I'm *Heaven and Earth*, me, Jen. It's what I'm using this week." She looked me over again and smiled at me as she picked up the phone. "Oh yes, I can use a sweet girl like you, I really can."

While I was quivering over that remark and what it was going to mean for me, a grey limo rolled up outside as the woman went on talking to clients and

then to girls who apparently worked for the agency. A bored blonde girl perked up when I was walked out finally by Jen and introduced to her as 'Brittany'. She was Laura.

"You get three hundred just for showing up?" I asked Laura as we both did ladylike entrances, tushes first, high heels following, to get into the limo.

Laura laughed. "That's what Jen says 'cos she's scared of being arrested," said Laura. "As if anyone cares about what we're doing. This is Vegas, after all, Sin City and all that. That's just the start as we get to know our dates for the evening and what they really want from us. Most of it's oral, so, if you don't like that, you should really think of switching careers!"

I giggled nervously at that as I sat beside Laura and we sped over to some huge, new hotel. "I'm serious," she said with a laugh at me. "The point is that we get nice tips when we leave the johns. That's all your money. Don't share it with Jed or let him hold it for you. Now this one is going to be a little tricky as we are going to arrive at the same time and we want to leave together as well."

"Brothers?" I asked, thinking that I might have lucked out and been placed with the Barrouqui brothers on my very first job for *Heaven and Earth*.

"In a way," laughed Laura. "Convention assholes. We've been booked by two of them but what do you want to bet that we get half a dozen others, crawling all over us, wanting to cut in on us. Just remember, if you do take another guy, I need to know and don't forget Jen's golden rule ..."

"Get your money up front," I said with a giggle, knowing it was a very girlish thing to do. It had taken me months to master it, the girlishness of it, Thierry being a really good teacher, showing me what it was that was wrong and making me make all the right girlish gestures as well when I did something like that.

"No, send for reinforcements if you don't want to do anal," laughed Laura, taking my arm as if we had

been girlfriends forever, “that’s what these guys will want. I don’t know why but it must be because they’re all so effing brotherly, right?”

I smiled nervously again, my throat dry as I wondered if I dared to do that with anyone else but Thierry. But Laura thought I was going to do that, as I was a girl just like her. I danced with her, laughing and giggling as Greg opened the limo door for us. I did feel a surge of excitement then as we girls went off like princesses to terrorize the frat brothers, high-priced clients of *Heaven and Earth*.

The excitement had flagged a great deal in three weeks’ time. I was thinking I had to do something else to get myself into the company of the Barrouqi brothers who might soon not even be in Las Vegas at all.

Jen was delighted with me at *Heaven and Earth*. I had to shudder each time she told me how the men I went with adored the blow jobs and ‘tushies’ I gave them. Oh, I had to be so clever when I did the anal thing. But, keeping my panties in place, my fingers there as well as if I was arousing myself got the jerks off quickly. Then the pills I slipped them exhausted them completely.

They only backfired on me a couple of times as the guy I was with called in his buddies when he was flaking out. I had more sex than I wanted in a very short time. I could protest that I didn’t want a frontal attack after Bruce or Jason had just filled me and the guys understood.

But the pricks I had in my mouth and the number of times I bounced up and down in some guy’s lap, pretending I loved it as much as he did, wiggling and jiggling as I tried to think that I was making love to Thierry. But it never was the same. I could never let go and never, ever, orgasm myself.

I never felt like loving one of the men as I did with Thierry as I established myself as a call girl, a prostitute, an escort and highly paid. No one called me a whore, which is what I thought of myself, night after night as I went out on my dates, smiling and touching men, arousing them, some even coming before I

could even get my mouth to any sensitive part of their bodies.

Well, it's a living, I thought, my stomach curdling a little at the praise I was getting. I was now known and in demand for my 'specialty'. I'd even be called in by several other girls who didn't want to do what they were asked to do with a man's pecker in their mouths, or, in some cases, as with Laura once, she couldn't do the job well enough on her date. From that one, a Norbert no less, I did get a thousand dollar tip for a job well done.

That was when I'd think of Thierry, and wish he was there so that I could kick his ass with my high-heels jammed in him. All through my head, my mind re-played the tapes he had of me that he'd made me watch, showing me with various women, high-class former call girls I figured, in Paris, teaching me how to make love to a man even though I wasn't a woman.

It made me shudder all over but I couldn't get the images out of my mind nor the orderly progressions these women taught me, using what they called strap-ons and pushing me down in the soft, frilly beds that were in some former apartment I had apparently had. It was like looking at one woman satisfying another but I was always the one being on the receiving end of the dildo.

But the training did seem to have worked. It was imprinted on me. I recalled trick after trick that I used as a *Heaven and Earth* girl. Even a man who'd come to me intending a frontal attack, went away totally satisfied with the other things I did for him. Oh, I learned how to be a very bad, bad girl, as one of my first 'dates' called me, me thrilling to hear that as he had not found out at all that I was a male beneath all the disguise that I wore about my genitals.

Yes, I used the excuse several times about having a period but men were so desirous of having me in some way that it's never been a problem. Once I get below a guy's navel, he's mine to do with as I wish. But, oh, there are some guys that really drew me on, almost making me reveal myself, but not quite, as

they kissed my thighs and buried their heads into my panties and the fake pussy I sometimes wore in there. It gave them a lot of fun; and was fun for me as well, I should admit.

But if anyone was to put his fingers behind my tapping, he'd be a dead man. Since I didn't want that, I was very careful. So, thank you, Thierry, thank you, Madame Ricochet, Madame Burris, and Madame Lillian, who only confided in me when I saw her for the last time that she was in fact a transsexual herself, and always would be. She left me staring, gasping and quivering in emotion, when she showed me how much of a man she still was, and how much of a woman she also was, as she left me to join her 'husband-of-the-month'.

I was benumbed by making love to men all night long and occasionally going shopping as a girl with my friend, Laura. It seemed to be all I did. I knew that I couldn't go on for much longer or I'd have an accident. I'd be discovered. I began to remove the files about me from the computers and was trying to think up a new plan to get tight to my targets when *Heaven and Earth* sent me to a party for some 'scientists'.

As soon as I strutted in with Laura, making sure my tush was swinging provocatively for whoever my date was going to be, there was Mohammed ("Call me Mo") Barrouqi to sweep me into his arms and kiss me passionately while Greg, Laura and the brothers' bodyguards looked on in amazement.

"It's you, isn't it, it's you!" screamed Mo, lifting my high-heeled feet off the carpeted floor as he swirled me around, my long hair bouncing as much as my breasts. "This is the girl I was telling you about, Al," that was brother Ahmed, I soon found out. "This is the air hostess who charmed me in New York! And here she is, a hostess in Las Vegas now.

"And I'm going to have her first, Al. You can have the others. You're calling yourself Brittany now! A lovely name for such a lovely girl. Oh, you have to try her, my brother, you really do. But I have to have her first. See, even looking at her and my little man is bursting out of my pants to get at her!"

**\*\*7. Tell me why I should believe what  
you're telling me\*\***

“Well,” asked Jack Reynolds after his Chief, Virginia Shepherd, returned to her office after her long breakfast alone with Ezra Marsh, “did he answer the question for you?”

“Yes,” said Ginny Shepherd. She went over to her desk, taking the silk scarf from her neck and putting it over her purse in the side drawer as she always did.

“Well?” asked Jack Reynolds eagerly.

“You won’t believe the answer,” said Ginny Shepherd, sitting down and looking up at her right-hand man.

“The only answer I won’t believe is that Noelle Mercier is a woman,” said Jack Reynolds savagely, reaching up to stroke his forehead. The bruise had long since disappeared but Jack seemed unable to forget what had been done to him, and, more to the point, how easily it had been done to him.

“He lied to me,” said Ginny, staring at the man who trusted her to make the right decisions for both of them with the agency.

Jack looked up at her, puzzled a little. Ginny was not going to tell him all about Budapest and Ezra. It had been a few years ago but she’d figured out then whenever it was that ‘Z’ was lying to her. She’d never told him and wouldn’t tell Jack now how she knew, the telltale gestures and expressions that Ezra didn’t seem to know he made.

“She’s not a woman,” said Virginia, watching the shock register on Jack’s face even though he’d just said that he wouldn’t believe anything else about Noelle Mercier. “And I asked him if he’d had any con-

tact with her while she was over here. He lied to me again. He said that he hadn't."

Jack Reynolds let out the breath he hadn't realized that he was holding. "Which means," he began, not completing the sentence as if he couldn't believe what he was about to say.

"What we conjectured is true," said Ginny. "She was here in New York. Ezra almost jumped on the line I fed him about Mohammed meeting her here. Said it might be why the Barrouqis let her in. They recognized her. Saying that was true only brings the next question. Who would have given Noelle Mercier the order to meet Mohammed Barrouqi while he was here?"

"He did meet someone, a woman, who impressed him. He was intending to meet her again. It still might not have been Noelle, but with Ezra's reaction, I think that it was. It still is standard to control interactions, male and female, when a member we're trying to recruit is over here, isn't it?"

"Should be evidence of the meet, one way or the other," growled Reynolds, staring at Ginny as if he couldn't take in that the girl they were talking about was really a man, as Ginny had proposed.

"But there isn't," said Ginny with a smile. "Because the Barrouqis are dead and evidence of the pretty girl Mohammed met would only prove that he met with a discredited agent. And she is one whom everyone who has access at our level now knows is the woman who killed a Section Chief on the streets of Paris."

"A deputy director couldn't be so stupid," said Reynolds after a long pause, thinking the whole situation through. Then he tried a new track. "Marsh must know you're on to him."

"He'll know you were checking all the training records, looking for a female asset," said Ginny. "He probably has someone floating around after us, asking what we wanted to know. He isn't stupid. He'll

know we know there never was a female assassin trained to the level of Noelle Mercier.”

“Anderson recalls a fair-haired boy with blue eyes,” said Reynolds gloomily, stopping for a moment to shiver. “Johnny, no second name, he told me. Small, Andy didn’t think he’d ever be any good when it got to fighting at close quarters. But Jackson told him that Johnny was working out well, was on the way to being his number one boy in Europe.”

“And we know,” added Ginny redundantly, “that Noelle Mercier was Jackson’s number one girl in Europe for nearly two years.”

“You going over Ezra’s head?” asked Jack after another long pause between them. “I didn’t dare to tell Andy not to tell Ezra what I was asking about. Just said you were still recruiting a team and wanted the best. Andy said Johnny would fit the bill.”

“Going over heads as Noelle did?” asked Ginny with a grimace. “Let’s get some hard facts first, Jack, and see where they lead. If Noelle did kill Jackson, we should take her out, if we get the chance. If she killed the Barrouqis, the why is just as important. Was someone giving her the target and the mission to do that? Was she sent back to Paris to be killed by the French as Thierry suggested? All her other killings, think about it, were taken as accidental or untraceable to the agency. We need to know for certain who she was working for and what she was ordered to do. If we could only find Thierry, I’d really like to talk to him!”

Reynolds was very quiet. “I know what I said,” he said in almost a whisper, unable to look at Ginny. “But it can’t be, can it? With all the resources at our disposal, what would we be doing messing around with gays and tranny-whatevers? This one we have to keep very, very quiet, don’t we?”

The man left unhappily to go on with other work he still had to finish. Ginny sat back in her desk and thought about that. Yes, it did seem to be so stupid and so improbable. A man dressed as a woman

worked for the agency and well enough that no one spotted him. It couldn't be.

Ginny hated the fact that, if some proof turned up, like a very alive Thierry Bouchard, and he confirmed in interrogation what she suspected, she was going to have to confront a deputy director of the agency. Probably, they'd have to assassinate a number of people to keep such a secret from becoming gossiped about and made public.

She wasn't expecting the phone call or the soft woman's voice that Ginny heard on the other end. "You were going to recruit Mohammed Barrouqi into the network you hoped to set up across Europe, weren't you?" asked the woman after she'd verified that she was talking to 'Ginny' Shepherd.

"Who is this?" Virginia Shepherd asked sharply.

A very feminine giggle answered her down the phone.

"Noelle Mercier," said Virginia, feeling all the blood drain from her face. That couldn't be a man. It couldn't, not with a voice like that.

"Turn on your computer, Ginny darling," said the woman. "Open the file you've just received called 'The Resurrection'. The password and entry codes are the name of your worst enemy in the agency."

## \*\*\*\*\*8. Cementing a relationship\*\*\*\*\*

"I can't believe I'm sitting here in my house and talking to you as if you were a woman," said Ezra Marsh, repeating what he'd said for several days, as we did normal things like having breakfast together. I had accompanied him as usual to his bedroom and watched him change surreptitiously as I didn't want him to get ideas about escaping from me. It was amazing how different, how short a time it took a

man to get dressed. I took three times as long just to do my face.

Not that I said anything like that to him. No, I wanted him to relax and try to turn on the charm with me. I had a lot of ground to cover, a lot of records still to probe and to remove from the files.

"This will never work in the way you want it to," said Ezra as we relaxed over a late brunch. "There's always going to be one thing you didn't think of that someone else will. There'll be a training file, an entry record from a building you never thought of. You can't eliminate yourself completely from all of our records. It isn't possible."

I'd already worked that out. "I know that," I said with a smile at the deputy director. He was unfreezing from the icy demeanor he'd tried to maintain as I listened to and erased the conversations about me that Jackson had had with Thierry. I'd found copies of them everywhere, tracked them down and eliminated them. "If you could just help me now to find out all I want to know about Stephen Nixon, a lieutenant, helicopter pilot ..."

"That's where your fingerprints lead," Ezra had said with a frown. "That's not the real you, is it?"

I smiled at the man across the table from me. "Who else could I be?" I asked him. He must have heard Jackson and Thierry discussing my amnesia and the state that I was in after I'd been run down by a boat in the Mediterranean. But it hadn't seemed to register with him.

"I've a story to tell you," I sighed, uncrossing my legs and standing up, doing the woman's work of clearing the table while he watched me, waiting to tell me again, I knew, that he couldn't believe I wasn't a woman. Ezra listened to me relate all the story about how I'd been betrayed by Thierry, who'd seemed to want me as a woman to fulfill some fantasy of his.

"Fascinating," said Ezra Marsh as I finished. "You, you didn't really choose then to be this lovely girl you've become."

“I can blame Thierry,” I said to him, turning on the feminine charm, as I took my compact mirror and lipstick from my purse and did the very womanly thing of repairing my lipstick in front of a man. I femininely checked out the rest of my look and my hair, knowing he was just staring at me, just wondering how much of a ‘tranny’ I was. It was his word for me in one of his angry confrontations with Jackson that I’d listened to.

“You haven’t seen our Johnny,” Jackson had laughed at him. “He makes up into a very presentable ‘she,’” Thierry tells me. You haven’t seen her as a chorus girl, dancing her little heart away, wiggling her tush in the target’s face. The poor schmuck never knew he was getting into it with a guy, a tranny I expect. I’ll send you the video. It’ll turn you on.”

I’d found the video of me performing with the girls at the *Troca*. There were others of me in the fashion show that Thierry had arranged for me, there were lots of me at parties, smiling up at different men, letting myself be caressed by older men. There were others of me as a travesti in the shows at drag clubs. There I was, with Craznour’s hands all over me, before I had had my breasts surgically added.

It was obvious that I was a man in a dress then, at least to me. It wasn’t so obvious when I was dancing around a pole as I stripped all the way to a g-string and wiggled for the Kushtun boy who’d recruited me as a girl to perform for his father. I’d strangled both of them with different panties, I recalled.

“I can’t believe it,” Ezra said as he stared at me gyrating for a group of men, all so agitated as they demanded to touch me and put money into my g-string. I gave several of them including Ali, the Kushtun, long, lingering kisses and even let Ali run his tongue delightedly over my breasts.

“You don’t feel anything when ...” Ezra began as I removed all conversations about me to his personal computer where I placed them under his personal password. He wouldn’t know that I’d remove them all later, consigning them to the dustbin of history, not leaving them for him to ogle when I was gone.

“It’s just a job,” I said sweetly to him.

That got him a little. “As this is,” Ezra said. “You’re just working here. You’re working it as if it’s a part in a play.”

I recognized the words as Thierry’s, how he was trying to explain to Jackson how it was that I could be trusted to finish some job I didn’t recall. “She’s just on stage when she’s with the guy,” he’d said. “She sparkles for him and he falls for her. They’ll go somewhere very private, he’ll dismiss his guards and she’ll leave the scene as if he died in some sex game they were playing. It won’t come back to us at all.”

That had been the operative mandate we had lived by, Thierry and me. “It won’t come back to us at all,” I’d repeated to him as I’d smiled and picked up my purse, flicked my skirts, ran his hand a last time over my breasts to arouse them nicely, and gone out to be the very girlie girl with some bozo. The target didn’t know he was dead as soon as he put his hand on my panties.

Thierry had had the right of it as well. The only way I’d got through what Thierry wanted me do as ‘Lise Dagenais,’ making another man come on to me, never mind making love to Thierry as if I was his real wife, was to pretend I was in a play or a movie. I was Angelina or Lindsay, someone curvy and exotically female. I was just playing the part until, at last, the man would gasp and say, “You fooled me!” or something like that.

“What is it, Ezra?” I finally asked him after a day of his prowling around the rooms in which I’d moved the computers. The work that I could do with him I could see was over. I’d eliminated all the junk he had on them about Jackson and Thierry and me, though it wasn’t really important as it wasn’t about me and who I really was. “My perfume getting to you?”

“Yes,” he said, surprisingly. “Do you know the effect that a girl as lovely as you has on a man, particularly when she ignores him?”

“I’m not ignoring you, Ezra,” I said slowly, seeing how he was trying to control himself. Ah, his record of sexual conquests. He hadn’t had a girl in several days. I’d made sure he was alone with me. I’d cancelled the date he’d had set up with some woman named Natasha.

“Where did you sleep last night or the night before?” asked Ezra Marsh. “And why isn’t anyone coming around to check on me? I can’t believe I’m still here, with you, after so many days.”

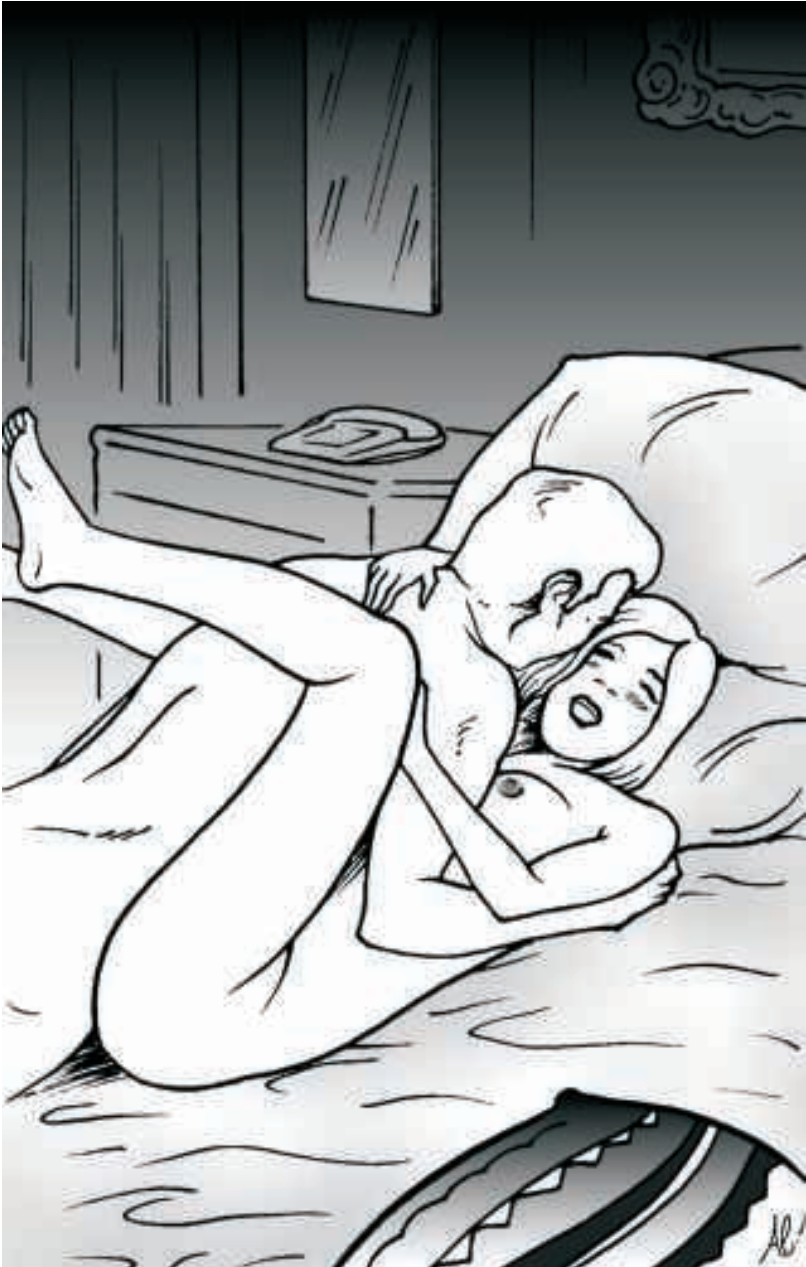
“It’s all right,” I told him. “Your reputation isn’t going to suffer, Ezra. Your closest friends and business associates know you’re here with me. You’re having a delightful lost weekend, aren’t you?”

I leaked some of the messages being sent to him by Section Chiefs and deputy directors, one thanking him for the ‘wet dream’ he’d sent him. I’d relayed the pole dancing and stripping routine I’d done, Ali’s face eliminated and changed in that scene of a man licking my breasts to Ezra’s likeness. It would have been easy to find out that it wasn’t Ezra, actually, as the other deputy director would find out if he was expert enough to check out who the man sucking my breasts was. But since the image was sent to him supposedly by Ezra, I didn’t think that he would.

“You bitch!” screamed Ezra Marsh at me as he trolled through the images of him. Sexist messages scrolled along the bottom of the screen from all his associates who watched him apparently having me on the dance floor of the *Troca* in Marseilles.

“You’ve done it before, Ezra,” I said to him. “It’s why Jackson sent you the pictures and tapes of me. He knew what would appeal to you. How often have you jerked off to me letting Ali lick my breasts?”

“You’re sick,” said Ezra Marsh, trembling as he closed his computer and pulled the plug on the big screen. There, I’d been gyrating again in another club, the target I was with finally pulling me against him, groping me as we kissed so ecstatically.



“I’ve hidden you away for the weekend, Ezra,” I told him. “Yet, all these passwords and keys you’ve given me don’t work on the Army records I need.”

“No,” agreed Ezra. “I tried to tell you that. We are two separate, stand-alone agencies, us and military intelligence. What they have on you as Stephen Nixon I couldn’t access from here.”

“From your office on Grosvenor?” I asked him, having finally figured out Ezra was telling me the truth.

“Possibly,” Ezra said cautiously.

“I’d be very grateful to you,” I whispered to him, crossing my legs again, ogling him girlishly as I heard the rasp of my nylons again, indicating what I was wearing.

I sensed him coming behind me, looking over at the screen in front of me. He gasped at the files of me, flirting, flicking my dress up to let some man snap my garter belt, me wiggling in pleasure as some white hair trembled while I bounced my breasts in his hand, and kissing Thierry, it very clear that his tongue possessed my lovely mouth. I clearly enjoyed being the flirty girl for all of the men in the files Jackson had kept. Ezra put a hand on my neck then, a surprisingly soft hand for a man, I thought. I waited for him to make a move to try to strangle or incapacitate me.

But he didn’t, Ezra stroked me gently, leaning down to kiss my shoulder along the thin straps of my bra and the sundress I was wearing.

“Oh, Ezra,” I murmured to him, reaching up and covering his hand with mine. “Are you really sure you want to do this?”

I let him take the lead, bring me to my feet, playing the demure maiden and tensing coyly as Ezra Marsh, deputy director, kissed me. Well, far better than killing me, I said gleefully to myself. If I could just get him eating out of my hand as I had so many men in France. But those men were different. None of them had known I was a man just like them. Ezra did.

Ezra knew what I was. I never did get off, really, with all the men I'd made love to in my special way. They'd loved what I did to them as foreplay. I did what most of them really wanted from me.

So the problem with Ezra was that he was only the second other man alive whom I wasn't going to have to hold back with. I thought of Thierry and, to my surprise, it worked. It had been so long since I had been with Thierry, half a year then. And as I imagined Ezra as Thierry, I realized just how much I really missed having sex fully with another man.

So I went a little overboard with Ezra, well, a lot overboard. When he finally slipped off my panties, and found I really had what he thought I did beneath them, Ezra didn't stop. Just like Thierry, I felt him lift my tush and legs up around him and he drove into me, thrilling me as I was penetrated again as if I was really a woman. I really began to be a woman as the arousals and excitement came to me so fully. I was an orgasmic woman again after a long abstinence. Ezra loved it. He came again and again, rutting with me, asking me what I liked him to do and doing it for me.

And yes, I thought, it was going to be so much more wonderful to have a man co-operating with me on my quest, as I was privately calling it, to be Stephen Nixon again. And I was going to achieve that end, I thought mischievously, by being a blonde, sexy woman in my lover's bed, pleasing him in every way, climaxing as he did and so showing him that, yes, he was arousing the woman in me, as I was arousing the man in him.

## **\*\*\*\*\*9. What happens in Vegas ...\*\*\*\*\***

'Mo Patel' was soon my exclusive contract at *Heaven and Earth*. I was lucky that he was infatuated with me from the start. Within the week, I'd suspended my job with the escort service. I went to live

with my beloved Mo in his protected penthouse suite, as his affectionate, sex-starved girl friend.

I was lucky that Mo wanted the 'perfect' blow job almost all of the time. That didn't require me to disrobe and show my nakedness to him. He was actually pleased I was so modest, as he called it, even though, one night, I performed a belly dance for him that was lewd and licentious by anyone's standards. He aroused himself before I could join him and bring him to 'complete heavenly joy,' his words.

'Al Patel' refused to share and wanted variety, sometimes having two different girls from *Heaven and Earth* in one evening. He seemed to be in some kind of rush, as his elder brother wasn't, to make up for all the nights he'd spent in the mountains with his terrorist friends, I supposed, plotting and fighting against the very country whose luxuries he was now lapping up.

Being part of the household, being Mo's mistress, wiggly and squeaky as Mo liked me to be, I was soon ignored by the heavily-armed security. It took very little time to drug all of them, save for a devout pair who wouldn't drink the water in Las Vegas, or eat anything cooked in Las Vegas water. Those last two, I took down with impressive high kicks that I admired myself.

Yes, I could still get a job in a chorus line, I thought, as I bound and tied up the last of the groggy 'security' and stowed them in the bedroom's walk-in closet where I'd laid the men I'd injected with the knockout drugs. I'd procured those from several pharmacies who were now dispensing birth control pills and hormones that had the same marks on them as the knockout pills and potions I'd required.

Mohammed and Ahmed Barrouqi, I laid on one bed with the latest newspaper, the stories of the Nevada primary front and foremost, the candidates easily recognizable. Making the file was easy enough. But then I had the problem of transporting the pair out of the so-called 'secured' building before I sent the file off to Virginia Shepherd.

Why her? Well, she hadn't tried to kill Thierry, had she? She'd wanted information from him, information about me. Well, she was going to get it. And Ezra Marsh? He and I had worked well together for a short time. I'd even gone out and enticed Mo Barrouqi back to my hotel room. Yes, I'd been in a flight attendant's uniform, an 'air hostess,' as Mo had called me. It was some fantasy of his and so I supplied him with everything he needed, looking so cute in my uniform, I thought.

I was there again when Mo and Al had come over on a private jet to America. I'd been the ground hostess who had taken the pair off the hands of the regular flying girls who were most relieved I did that. They tried to warn me to watch out for Al in particular who seemed to think that every American woman was his to fornicate with, on the spot, not caring that his brother was present as he tried to be amorous.

Of course, Al was slowed down when he unfortunately twisted and dislocated his wrist when reaching for the drink I'd asked him for. He'd been trying to kiss me at the time. I leaned back and the poor man had trapped his hand between my tush and thigh and something had had to give.

That had given me a little time to romance with Mo, a condition he'd imposed on Ezra, that I be there for him, before I lovingly sent him on his way. I told him yes; if I could, I would indeed look him up in Miami. I knew that he was lying. I'd seen the plane's itinerary and read Ezra's instructions on his private mail, which he still thought was secret from me, his live-in girl friend.

I was certain as I could be in Paris that it was a set-up to get rid of Thierry and me, both. The only one, once I knew about Jackson, who'd want a girl like me dead was Ezra Marsh. His promise to trade favors with a general to get me all the information that the army had on me, on Stephen Nixon, was all a lie. How often must a girl be betrayed by her man? I said to myself, before she learns the score and forgets about men and tries a woman instead.

I told the ambulance driver that there was no need to hurry as I let his partner and him load Mo and Al into the ambulance. I smiled and shook my head, thinking that wearing a nurse's uniform was something I should do more often, the way that the men were looking at me.

"Alcohol poisoning," I said, wrinkling my nose at the smell that came off the clothes I'd liberally doused in whiskey. Even so, one guy was trying to put a move on me, looking up and down at me in my sexy nurse's uniform. "They're expecting them at the Clinic to dry out there."

The driver wanted to know if I was going with them, his pal looking down the front of my dress. "Oh, I'm not a nurse," I giggled to them. "I'm the girl who pops out of the cake or, in this case, delivers the singing telegram. They were all too blotto, the ones upstairs as well, to appreciate the view."

"We're not," said the driver with a smile. "Why don't you come with us after? We can drive you home."

"Ooo, that would be so nice!" I giggled and did a pretty, feminine pose for them. "But there's more upstairs that might be coming your way. And I have to get paid!"

The guys laughed and went off. I was wiggling for them, lifting my short skirt to show off my black panties as I called Virginia Shepherd on her private, personal number.

## **\*10. Tell us what you are going to do now\***

It took Virginia Shepherd only three or four tries to type in 'Ezra Marsh' as the password to 'The Resurrection' file.

“Are they who I think that they are?” Jack Reynolds asked her, glaring angrily at the screen.

“Yes,” said Ginny, “and, if you look at the stories on the first page of that group of newspapers ...” Whoever made the video was now showing a series of papers from that very morning. Ahmed Barrouqi was clutching the *NY Times* as he grunted and seemed to settle down into deep sleep against his brother beside him on the sofa.

Jack Reynolds swore. “Those are from today,” he said. “Those are the Barrouqi brothers! They’re alive. Where the hell is this?”

The ‘cameraman’ left the apartment, walked down stairs onto a street. There were people smiling and scurrying to get out of the way of the pictures of the ‘Eiffel Tower’ and ‘Montgolfier’s Balloon’ carrying a Casino de Paris signage.

“That can’t be Paris!” Jack exclaimed. “The other buildings about ...”

The camera swung to show the great fountains swirling up from the Bellagio.

“That’s Las Vegas!” Jack shouted at Ginny Shepherd who’d already figured that out. “They’re here in America, in Sin City!”

“Where else?” asked Ginny grimly. Her Blackberry rang again. “Yes!” she snapped. It was the person she’d expected. She signaled to Jack and hastily put it onto the room speaker.

“... you didn’t like the idea of the Barrouqi brothers not being dead?” asked the soft, girlish voice. “If that really doesn’t appeal to you, I can always do something about it if you meet my price for such a mission.”

“We’re very happy that Mohammed and Ahmed are alive,” Ginny snapped in the same tone with which she’d answered the phone. “And we’d prefer them to stay that way. Where can we locate them?”

“They were delivered to the Lister Clinic not ten minutes ago,” said the French-accented girl. “They need a room to sleep off the colossal amount of liquor they’ve drunk.”

“Liquor?” asked Ginny. “Muslims? That will raise eyebrows.”

“Two Indian gentlemen according to their passports,” said Noelle Mercier with a giggle. “Mo and Al Patel, as they’re calling themselves.”

“There must have been protection, security, for those men,” said Ginny grimly. “What did you do with them?”

“I didn’t kill any of them,” said Noelle, the amusement still clear in her voice. “Hmm, I suppose if you don’t get someone over to the Marengo Suites, you might have someone expire from the sorts of emissions men make when they’re packed tightly into a closet. Men are such beasts, aren’t they?”

“You should know,” said Ginny shortly. There was a silence then on the other end of the phone.

“Ah,” said Noelle Mercier. “You’ve talked to Ezra.”

“He said nothing of any significance to me,” said Ginny. “Look, Noelle, if I can call you that, or should I call you Steve?” There was another long, pregnant pause on the phone. “Okay, Noelle, it is. Why don’t you come in and we can talk about all of this? It seems clear you’ve been wrongly accused of killing men who are still alive.”

“Right now,” said Noelle forcefully. “But will they still be when the bully boy squad Jack is undoubtedly putting together right now takes them in hand?”

Jack Reynolds looked up from the phones he’d been working since Ginny had begun speaking. She waved to him to keep going on as he had.

“You know that Ezra is only minutes behind you now, don’t you?” said Noelle. “I suggest you come

here to Vegas for a little R and R. You've been working far too hard, girl."

"If I come to Vegas, it will be to talk to you," said Virginia Shepherd. "Where can I meet with you?"

"Come to Vegas," said Noelle quietly. "I'll find you wherever you are."

### **\*\*\*11. ...doesn't stay in Vegas\*\*\***

Inevitably, Jack Reynolds was at Virginia Shepherd's elbow all through her movement through the hotel. One of Ezra's squads was right behind Ginny as well, making no attempt to hide what they were doing.

I'd thought about approaching her as Steve, in a soldier uniform like the one I'd worn in Paris. But I still couldn't control my voice well. I'd worked too earnestly in that time when the Madames ruled me. Between them all, they'd made me permanently, or so it seemed, talk like a woman.

Female habits came easily to me as well, the way that I stood. I'd tried pants on a couple of occasions, even a short-haired wig and no makeup but, always, I was called 'Miss'. Watching myself walk towards a glass window, I could see why. It must be partly those darn hormone pills I was still taking. Well, I didn't want to suddenly have to shave or anything like that, did I?

The effect of the hormones seemed to be obvious woman-shaping. I'd taped my breasts once and it made no appreciable difference in the way I saw myself, never mind how others saw me. I was, for this moment at least, a woman. I had to learn to live with that. It wasn't as if it was something unpleasant, I kept telling myself. After all, fifty percent of the people on the planet wore dresses, more if you thought about how some men in Asian countries dressed.

As a woman as well, disguise was easier than it had been when I was a man, or so I thought, not really recalling any of that now. I could wear a wig of a different color, re-do my makeup and perfume, exaggerate the clothing I wore, just be a different kind of woman entirely.

I had to smile to myself as I skipped along in my hotel uniform, my hair a sort of ash-blonde, helping different people with difficulties they were having with the hotel. I appeared always to be moving and busy even though Ginny and her bodyguard were watching every girl they came across, no matter how glamorous she was or wasn't, as if she might attack them.

Yes, it was funny how the rich just didn't seem to notice the working poor, I thought with a smile to myself. Normally, I'd be the one standing out, of course. Thierry always wanted me to attract others so that, when I zeroed in on a target, they'd be flattered that a girl who was so attractive to other men was paying attention to them.

I had to get rid of the tail on the woman who'd come to Vegas to talk to me. I carried the missive on a small, silver tray, smiling as I approached one of Ezra's 'weasels'.

"Mr Danielson," I said as prettily as I could, smiling the whole time. Mark Danielson almost took out his gun and pointed it at me, I thought; deciding I wasn't worth it, he took the note from the tray I presented to him. It was an old-fashioned way to present a missive to a guest but the New Traditional Hotel and Casino did things like that. It was so new that most of the staff didn't bother anyone in the gray skirt, white blouse, greenish blazer and soft, multi-colored scarf that comprised the 'uniform' of us women working there.

"So where is the outside smoking room?" growled Danielson, the two members of his pack closing up to him. They were all over six-three in height. If they stayed like that, bunched together, they'd be so easy to put down.

“May I show you, gentlemen?” I asked them, swiveling my hips and looking back archly at them as I walked away with the sway I’d practiced for so long and hard to master. “Walk this way, please.”

I saw the smiles on their faces as they reacted to the old chestnut of an expression as all men do. I led them to the elevator and stood in front of them all as if I hadn’t a care in the world. I took them up to the eighteenth which was being re-decorated and had no one currently in residence there.

The elevator door opened and I stepped out. There was no one in sight. I turned back with a mutter as they bunched up in the doorway. The black man was still smiling at me as he went down first, followed quickly by his buddies. I could have done all sorts of things to demean them, dressing them like me came to mind but I didn’t. I just dumped them into a room that was locked and out of bounds till the morning. They could scream and yell all they liked in there, when they woke up. There were no working electronics and I’d jammed the windows and doors.

I dumped the guns and communications devices into a garbage chute and headed over to Virginia’s suite. She was out with Reynolds, undoubtedly checking on the Patel brothers and their security. That ‘security’, on one hand, would be telling her they were only following orders, and, on the other, they could be telling her to bug off as she wasn’t supposed to know the Barrouqi brothers were alive. Didn’t she know she was compromising a national security operation? The deputy director in charge was going to hear about this. Long life, Mo and Al, I thought, if that happened.

Jack Reynolds checked the room for Virginia when they came back, neither of them saying very much. I waited at the back of the walk-in closet to pounce on him but he opened the door and gave Ginny’s dresses even less of a look than I had. I eased out after I heard him go. There was Ginny, just as I’d seen her before, an older woman, stylish, in her forties, talking to someone on the phone.

“Yes,” she said to whoever she was talking to, “we definitely have to re-think every word I said in the Director’s staff review of what happened in Paris. Nothing that went down there is quite what we thought. I’ll talk to you about it later.”

Virginia had remarkable poise. She showed it as she turned and looked at me.

“You shouldn’t wear Chanel when you’re out on a mission,” she said to me. “Not unless, of course, your mission involves you being a glamorous woman.”

“When ...” I began slowly, liberating myself from the jacket that I’d had to wear as part of my disguise.

“I wasn’t sure when I came in but there was more of a trace as I went into the bedroom,” said Ginny matter-of-factly. “Jack didn’t notice anything, of course, but he is a man, after all. And no, I didn’t mention it to him as he left. It is time for us to have a girl-to-girl talk, isn’t it?”

“I’d think so,” I said, putting my hand on my hip and doing my model sashay past a surprised Ginny. “You are studying me, aren’t you?” I asked her. “Did I do well enough to pass in your eyes?”

“More than well enough,” said Ginny. “You might have heard this before but I can’t believe I’m not looking at a young woman when I look at you. Those hips and those breasts, you must be on hormones, mustn’t you?”

“I didn’t realize it for the longest time,” I had to admit to her. “Thierry told me I had to take vitamin pills. That’s how they’re labeled. I think I knew in the second year but I rationalized taking them as having to preserve my cover in missions. Did you listen to the conversations Jackson and Thierry had about me? Is that how you figured it out that I’m not, well, I’m not ...”

“You probably are,” said Ginny then, interrupting me, surprising me. “And no, I didn’t know such tapes existed. Since Jackson’s demise, all his records have been deep-sixed, of course.”

Ginny stared intensely at me. "At least, Jack and I thought that," she said, "or else they were assigned to a pay grade well above ours."

"For a time," I had to tell Ginny with some regret. This wasn't really what I wanted to talk to her about. "Ezra had almost all of the incriminating evidence, the tapes about me, under his control. He thought he had a secret stash as well, that even I wouldn't find. He was wrong."

"You've been working with Ezra," said Ginny, her jaw tightening, a lovely 'tell' I thought that showed her anger towards Ezra. Later, if there was a later with us, I'd have to relate to her why I'd labeled Ezra Marsh as her worst enemy in the agency.

I nodded and sat down opposite her, carefully shaping my skirt beneath me and then crossing my legs in ladylike fashion. "Until he put together this little plot to have both the Barrouqis and me killed," I told her.

"It was meant to be the Battle of Paris when you got off the train," said Ginny thoughtfully, staring at me as I checked I was sitting properly, back straight, elbows in, my hair down my back and not around my shoulders.

"With the French there to make sure there'd be no survivors," I said. "Neither Thierry or me."

Ginny nodded and sighed. She frowned, a little smile coming to her lips. "Did you have to hit Jack quite so hard?" she asked. "He's still mad at you for that. He can't get over that a woman took him out. When he recalls you're a man, *were* a man, well, that a man like you took him out, he and his whole team, that's something that he can't bear to think about."

"But you can?" I asked her unsteadily.

Ginny smiled. "I've spent a lot more time in foreign parts," she said. "Jack hasn't. Did your record-gathering, I presume that's what you were having Ezra do for you, ever come across Ezra's tours across Eastern Europe?"

“I wasn’t really interested in that,” I had to tell her.

“What *were* you really interested in?” asked an amused Virginia, offering me a glass of white wine. She was sipping on hers, the usual lipstick on her glass as it would soon be on mine. I accepted as I couldn’t think of more than fifty reasons why she should want to poison me right there. “Jackson and the reports on how he was killed?”

“Those seem to have really disappeared,” I had to confess to her. “I didn’t find anything about Jackson being dead. He just disappeared from all records. No one said why.”

“No, we don’t do that,” said Ginny, giving me the glass she’d poured and drunk from herself. “Not when one of ours has been killed by one of our own. You never saw the report Jack and I were given just before we went over to Paris. You were named as the one, Noelle Mercier, who’d eliminated Jackson.”

“No, I hit him and disarmed him,” I told her. “I didn’t kill him.”

Ginny’s eyebrows went up in surprise. “Then who ... Oh, it’s so obvious, isn’t it? Man and woman ...?”

I flushed. “Jackson was calling me all kinds of horrible names,” I told her. “Cec asked me when we drove off why he’d been calling Thierry all the names he did, you know, compound words with sucker in most of them. Now, I think that the others, his bodyguards, thought he was using that language to Thierry, but he wasn’t.

“Jackson was calling me all the most horrible things he could dredge up. We were over, you see, Thierry and me, as a kill-squad. We were too successful, in a way. We were attracting attention. All the bad guys knew there was a kill-squad out there operating against them in and around Paris. And Halima telling everyone it was a woman who’d killed her husband and father-in-law ...”

“So Thierry killed Jackson,” said Ginny, staring at me.

"I think so," I said to her slowly. "He told me that he did but you know Thierry. He was the greatest liar in the world. You should have heard what he told me about myself. Well, you can see the results, can't you?"

"Pretty wonderful results, if you ask me," said Virginia with a smile that made me blush. "How does it feel, Noelle, to be batting for the other side, as some people call it?"

"I, I don't really do that," I tried to explain to her. One of her thin eyebrows rose in a gesture I'd tried to do but never really mastered it, not like the way Ginny did it, so naturally feminine and dismissive.

"What did you want from Ezra?" asked Ginny with a slow smile. "And what excuse did he give you why he couldn't get you what you wanted right away?"

I hesitated. Could I really trust this woman across from me? "When did you know that it was Ezra who betrayed you?" Ginny went on as I stared at her, took a drink, swirled it around in my mouth and on my tongue, trying to find anything in the taste of white wine that shouldn't be there. Oh, yes, I know that there are a lot of tasteless, odorless poisons and other dangerous drugs but I'd watched her sip from the wine she'd passed to me. She'd have to feel the effects long before I did.

"Thierry told me the French had found my fingerprints and were looking for me," I told her. Ginny frowned at that.

"Even if they found my fingerprints," I told her, "the person they should have been looking for was Lieutenant Stephen Nixon, deceased."

"Not so deceased," Ginny said with a little smile that made me shiver inside but I tried and succeeded, I think, in keeping a straight face, thankful then for the makeup I'd applied so liberally for my 'job' as hostess.

“Ezra was the only one, I think, who knew where I was, that I’d be in Paris, and who knew Stephen’s fingerprints were mine,” I finished.

“You’ve got all the files that could prove he knew both of those things?” Ginny said to me.

“I flushed all his files, his personal and private ones, ones he shared only with the Director himself,” I said to Ginny with a sigh. “They trained us too well as hackers, Thierry and me. Well, Thierry’s much better than me. He showed me the things I did to Ezra’s files. Now no one I think could ever prove directly that I am Stephen Nixon, not even me.”

I must have let my guard down a little on the last three words. I know I felt a touch of sadness as I said that. I shuddered as the room seemed suddenly so cold.

“That’s what you wanted from Ezra,” said Ginny perceptively. “He wouldn’t give you the files he had access to about Stephen Nixon.”

“I couldn’t find any that he did have access to,” I told her, trying to keep my emotions in check and not let her see how much they did mean to me. “There are army files I have to find a way to access but ...”

“Ezra would have clearance to those,” said Ginny. I shivered again inside as she confirmed what I’d thought. I’d known Ezra was lying to me. But I’d so wanted to believe him. He’d said that he loved me, loved the way we made love together. He wanted me to retire from ‘heavy’ work, what I’d done for too long.

Yes, Ezra was going to bring me into the agency as a woman, as his secretary and confidante. Everything he knew, I’d know. I’d live with him, go to parties openly with him, and meet everyone of importance as a woman. I’d know everyone he knew. Eventually, I’d wear his ring and be known everywhere as ‘Mrs Ezra Marsh’.

What a fool I was, I thought angrily, as I sat opposite Ginny, and realized how I’d been played by another man, by Ezra Marsh. I’d been so happy to go off

to Europe for my lover, to do some chores for him, eliminating Ahmed Barrouqi, for one, Halima for another. He'd told me all about Thierry's unhappy plight, not being really in the agency any more.

"He's such a liar," I'd said gaily to Ezra as I drew his face down onto my breasts. I felt his manhood instantly begin to grow between my thighs then. I wiggled in ecstasy as he caressed my bra and panties. No, I didn't have to think about Thierry any more to rise to the occasion with Ezra Marsh. No, I was an orgasmic woman again, with a man who seemed to delight in having me as a showgirl many times nightly and, on occasions, in my bikini, during the day.

"He knows all about you, this Thierry," Ezra said some time during one night. "We have to do something about that, my honey-sweet woman. I'll take care of him."

"Kill Thierry Bouchard?" I'd laughed at him. "I've promised him a hundred times I'd do that." I'd tickled Ezra who'd joined in my laughter.

"I couldn't have him coming after me, blackmailing me, writing and depositing information about you in private places," Ezra went on. "Not when, Noelle my sweet, you're fully acknowledged by the world as my wife."

"You don't have to do that," I'd told Ezra unsteadily, a thrill going through me all the same at what he was proposing. I found it hard to imagine myself as his bride as he told me he wanted me. I'd be meeting the President, surely, as Ezra had his trophy wall with the pictures of several Presidents and him, some where he was receiving medals for the wonderful things he'd done for the agency.

I couldn't believe I'd be a wife, accepted by the most important people in the country as such, treated as such, admired as such. Ezra said I'd have to have an enormous dress allowance as he wanted every man in Washington and New York to envy him and the wife he'd chosen.

Oh, I'd thrilled to that completely, the silly, girlish fool I was. I'd coaxed my husband-to-be into having me again, being as girlish as I could be to pleasure him as he wanted, being a silly bimbo as he liked me to be.

"Let me talk to Thierry," I'd finally put it to my lover. "I'll talk to him. If he won't see reason about us, I'll take care of him myself. It'll be the last mission I'll ever have to do. I'll do it for us, if I have to. But I think I can talk Thierry into leaving us strictly alone. He's really a coward inside, you know, and really afraid of me."

Just like you were, I could have added to Ezra, but that wouldn't have been true. I'm the most awful judge of men. All the time that I was being such a loving girl to Ezra Marsh, he must have been thinking how he could get rid of me, and Thierry as well. And I really did misjudge Thierry as well. He wasn't the coward I said he was. I did sort of know that. But he was afraid of me when I threatened to break his arms and his hands and then his neck when I was first with him. That being the time after he picked me up in my red bikini on a beach in Italy.

"Something we have in common," said Ginny, intruding on all the thoughts that kept flowing through my mind as I thought of the two men I'd really been intimate with.

"I was thinking," I said.

"About making love to Ezra?" Ginny asked and pulled a face. "That's what we have in common, Noelle. Once upon a time, I was Z's lover in Europe. I was even going to marry him. Luckily for me, I saw him with what at first glance was a girl in a boite in Paris." She was really studying my face hard then. "You don't remember that at all, do you?"

"I knew Ezra in Paris?" I gasped at her. "I didn't ... I couldn't have! Thierry would have told me! Ezra would have told me ...!"

"This amnesia of yours," said Ginny. "It still afflicts you?"

“I can’t remember anything before I boarded the plane with Vernon Green, the arms dealer,” I told her, reluctantly. “I know a lot of things I did before that because Thierry told me all about the things I did, including making love to him. That was his biggest lie, of course. I couldn’t remember that and, of course, it hadn’t happened at all. I was, in fact, supposed to have given up my role as a travesti and returned to being me, Stephen Nixon, though Jackson and Thierry called me Johnny.”

“So, if Thierry didn’t know that you met Ezra, he couldn’t tell you about it, could he? I wonder if Jackson knew,” Ginny went on. “Was that why he was so cavalier in running his section? He knew Ezra, the deputy director over him, couldn’t touch him no matter what Thierry did, making you into the beautiful girl you are today.”

I know I flushed at that. “That’s not true,” I said with a shiver, nervously uncrossing and crossing my long legs again as femininely as I could, aware of her watching me in amusement.

“Let’s not lie to one another,” said Ginny, finishing her wine and pouring herself another from the bottle I’d been suspicious of. “You, Noelle Mercier, are a very beautiful girl, a clever girl, as well. An experienced man like Mo Barrouqi has no idea still that he’s been sleeping with a transvestite. Is that the word I should use for you?”

I shivered openly. I could scarcely ask her to call me a boy or a man, could I? “You could call me a girl, I guess,” I said to her, flushing horribly again, I’m sure.

“Yes, you are a most lovely, formidable girl,” said Ginny. “I’d guess that’s what Ezra sees in you. I imagine he must have been terribly worried that some day, some jolt, some injury would awaken the travesti working as an asset as you were. You’d recall him from your first days as a drag queen, making love to him in *L’Hotel Mediterranee*. You don’t recall that at all, do you?”

“I, I don’t at all,” I said, my head pounding as my heart beat so fast as I thought about what Thierry had said about me making love to him, a man, before I lost my memory. I’d thought that it was all untrue but here was Ginny saying it wasn’t. She’d seen me with another man and knew I’d made love to him. “It, it couldn’t be true.”

“There was an older woman with you,” Ginny went on. “You went into this crossdresser cabaret and she sold you to Ezra. I think it was done openly and vividly. Now, I think you were having your bonafides as a travesti confirmed in front of a target. You didn’t have anything like the figure you have now, Noelle. Your legs, I recall, in those black stockings and garters that all the boys like you love to wear, were thinner than they are now.

“You took half the money the woman took from Ezra and put it in your bra and led him out of the cabaret. All the men dressed as girls pranced about on the stage. I was annoyed. I followed you and ran a video line under the door of the room you were in. You and Ezra were laughing and drinking. He started kissing you.

“You were reluctant, at first, but as you went on, drinking a little more. Ezra took the money from your bra and pointed downstairs as if he was talking about the woman and what he’d paid for you. He got up to leave. You grabbed his hand, pulled him onto the bed and let him stroke your stockings and take them from you. You rolled over in your panties and let him have you again as he pressed your face into a pillow.

“I remember thinking you didn’t like my boyfriend fucking you but you might as well get used to it, girlie boy, that’s what went through my head, as I wasn’t ever going to let him touch me again. And I never have.”

“That-that’s awful!” I told her, disgust running through me like a drug. “How, how could I have ever let a man, then, when I still had all my memories ...”



“You didn’t seem to like it,” said Ginny. “I retreated outside and saw you going off with the elder woman. I think you were in tears. She was talking to you, holding your arm. You were shaking your blonde hair, saying No, I think. It was a new wig, not like the one you wore in bed when Ezra was fucking you.”

I winced and shuddered, feeling as if I’d just swallowed a mouthful of ashes, not white wine. My breasts quivered as all of me was revolted by the unexpected story Ginny had told me about myself.

“You don’t like the ‘f’ word?” asked Ginny, the amused smile returning to her face. “No, a pretty girl like you wouldn’t like that, would you? What do you call it when you let a man penetrate you?”

“Making love,” I said wretchedly, knowing I couldn’t go on any longer. I uncrossed my legs and swayed onto my high heels.

“You would make a lovely model,” said Ginny, studying me. “It was the career you should have had, Noelle Mercier. When all this is over ...”

“I won’t look like this at all,” I told her fervently.

“Oh?” asked Virginia Shepherd. “And how will you look? Even Lindsay Lohan is a platinum blonde, I saw yesterday in the paper you draped over Mo and Al.”

“I’ll look like Stephen Nixon,” I told her.

**\*12. I promise you I’ll do that little thing for you\***

Ginny Shepherd swayed to her feet and went to the lovely girl who backed away from her. But finally Ginny managed to take her hand. Reluctantly, the girl let herself be hugged, woman to woman, the

bounce of Ginny's older woman's, fuller breasts against the girl's making her flush again.

At the touch of Ginny's soft cheek on her soft cheek, the girl shivered again as she'd done several times in their little 'girl-to-girl' chat.

"I can do that thing for you," said Ginny, admiring the beautifully made-up eyes of Noelle Mercier. "As a Section Chief, I can get Army records for you. What are you going to do with them when you know all that there is to know about Lieutenant Stephen Nixon, a hero, I suppose, of the Iraq war?"

"There must be people alive who knew me, cared about me," said Noelle, a definite, nervous quiver in her voice. She wants to be Stephen again, mused Ginny in amazement. She was such a lovely, attractive girl. She should just have her extra male equipment removed, Ginny thought in amusement, and settle down to live the life of a beautiful woman. There were millions of men in the world who'd love to live with a woman like her. There were a million men in the world as well, probably more, who would do just that in her place.

"It won't be what you imagine," warned Ginny as the pretty girl looked at her uncertainly. "Don't have stars in your eyes, girl." That made her jump a little. "The truth is probably uglier than your sentimental, romantic thoughts would have it be. You're heading into one colossal disappointment."

All the time she was saying that to Noelle, Ginny was hugging and caressing the girl. Noelle shivered some more and nodded, her lovely hair swirling about her face and neck. "I, I'll just have to handle it when it comes," she whispered to Ginny, letting her soft cheek touch Ginny's in return then.

Ginny didn't know why she did it but it seemed so natural. She kissed Noelle's cheek and then, as the girl turned, startled, she kissed her on her lovely, pink-painted lips, which quivered against Ginny's mouth so pleasantly that the older woman couldn't let go and so the kiss deepened and went on.

“Well, this is unexpected,” murmured Ginny as the girl finally broke away and pulled back a little, staring at her in horror.

“We, we were kissing!” gasped Noelle, stepping back and trying to break Ginny’s caressing of her back and her bra beneath the thin, see-through blouse she was wearing.

“And I liked it,” said Ginny, surprising herself. “I’d like to do it again.”

“No!” said the lovely girl in front of her, grasping Ginny’s hand with surprising strength.

“You’re right,” said Ginny, knowing she was grimacing as the girl had taken hold of the pressure point that would cause her the most pain. “I’m not a lesbian, Noelle, so you can either break my wrist or let me go.”

Noelle jerked as if she suddenly realized what she was doing and let the older woman go.

“How about you?” Ginny asked, watching the shock on the girlish face, noting the shiver and anxiety with which the very pretty girl licked her lips as if she was still tasting Ginny. “Are you now,” she asked dryly, “or have you ever been a lesbian?”

Noelle’s eyes widened in shock. She swallowed hard and babbled at the start of an answer as if she didn’t know what she was talking about, about what to say.

“Never thought about it?” asked Ginny. “Never thought about making love to a woman?” There was an immediate flush spreading across the girl’s face. “Ah, you have. So that makes you the lesbian, doesn’t it?”

“It makes me a normal boy,” flared Noelle in definite, female tones as she picked up the jacket and purse she’d left on an armchair.

“Stephen Nixon?” asked Ginny, watching the way the girl in front of her moved, the way she

bunny-dipped so naturally to pick up her purse. “I can and will get you all the information you want about Stephen. I can start the procedure now, if you wish. You can wait here, Stephen,” it sounded so absurd to call this flustered girl that, “and you can go on your merry way. Notice I didn’t say ‘gaily on your way’.”

“I, I’m not gay!” Noelle said hotly, angrily, her earrings shaking, her hair flicking about her face so that she had to push it back with a well-manicured hand, her brightly colored and shaped fingernails flashing at Ginny. “I hated, hated all the things that, that people like you have made me do for, for ...”

“Human rights, justice and the American way,” Ginny said cynically. The girl in front of her nodded furiously, again, quite unconsciously moving her arm easily and femininely to push her long hair back behind her ears and her lovely earrings.

“When was the last time that you slept with a woman?” asked Ginny. It was as if she’d dropped a curtain across a play before its end.

The lovely girl’s nervousness vanished as she visibly took hold of herself, her emotions, and looked at Ginny stonily, all her ‘tell’ marks disappearing. “I’ll wait while you keep your promise,” she said, not a trace of nervousness now in her manner as she put her jacket and purse back across the armchair.

“You don’t remember,” Ginny said in surprise as the thought came to her. “It would have been back before Thierry convinced you to be his woman.”

“It could be,” said Noelle, not a flicker crossing her smooth, lovely face.

“Let’s get on the computer,” said Ginny, going back to the desk and opening the laptop there.

“Wait a moment,” said Noelle, coming and leaning over her.

Mmm, thought Ginny, the scent of Chanel wafting over her deliciously. I must use some of that scent as

well. I'd drive Jack crazy with it, wouldn't I? No, she'd better not. She and Jack had a good working relationship she didn't want to jeopardize. Then she smiled to herself as Noelle's long hair fell forward as the girl was doing something with Ginny's computer, downloading some program with a name Ginny didn't recognize.

"What are you doing, Noelle?" she asked the girl.

"Your computer is being tapped," said Noelle. "There, you see? Wait a moment."

Ginny scarcely recognized the search results that were being listed on the screen of her laptop. Noelle went back to her purse and did her bunny dip again in her tight skirt, not showing off her panties to any man behind her as she would have if she'd bent like a man.

Noelle came back with several flash drives in her hand, one of which she immediately attached to Ginny's laptop. "I didn't do any of this," Noelle said quietly as she leaned in again, her fragrance really intriguing Ginny. She was sure it did the same to any of the men whom the adorable Noelle was given as a target for her amorous approaches.

"This is all Thierry's work," Noelle said as she brought another program on line and did something that started the screen breaking up. "We just sent your watcher a really interesting worm," Noelle went on as the icons on the screen whirled in no credible order to Ginny. "There, your watcher is detached now. You can use your laptop as you please."

"Do we have that?" asked Ginny, staring, as the screen cleared and returned to settings she preferred as a first step to using her laptop.

"The agency?" asked Noelle. "I've never really thought about it. I always supposed that Thierry was working with the geeks and hackers the agency has. He might have kept this to himself. He'd often spend almost a whole day on the computer. He was always working on something, showing me how to get into

and out of differently protected sites, and how to hit back at anyone who tried to hack me.”

“When did you ever find time to ...?” asked Ginny and then realized how personal and invasive such a question would be. “No,” she said. “Don’t answer that, Noelle. That was very rude of me.”

“We always found the time to make love,” Noelle said soberly, looking squarely at Ginny. “I’d get up to make coffee and there he’d be, behind me, his hands, well, his hands stroking my panties and tush, awakening my desire for him. Thierry could do me and bound back to one of the computers he was working on, telling me how much I inspired him.”

“You miss him,” Ginny said quietly then.

“It isn’t the sex I miss,” said Noelle. Again Ginny couldn’t read this girl at all. “He was the only one I could really talk to. He was the only one who knew the real me.”

“But he kept half of your true self hidden from you, didn’t he?” said Ginny, calling up what were often called ‘the dead files’.

“How, how did you get there?” asked Noelle, the first signs of excitement returning to her voice as Ginny began to search through the awfully long list of those who’d fallen in service to the agency. Yes, there were the files on Jackson, she noted in passing.

“All the deputy directors go here,” Ginny told Noelle as she slowed. There was the notation for ‘Lieutenant Stephen Nixon, RIP’. A click and the file opened on a listing of over twenty files assembled about the late Stephen Nixon.

“Ezra swore,” Noelle said in a choked voice. “He’d have to swap favors with some Army General and have the files delivered to him, to Ezra that is, by hand, he swore on his mother’s grave.”

“I don’t think,” murmured Ginny, with a smile at the girl who tremulously smiled back, “that that man ever had a mother.”

“He was going to have them ready for me to look over when I returned from Europe,” Noelle said, holding her anger back. “H-How did you ever get access ...?”

“Need to know,” said Virginia Shepherd in her best, most formal Section Chief voice. “I needed to know all about Jackson’s and the Barrouqis’ deaths, the records that existed on them. Mohammed was, is, a contact of ours, if I was going to carry out a proper investigation and find you guilty of those deaths beyond a doubt.”

“And did you?” Noelle asked the woman in front of her who turned again as so many men did when she was near them and inhaled her perfume. “Find me guilty beyond a doubt.”

“Oh yes,” said Virginia Shepherd. “I had no doubts at all you were a woman and capable of what you were accused of. I found it so intriguing that a woman had done what you did. I don’t know any woman working for the agency like you, a genuine asset. I admired you. I said so to Jack. I had to wonder why we’d just let you go.”

“So this coming after me ...” Noelle said, backing away slightly from the other woman.

“Wasn’t just to have you killed, though I thought it necessary when I first was set after you by Ezra,” said Ginny with a smile. “Yes,” she reached up and stroked Noelle’s arm again. “You aren’t the first woman who’s been screwed by Ezra Marsh. And you’ll be pleased to know Thierry gave us nothing of any importance about you, Noelle. If you’d run, after the station incident in Paris, we wouldn’t know who or what or where you are at all.”

“You know where I am now,” Noelle said as Ginny’s hand lingered on hers.

“Yes,” said Ginny with a smile. “Why don’t you download these files, Noelle? Can you take them and leave no trace that you were in here?”

Noelle nodded and made a face as if what Ginny was asking her was child's play. "But I don't want to leave any traces," she added as she sat where Ginny had been.

Ginny watched in surprise as the files were captured at incredible speed and the originals themselves deleted, the Army program protesting impotently at the destruction of Army property.

"I need to check Jackson's files," Noelle said as she was already there and doing that.

"Be my guest," said Ginny Shepherd, wondering if her entry had been logged and all of this would come back on her head in time.

"There, nothing to worry about there," said Noelle as she did something else. "I don't suppose you want the Army to know who accessed their files tonight."

"No," agreed Ginny as she saw the screen blur and go haywire again.

"Now, I can look at, at these files, at my leisure," said Noelle, a touch of nervousness in her voice as she looked up at Ginny.

"Time for another drink," said Ginny, with a smile. "That's some program that you have access to."

"You need Thierry if you want it," Noelle said. "And one drink is enough for me."

"Ah," said Ginny, "a residue of your first night with Ezra perhaps?"

"How would I know?" asked Noelle, frowning as she thought about it.

"Well, a second isn't going to hurt you," said Ginny. "I promise and I keep my promises, don't I?" She nodded at the flash drive that Noelle had in her hand. Noelle handled it as if it was a bomb or something like that. It possibly could be to her, to Stephen, Ginny thought sympathetically.

“Do you think of yourself as a Steve or a Stephen?” Ginny asked looking at the drive that Noelle seemed reluctant to view right away. Ginny turned and went to the fridge and brought out two bottles of white, studying each before deciding to open the sweeter one.

“Jackson called me Stevie or Stevie Wonder sometimes,” Noelle said, flicking her hair back again as she followed Ginny to the little kitchen area of the suite. “In Paris, he called me Stephanie once.”

“He wanted to belittle you, get you off your guard,” said Ginny as she handed the pretty girl her second drink. “It’s an old technique.”

“Yes,” agreed Noelle.

“What are you going to do tonight?” asked Ginny. “You have a place to sleep?”

“Yes,” Noelle agreed as the phone rang.

Virginia Shepherd talked to an excited Jack. “I’ll let you set that up and see you in the morning, Jack,” she said and turned to Noelle. “The hotel is being ringed with security after they found the men you stowed, up on the eighteenth floor, was it?”

“I can get past them,” Noelle said confidently.

“And leave a trail of bodies, alive hopefully,” said Ginny. “No, we can go on and talk a little more. You can have one of the two bedrooms in this suite. I’ve got clothes that would fit you, and every lotion under the sun to keep my skin smooth and supple like yours.”

Ginny poured a refill into both of their glasses and guided Noelle towards the windows. “Fantastic view, isn’t it?” she asked.

“I don’t like it,” said Noelle nervously, clearly realizing that Ginny was treating her like a girl deliberately. “All I can see is places where I could hide and shoot down anyone who was walking about in this room.”

Ginny laughed but immediately drew the dark, liner curtains over the windows.

“That ends that line of talking,” she said lightly. “Why don’t we look into the bedrooms? You’ve already explored one and you know every dress I possess, I expect. Did you find one that you would like to try on?”

“I, I wasn’t looking for that,” said Noelle, following the older woman reluctantly. She watched in some discomfort as Ginny chose a black nightdress for Noelle and then took her hand to lead her to what Ginny called her, Noelle’s, room.

“Oh, do you wear panties in bed at night?” asked Ginny. “I don’t so I wasn’t thinking.”

“Usually,” said a disconcerted Noelle and so it was back and another ‘slosh’ of wine. There were giggles then as Ginny opened her panties drawer and began to talk about when and with whom she’d last worn the lacy bits that she held out to a flushed, embarrassed Noelle Mercier.

“So, goodnight,” said Ginny, her arm companionably through the other girl as she walked her back to ‘her’ room. “Mmm, I do so love your perfume, Noelle. You bought it in Paris, I presume. I passed because of the expense of Chanel. It really suits you. But I suppose all the men you meet say that to you.”

“Some do,” said Noelle with a quiver as Ginny’s arm was still about her as the older woman steered Noelle to the black nightie and the bed Noelle was supposed to sleep in.

“Well, goodnight,” said Ginny, hugging the girl again to her, feeling a surprising burst of pleasure as the lovely girl didn’t resist and timidly hugged her back. “There has to be a goodnight kiss,” said Ginny as well, smiling at the girl who quivered a little but didn’t object to the first, gentle, sticky kiss from the older woman.

“Oh heck,” said Ginny, putting her arms around the tense, trembling girl. “This doesn’t prove any-

thing, Stephanie. You either are or you aren't. I'm a woman and, if you were any kind of a man, you'd know what I want right now. And don't suggest Jack. That's something I don't want to compromise by doing this."

The passionate kiss would have been rejected by Noelle but Ginny had her arms so tightly about her neck and Ginny seemed to be getting something out of it as her lips moved over Noelle's hungrily.

### \*\*\*\*\*13. Tell me how that feels\*\*\*\*\*

I stiffened and tried to push this horny, older woman off me. I shuddered as I thought of what she'd said of the panties that she had given me to wear in bed, that I was closer to a President wearing them than I'd ever have been by listening to one of Ezra's promises.

I don't know which one of us fell across the bed first but Ginny was giggling as she held onto me and snuggled up to me, kissing me again. Older women like her shouldn't do that, I thought wildly. Maybe she'd had too much to drink, and didn't know how she was making me feel, lying on a bed with a woman, a real woman, cuddling to me, kicking off her high-heeled shoes and telling me to do the same. She wasn't even trying to tell me to stop. She didn't seem to care that I wasn't a lesbian girl.

"Ginny," I said, using the name she'd asked me to call her. 'Virginia' and 'Mrs. Shepherd' were what her former mother-in-law had called her. She hated that old bat. So, I called her Ginny and tried to slide away from her and the emotions she was feeding in me.

"Yes, Stephen," she whispered. I couldn't help clenching her body to me quickly and firmly as she did that, manipulating me just as Ezra had. I knew it. She giggled as if she knew it as well and knew what I was thinking.

Ginny touched my breasts then. I was on fire in a moment. Her lips brushed mine again. I couldn't restrain the kiss that I gave her, as her kiss mirrored the caress that tweaked the nipples beneath my thin blouse and uplifting bra. A strange, strange emotion came over me. I felt heady and aroused and loving. I didn't want such an emotion to die away.

Here I was, on my bed with a woman, a real woman, and she seemed to want me. Ginny wanted me, called me Stephen Nixon. She might just have been intrigued with a man like me and how pretty I was. Well, enough men had told me that - but never a woman - not one I remembered. I didn't think that any woman could ever look at me, as I was, touch me as Ginny was doing. It was what I wanted a woman to do.

Ginny called me 'so pretty' just the same, as she undid the belt at my narrow waist and freed my skirt. She didn't have to do that as she knew I was a man. She wasn't bothered at all by my breasts, my bra, the women's clothing I wore, my hair, my earrings or my makeup. She adored my stockings, she said, and, of course, my lovely fragrance.

I was dazed by the kiss she prolonged and by the way she took my hand. She made me touch her breast, a real woman's breast, not my own. I could feel it tightening under my touch.

"You're supposed to help, Stephen," said the woman stroking my hair and earrings back off my face. "You should know how to open a woman's dress and her bra, shouldn't you? Or do I have to do that myself?"

"I, I can do it," I whispered to her. I released Ginny from her little black dress. She released me from the transparent blouse I'd been wearing. She kissed my bra strap and my cleavage as I wriggled with emotion beside her. Oh, if only I wasn't as girlish as I was but my girlie things seemed to be turning Ginny on, I felt, even though she kept calling me by my boy's name.

Ginny wanted me to take off her bra and to kiss her scented breasts. And then she did the same thing to me.

“Oh, oh,” I gasped in pleasure as her mouth closed on my nipples as she suckled me. This was a woman doing that to me! Our breasts came together as she deliberately stroked mine with hers. I felt the erection in my panties trying to spring forth.

“I, I can’t do this,” I said, I know I did, but it was nothing in the face of the hurricane of emotions sweeping over me. “You, you, know, you know, that, that I’m a man, Ginny, I’m not ...”

“Sssh,” Ginny whispered. “This wouldn’t be any good at all, would it, if you weren’t a man, Stephen my boy? Now, be a good boy and do just what I tell you to do.” I had to slide Ginny’s dress from her, as she wanted me to, and then take off her panties as she smiled and took my hand, placing it gently where she wanted it next. I touched her vagina. It was moist.

“Since I first touched you, Stephen, I’ve wanted you,” Ginny whispered to me. “I’ve wanted to find out just what you are, Stephen. I’ve wanted you to be a man. Don’t disappoint me.”

A man? My stomach retracted and struggled with how I felt to be described that way as this older woman kissed and kissed me. I held me to her, my own feminized body tingling with the caresses and fondling she was pouring onto me.

How could anyone, doing what Ginny was doing to me, call me a man? She kept doing it while all the time she was fondling my breasts or my tush, and kissing my scented skin or my sticky lips. Her hands finally released my bra. She made a meal once more of my breasts, whispering praises of them because they were so shapely and ‘perky’.

I was far more aroused and in much more distress than I’d ever been with Thierry or Ezra undressing me, preparing me to have sex with them, men who wanted me to be their woman. This was a woman!

She wanted me but the way she touched me, she seemed to want me both as a man and as a woman. The excitement grew in me as Ginny put her legs over mine, caressing me as she undid my stockings and garter belt. She began to take down my panties, laughing as she finally found my gaff, which I nervously assisted her to take from me.

“Ah, you were telling the truth,” said Ginny as I gaped and writhed as my manhood and genitals came free. “You are Stephen indeed and not Stephanie.”

I really wouldn't have minded being either of those to her, I thought, a shudder passing through me as Ginny traced my feminine shape with her long fingernails and encouraged me to do the same to her. It was so wonderful. Almost immediately, I felt my manhood rising to agree with the wonders that Ginny was introducing me to.

Ginny fondled and kissed my breast making me frantic as I wriggled beside her as she was lifting herself on top of me. I tried to hold her back but she gently slapped my hands as if I was a little girl and eased over me, her mouth on mine, her face was filling my line of vision.

“I do like being on top,” Ginny whispered to me as she kissed my face as if I really was her girl friend. Other men had done it to me. Where did that ‘other men’ come from? I thought, looking at her fearfully as she held me down as if I was the girl and she was the man.

It wasn't what I wanted at all, I wanted to tell Ginny, but her kisses and touches held me in thrall, though I knew that I could have gotten her off me if I'd wanted. But, in so many ways, I didn't want her off me. I liked, I loved, all the wonderful womanly things she was doing to me that a mere man couldn't. She rubbed her vagina over my manhood. I almost ejaculated into her hand.

“No, don't do that,” Ginny giggled at me. “Good girls don't do that. Oh, good, now I know how to keep a horny, little guy under control, don't I? All I have to

do is call you Stephanie and I can make you take your time, give me the pleasure I want. After all, you're going to have all the pleasure you can stand in the end, Stephen, aren't you? You're a man and you'll be the one in the end pumping inside me. Won't that be lovely, Stephanie?"

And so we made love. All control was drained out of me as I made love to a woman, or rather, I should have said, she made love to me. I was putty in her hands. I was her little girl and then I was her little boy. She knew how to make me switch from one to the other, guiding me to taking off my earrings and barrettes and then letting her direct my long, long hair down about my breasts.

"Such lovely breasts for a boy," Ginny giggled. I flushed as she said that to me. "I could kiss them all day and all night. Ooo, that lovely Chanel, darling girl. I love a girl who has perfumed her breasts. I bet your boyfriends love it as well!"

I tried so fervently to get my manhood inside Ginny but she held me back. "A girl like you knows how to do this to a man," she laughed at me as she directed me to kiss her navel and no more. "A girl like you keeps him waiting so that she can enjoy all the extras a man should bring to lovemaking."

The extras were all the things I'd done for men when I was pretending to be a girl, pretending I was in love with them, making a man squirt all over me, often with my mouth on him.

I'd never thought I'd have my mouth on a woman's vagina or that she'd love it so. I soon found out what a clitoris was and how it aroused a woman as Ginny grabbed my hair, I thought she would pull it out, so much in the throes of passion was she as I worked her clit with my tongue.

Being inside the incredibly moist Ginny was so strange. I never did anything to a man, not even Thierry or Ezra, like that. I never penetrated anyone, ever. I'd thought of that being horrible, perverted, and perhaps it would be if I ever did that to a man in

my bed, but with Ginny it didn't seem horrible or perverted at all. It seemed right.

And Ginny, by her rocking, passionate movements, seemed to agree with me. Oh, when I realized I was beginning to climax, and she wasn't stopping me, she was begging me, "please Steve, please Stephen," not to stop, never to stop. I didn't as I drove myself into her, a woman, feeling so proud of myself, so excited, so wonderful as I sank into her arms, our breasts colliding, each so hard and aroused, Ginny giggling at me.

"And you told me you weren't a lesbian," she had to say, making me feel like such an idiot for loving her as I had. Somehow, I'd ended up on top in all of our lovemaking. Ginny kissed me and eased me over, telling me I had to get used to my place, which would always be, she said with a grin, beneath her.

"You're so easy to control," Ginny said to me as we creamed our faces in the bathroom, two girls together, flushed and excited, having loved each other through two of my climaxes. I knew I couldn't do more. I could see, in the bathroom mirror, that I was still a girl, a lesbian, I thought with an inward smile.

After all, I was the one with the panties on. I was the ones with ribbons tied in little bows on my long braids as Ginny had done them for me. Yes, we looked like two women together, touching and caressing one another, me, at least, being thrilled still as my female lover touched my tush with her soft hand.

"See how I did it with a word?" Ginny asked me as she placed her naked body against mine and kissed me, our previously made-up faces now scrubbed clean. "And it is going to be true, I think. I do believe you're one of those rare guys I call a male lesbian. You're a girl in everything you think and do. You make love to me as if you were a woman making love to another. Only the big finish is a little different. I could get the same release though from my vibrator. I think you would as well, Noelle. Shall we try it that way the next time?"

“I’m Stephen,” I began, and my panties began to jerk as she took my hand and stroked me there.

Back in bed, it was more of the same, Ginny in charge. She lay on me, caressing my breasts with hers. When she sat up, I thought she was going to let me penetrate her again, but it wasn’t her that was penetrated. She had something that looked like a male dildo, that vibrated between my legs, between my thighs and then inside me as she made me into what Thierry had called an orgasmic woman, she finally taking me only when I was so wickedly hard and on the verge of exploding.

“Now, don’t tell me, Noelle, you didn’t love that as I do,” said Ginny with a crooked smile. “Tell me what it was like for you. You really do feel like a girl now, don’t you, Stéphanie? You can never go back to being just Stephen, can you? There’s part of you that craves to be Stéphanie, and with me so you can be both, isn’t there?”

“I, I’d rather be Stephen,” I teased her, not about to agree to anything she said that made me what she said I was.

“I should just have had you made into a girl,” said Ginny. “I could still do it, you know, while you’re sleeping off the pills I’ll give you.”

“I wonder whose pills would last the longest,” I murmured as she drew me against her, again sliding over me, fondling me. She made me ready to have her womanhood slide over mine as she pinned me down and ‘rode’ me, as she called it.

“Oh! Oh! Mine!” my new lover shrieked. “Oh, gods, Stephen! I can’t stop! I’ve never met a girl like you before! Oh, we can’t ever let you go back to being some man’s lover when you do this so marvelously to a woman!”

## **\*14. Tell me about the miracle that just occurred\***

“Thank you all for coming on such short notice to this meeting,” said Virginia Shepherd in her most clipped, new deputy director voice. “You were all here several weeks ago when I led off this meeting with the statement that Noelle Mercier was the most dangerous woman alive. That we had to catch and kill her before she killed any more of us.”

Not an eyelid flickered over Virginia’s recitation of that ‘fact’, she noted with satisfaction. Not even Ezra Marsh, stony-faced as ever, had anything to say. Clearly, the word had got around that a ‘grievous’ error had been made. But then, were there any other kinds?

“We’ve had a shoot-to-kill order out on her for a month,” said a forceful, grey-mustached man finally from the top of the table from Virginia.

“Yes, Bob, we have,” said Virginia Shepherd. “But the Director has just posted a new memorandum, repealing that order.” She didn’t glance at Ezra Marsh as her fellow deputy director sat back in his chair, aloof from any current of curiosity that was floating through the room.

Virginia nodded to Jack Reynolds who started the recording of a young woman, a very attractive young woman with a gorgeous figure. She entered a modern building in a city everyone knew and couldn’t have been anywhere else in the world but Nevada.

“This is Noelle Mercier,” said Virginia as if the men in this room would not have known that, hadn’t been drooling over various pictures of her in her various ‘roles’ in Paris. “And these,” Noelle had gracefully risen in an elevator through the luxurious apartment building, and sashayed out, like the model girl she could have been, past various, scowling security men, into a suite that opened at her knock, “are the Barrouqi brothers.”

There was a stirring then at the table around her.

Bob stated the obvious from his end of the table. "They're alive," he muttered.

"We've given them new identities," said Virginia crisply. "This is probably the last time that any of us will ever see these gentlemen. The rest and relaxation they've enjoyed, where they were last week, is now over. And, of course, the services of Noelle are no longer needed in preserving the lives of these gentlemen."

"I've a lot of questions ..." began Bob belligerently.

"In writing only, no e-mails," said Virginia, "to Jack Reynolds who'll decide where to direct them and provide you with replies. Dissatisfaction with this procedure is to be referred to the director himself."

"This Noelle is not supposed to be here, in this country," said one of the others, the one who had persistently questioned Virginia Shepherd the first time she'd presented to this committee, she remembered.

"She isn't since early today," said Ginny, relaxing as she looked ostentatiously at her watch. "And, before you ask, Noelle is still working for the agency. She always has been. Jack Reynolds has taken over the section once run by Jackson and will re-integrate Noelle into the working of that section."

"Did she kill Jackson?" asked the same questioner, as persistent as ever, his glance to Ezra Marsh asking other, unavoidable, but silent questions.

"The short answer is 'no'." said Ginny. "The longer answer is that the bullets that struck Jackson have been re-examined. It appears he was hit by bullets from two guns. In the fire fight on that Parisian street, the two groups of our operatives were firing at one another, you may recall. Perhaps Jackson stepped forward to stop that, which would be nice to believe. He was could have been going for the gun that Noelle kicked away from him, exposing himself to shooters on both sides. The obvious answer is that we, the agency, killed him."

There was silence in the room as that information was absorbed. These men were used to hearing facts re-arranged to suit embarrassing situations. There was no blowback immediately on facts being 're-examined'.

"Now, the effect of the new Central Asian deal that has been worked out ..." began Virginia Shepherd, with a smile to Ezra Marsh, who glared back at her, the 'tell' on his face showing a malice that promised Ginny their truce on the matter of Stephen Nixon would soon be over.

## **\*15. Tell me how it's all going to end between us\***

I stopped on the side street and looked through the glass window at Thierry smiling and laughing with the girl at the counter of the shop. I couldn't help but notice my own image as well. The red wig suited me, as did the glasses I'd perched on my nose. In a stylish, swifty, grey skirt and black stockings, I looked just like any other university girl in Montreal. I hugged my books to me as my high heels clicked on the pavement and followed my quarry onto the street of apartment blocks, student residences in the main, with all of the universities clustered around downtown Montreal.

I made it fairly obvious I was tailing Thierry but he was startled when I grabbed the apartment building front door and scooted in with him before it could close.

"Je m'excuse, mademoiselle, ..." Thierry began. Then he paled and the bread that he'd just bought at the bakery began to shake in his hands.

"It's so delightful to hear someone speaking in French again," I said to him as we stood there looking at one another, a few other residents sweeping past

us from the emptying 'down' elevator. "You can call me 'mademoiselle' any time you like, Thierry. It sends goose bumps right through me."

"You, you found me," said Thierry nervously as another, empty elevator arrived. I danced past him to take it, having to take his hand to make him come in after me. I pressed the button for eleven. That made him get even paler.

"You know where I live," Thierry said thickly, staring at me over the parcel of food he was carrying.

"You used to talk to me when I'd sated you," I told him; that made him start and begin to breathe heavily. "This was the place you said you'd retire to and study French culture outside France. You remember how you'd whisper in my ear about the saucy clubs along St Catherine's Street. I think they're just sex clubs now, aren't they?"

"I, I talked about a lot of places, Tahiti, the Seychelles, Thailand," Thierry said as I held onto his arm as if I was his girlfriend, smiling at the guy who came out of his room and nodded to Thierry before he smiled at me.

"Oh, yes, Bangkok," I murmured to him. "If you hadn't been here, that's where I would have gone to next. I think you'd have stood out too much, though, Thierry, there among the ladyboys."

"Don't!" whispered Thierry, pulling me into his bedsitter or studio apartment. "I only talked to you about that because you asked me ..."

"Asked you if there were other girls in the world like me," I finished for the man who'd been my lover for so long when I couldn't remember who I was. He'd told me I was Noelle Mercier and his girlfriend, his woman, despite the way I felt inside and the manhood between my legs.

"There really isn't anyone in the world like you, Noelle," said Thierry, putting the package, the French bread threatening to fall over, on top of the untidy computer table.

I smiled at that, tossing my books and my glasses onto one of the room's two chairs. I didn't think we'd be needing them.

"You always knew how to make compliments to me," I cooed to him and moved into his arms.

"Noelle, I, I can't ..." Thierry began, sounding so much like me the first times I was with him.

"Don't tell me about that girl you were out with," I said to him as I put my arms about his neck. "You didn't go into her place, though she wanted you. You didn't bring her back here to your own bed. So, don't tell me there's someone else, unless it's Jean-Claude down the hall."

"No," said Thierry, beginning to shiver. He shivered and quivered all through our kissing and the urgent way I pressed my body against his. Funny, but I was acting a part, as we used to say, and probably he'd recognized that I was, but as I touched my lips to his and pushed my breasts against his chest, I wasn't the sassy co-ed I'd been playing for Thierry.

I was his girl friend again and I wanted him. I wanted him to make love to me. Yes, I'd been enthralled by Ginny Shepherd for over a month while the details of my resurrection, and that of the Barrouqi brothers, was worked out. But I'd soon figured it out I was never going to be Stephen Nixon in her bed.

Ginny loved to dress me as a model. She loved to make love to me from the dominant position. Soon, she was calling me Noelle all the time. The only part of our relationship in which I was male was when I penetrated her but she rode me so intensely I didn't know half of the time as we bucked and rolled around together if I was really in her or if she was truly in me.

I know that Ginny loved making love to me but I didn't know if she really was in love with me, even as Noelle Mercier. I vaguely mentioned I needed to track down some of the people in my file. Well, only child, mother and father deceased. The same as in a hundred files of members of a 'section', Ginny said.

“Doesn’t mean that it’s true. But it could be. Suggests you’re in for a big disappointment if you do go back. Probably, all the stuff in your file is false.”

Another time, me talking about it again, had brought a similar response.

“Oh, there’ll be time for that if you’re set on being Stephen again, Noelle,” Ginny had said finally, twirling me round in my flaring dance dress while she wore the pants in our dancing duet. “We won’t have much time together, you know, once the Director agrees you are reinstated. So we have to enjoy each other while we can.”

So, I never got to go on a voyage of discovery, see my old haunts, if there were any, as the order came down from the Director. Of course someone with my kill-set was ordered to the front lines, out of the country again.

“I’m really going to miss you,” Ginny told me, looking like a mother sending her daughter off to college as she hugged me openly in the airport lounge. “But I insist on holidays for both of us. We can lie on a Caribbean beach in our bikinis and drive the natives wild, can’t we? Christmas will be best.”

“It sounds wonderful,” I’d said, hugging her back, as if I was her daughter, letting her kiss my cheek. I almost called her ‘Mummy’ but that would have been too much. Ginny would have guessed that I was on to her wiles.

“You’re not playing a part,” croaked Thierry as I went down on the bed, drawing him down on top of me, the kiss I gave him as warm and passionate as any I’d given to Ginny.

“No,” I whispered to him. “It’s me, Noelle, my darling. I’ve been dreaming of loving you again ever since we left Paris. We didn’t finish, did we?”

“You were the one to say ‘Run’ that time,” said Thierry as he began slowly to take my clothes off me, stopping to kiss and caress everything about me that was revealed by his eager fingers.

“That’s over with now,” I had to tell him. “I’m back. They want me to bring you back in with me as well.” I giggled. “They think you can control me,” I had to tell him.

Thierry kissed me, his tongue so wonderfully alive and firm, yet gentle in my mouth, letting me know all the wonderful things that were going to happen to me. I helped Thierry out of his shirt and undid his pants where his manhood was clearly eager to see me again.

I slipped out of my skirt and let him take off each item of women’s underwear I wore. I groaned and shrieked as I always had with him, and had never with Ginny, I realized, as he caressed my breasts and kissed them so ardently. Oh, yes, I felt I was a woman. I was a woman with a male, fervent lover who wanted me as much as I wanted him inside me.

It was too rushed, too fervent, that first time. Thierry almost tore my panties off me in his hurry but I was just as bad, spreading my legs for him and lifting my tush so that he could do what any man should do to his women. I was squealing again as I wriggled and writhed to make him enter me more deeply. I bounced and thrashed beneath my lover, pulling his head down to my breasts and then to my lips until finally, he released. Then I could let go as well, becoming the orgasmic woman he’d told me I was.

“You, you sh-should never have done this to me the first time,” I scolded Thierry as he lay beside me, fondling me, knowing I’d want him again in just a few short minutes.

“Why not?” asked Thierry smiling at me. “Because you like it too much, my darling woman?”

“Because I like it too much, my darling man,” I told him, clutching at him again as the urge to orgasm rose in me again so fiercely. I rolled around in bliss and ecstasy as Thierry made love to me, his naked woman, whispering such lovely compliments to me as he drove and drove into me until I erupted and

convulsed beneath him, so sure, for that time, at least, that I was a woman.

I was starving for breakfast. We ate his breakfast and lunch as I sat in his lap in my frilly, feminine panties, teasing him, but he was too much satisfied, typical man, to love me fully again.

“The computer program?” asked Thierry when I explained why they wanted him back. “It’s not to be your control, then?”

“I need *you* in control of me, Thierry,” I told him, squirming my tush into his manhood. I could tell he really liked that as he reached over and kissed my breasts gently as my panties began to move as well.

“So, it’s a package deal,” said Thierry. “What about Jackson?”

That led to the long story, including the interlude I had had with Ezra, and the other with Ginny. Neither made Thierry very happy.

“I did kill Jackson,” Thierry told me once more as he had in Paris.

I had to love my wonderful man then because I knew he’d killed Jackson for all the insults that he’d directed at me.

“Let’s not make it a habit,” I finally said to him after he had satisfied me even more than I thought was possible.

“With the people we’re working for,” said Thierry, before I went off into total bliss again, “I don’t think that is possible.”

\*\*\*\*\*END\*\*\*\*\*