

HOUSEMAID

In My Fifties



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HOUSEMAID IN MY FIFTIES!

by **Monica Graz**

CHAPTER 1

“Oh dear!” my wife said when she heard the news. “This is quite unexpected. Do you try to tell me that as of the 1st of the next month you will be out of work?”

I shifted in my chair a bit uncomfortably and had another sip of my drink, “It is an offer which I seriously consider to accept dear” I answered a bit cautiously, knowing already this was going to be a difficult discussion, “it appears to be a very handsome offer, I already checked it with our lawyer.”

She looked at me in an uncertain way but not without an interest, “tell me about it then” she said.

I was encouraged by her obvious interest and continued rather eagerly, “Well, they offer me a transition period of five years during which I will collect half of my salary without working and when I turn sixty I will collect my full pension, as planned by my pension scheme. In other words the company will pay half my salary for the next five years with the condition that I will not go out in the market to get another job based on my qualifications.”

She looked at me as if I said something incredulous. “You are telling me they are willing to pay you for doing nothing?” she said in a rather abrupt way. “That doesn’t make sense to me, it is simply bad management.”

I looked at her skeptically because initially I thought the same myself, but when the lawyer explained a few things I realized that the Company had some interest in doing that. They would get rid of me and employ some one younger paying the third of my current

senior salary. On the other hand they would benefit with tax cuts when they implement a policy of hiring young people in replacement of senior high ranking administrators. I explained that to Pam my wife and this time she appeared to accept it. In fact she remembered similar cases in the Company she was working.

She looked at me more seriously now and said, "I guess you have a point here. But do you really want to stop working at 55; you will probably be bored to death. And you are not the type with lots of male friends, you are not involved in sports, you don't go out with the guys fishing or whatever an average man of your age would do. In fact, now that I think of it, you enjoy more going out with my girlfriends and they all love you and think that you are a very unusual male, they feel comfortable with you."

That took me by surprise, what on earth her girlfriends have to do with our serious discussion. I didn't make any comment and I decided to continue with some practical matters. "I have been thinking what it actually means to our finances my possible early retirement. I'll lose half my income but you are doing very well at your job and if I remember correctly you are about to get a substantial salary raise. Then our daughter is 22 already earning her own money and there are no mortgages pending or any other financial obligations, don't you agree Pam?"

She looked at me with a renewed interest, "the way you talk Nick is as if you decided already to retire. Yes you are right I am doing well at my work I am already an associate partner receiving extra bonuses and I am about to get a substantial raise and yes our finances are very healthy. So yes again it is true we can face the change financially, but for me the challenge is elsewhere. In fact you didn't answer my question how you are going to use your free time." She stopped and looked at me expectantly for an answer.

I hesitated a bit because I wasn't certain how she would take my next suggestion, but somehow I decided to go ahead and speak my mind, "I must admit I have been doing some thinking myself about that. I am not a fool I know that too much free time can lead to boredom and depression so I want to keep myself busy with activities probably less intellectual but certainly more manual and beneficial for a middle age person's health."

"I can't imagine you starting playing golf at this age and somehow I can't imagine you in a gym running in a tread mill." She said that rather sarcastically and looked at me waiting for an answer.

I decided to continue talking in my even and calm way; I should avoid a fight at this stage at any cost. "No dear, I am not going to become a sport maniac you know it's not my style, but I can become the housekeeper and homemaker in this house." There I said it!

She didn't get angry; instead she looked at me with a rather ironical smile, "So this is what you want? You more or less said in a politically correct term that you want to become the maid and/or housewife in this house. Are you certain you are thinking clearly? I know you will tell me you enjoy housework, we have been through this argument before, but this time is not on an amateur basis, it is like a full time job."

She stopped to look at me in a concerned way this time, I didn't like this look, it meant she wasn't approving; I had to fight more to win this argument. I was about to answer but she continued talking, "and what about Linda, you seem to forget that for the last ten years we employ an excellent housekeeper and the house never looked better. I know she

comes only twice a week but she is a terrific worker and a very organized person." She must have noticed the slightly hurt look on my face because she added rather hastily, "I know, I know darling, you help her quite a lot and you often do the cooking and all sorts of other bits and pieces. I am not blind, I can see your contribution in this house, after all Linda is here twice a week and the other five days you keep an eye to everything."

This time I rushed to say something to stop her monologue. "I am pleased you recognize my contribution Pam, all those years I am next to Linda for all sorts of things and now I can tell you something that probably will be news to you. Last Thursday Linda announced to me that she is thinking to retire and go back to her children in Philippines. Don't forget she is my age and she has been working since the age of fifteen. So there is an extra reason to suggest what I suggested before."

She looked at me more skeptically and said, "Do I see a conspiracy here? How come Linda hasn't mentioned anything to me? After all I am the lady of the house!"

She said this last phrase in a rather menacing way. Careful Nick, you might lose your case. One thing that Pam hates is lies and things happening behind her back. She is a very straightforward person and she demands that the others are equally honest with her.

I cleared my throat with a sip of wine and continued cautiously, "I must admit that Linda mentioned that to me because she feels more comfortable talking to me, after all she often says I am her 'assistant' or 'colleague' when I help her with her chores. She is worried how you are going to take it, she doesn't want to let you down, and she respects you too much for that. But I can tell she is tired and she wants to go."

My wife was more accommodating this time, "I see what you mean, but if she feels that way we have to let her go and make sure that she receives a generous bonus. She has been very good all those years. I can't forget how helpful she was with our daughter in her difficult teenage years. Did she tell you when she would like to go?"

"She said that this is up to us to decide. But I understand she would like to be back home for Christmas, which is about eight weeks from now."

"I can see you have a stronger case now; Linda wants to go and you want to retire from your prestigious job and take her place, am I correct Nicky?"

That was a good sign, she called me Nicky and this means that her mood was softening, but I must be extra careful now, one wrong phrase and I'll lose my case.

And I must say here that my case is that I want to become the housekeeper, I love housework and I love all things feminine, I am a repressed cross dresser and for many years now I was very good at keeping my urges under control. Pam knows my tendencies from the very beginning, in fact in our early years we had quite a bit of fun playing roles and often going to role reversal mode but after the birth of our daughter she made me promise to abstain from all those cross dressing activities.

I kept my promise with some exceptions, silently accepted by my spouse, like wearing plain cotton panties at all times, a long T-shirt type nightie in bed and of course my aprons for housework and cooking. The aprons were and still are very plain but not masculine, always bought in ladies wear shops and most preferably in domestic uniform shops.

“Are you day dreaming Nick? I thought we are having a serious conversation here.” My wife brought me back to reality.

“I am so sorry dear, all sorts of thoughts cross my mind at the moment, after all is a big decision to make, something that will change my life and by default yours as well.”

“I know that stupid,” she said impatiently, “this is why I try to sort things out the best way for both of us and ask all those questions. So, I ask you again, do you really want to take Linda’s position and responsibilities in the house?”

“Yes and no,” I answered cautiously again and I continued before she started speaking herself. “What I mean is that I am not Linda, I am a different person and I am your husband, so obviously things will be different in terms of everyday interaction and other activities concerning my obligations and duties in this house, but to be frank with you, yes, I want to take up her responsibilities and do even more because I’ll be like a ‘live in’ person, not the outside help.”

“That’s interesting”, she remarked looking particularly sharp as she was examining me closely, “I can tell, you are quite determined to change course in your life and I must respect that, but I have to consider what that means to me to our daughter, to our friends to our life in general.”

I rushed to answer to that before she could develop her thoughts any further, “I understand what you mean but I can tell you from the very beginning, no dramatic changes will be monitored in our life. I am not the only person being retired in my fifties with a working wife. They will probably call me a ‘househusband’ but I certainly don’t mind that since I am going to be that anyway. Our daughter is not living with us anymore and in the coming year she will be probably getting a job far away from us. As for our friends, you said it yourself before, I don’t have any male friends and your girl friends are my friends as well and I don’t think at all they will be critical of my decision. On the contrary they will consider you lucky that you have someone looking after you on a permanent basis.”

“Jesus! You can argue well when you really want something,” Pam said looking at me rather tired now. “It’s late Nick, past midnight, I am exhausted after a very hectic week. Let’s call it a night. I will sleep with it tonight and tomorrow it’s Saturday and we can continue our discussion over a leisurely breakfast with plenty of fresh coffee and those lovely pancakes you make occasionally.” She came and gave me a quick kiss and said, “I am off to bed, goodnight.”

I stayed behind a bit stunned. Pam was a bit like that, one moment full of energy and the next one exhausted and off to bed. I decided to finish my wine relaxing a bit on my own and thinking about the conversation we just had. She certainly didn’t reject my ideas; she didn’t say a big ‘no’ and she was thinking all the options and I could tell from her reactions so far, I was giving straightforward answers to her.

When I joined her in bed half an hour later she was already fast asleep. I was lying next to her in my plain cotton nightie, all sorts of thoughts crossing my mind. It took me a long time to go to sleep.

CHAPTER 2

I was up and around before Pam. Usually on Saturdays I was preparing a good breakfast and only then I was calling her to come down. I kept my nightie on and I covered it with one of my many kitchen aprons hanging in the back of the kitchen door, a full blue striped cotton one with white piping all around it, quite plain but definitely a feminine one.

Soon I had everything ready and I decided to be extra accommodating today so I went up to wake her up with a cup of fresh orange juice. I knew she loved that early morning treatment. She said to me on numeral occasions that her eyes were opening instantly after a glass of fresh orange juice.

She was all warm and cozy from her sleep and she looked quite pretty even without her make up on. I left her to her morning ablutions and soon she joined me in the kitchen wearing her tracksuit. It was a normal Saturday scene, me in my nightie and apron serving breakfast to my wife who looked definitely more 'manly' than me.

We were in our second cup of coffee when in her usual manner Pam started speaking, going to the point immediately, "I have been thinking what we were discussing yesterday, I still feel surprised by this early retirement proposal, but I guess it is not a bad offer and if you consider it seriously I have to consider it to. Something else that I just thought also is that we are going to save even more money if we are not going to replace Linda with another cleaner. Than means the loss of income for both of us is really not important."

She stopped for a sip of her coffee and I added, "Yes, I had the same thought, Linda isn't that cheap anymore because we are paying her in a very generous manner."

Pam continued as if she hasn't heard me, "But I think we have to be more specific about your role and tasks in this house".

I was quite intrigued by now; she obviously appeared to agree with my proposal.

"The house is quite big and requires lots of attention. I know we are only the two of us at the moment, but we often have guests and we often entertain. Are you prepared to assume full responsibility on everything?"

I rushed to answer that question, "You know Pam how many different things I do in this house and for this house even now that I work full time. I'll remind you some, the weekly shopping which I will be doing later today when you will be in the Gym, most of the cooking, the washing up the days Linda is not around, some urgent laundry and ironing if needed, and other small tasks that usually go unnoticed."

She looked at me with a new interest, "I must admit that I take so many things for granted in this house that I often forget how much you do. You are right darling, for many years you have been a committed homemaker for me and for our daughter when she was

growing, I would be really blind not to see that, in fact all you are asking me now is to make that role of yours more official and accepted. I am sorry if I offended you before."

"Don't be silly Pam, of course you didn't offend me, I only do what I enjoy doing more and over the years I tried to emphasize that to you."

She looked at me more intensely now, "Of course I am blind sometimes, look at you at this very moment how you are dressed, the epitome of a housewife in a nightie and apron. I am so used seeing you like this that I pay no attention anymore and yet you are yelling it to me, you are telling me in so many ways that you want to become the housekeeper in this home and leave to me the professional breadwinning role. You remind me of our early days when I fell in love with you because you were not a threatening and insecure male; you were always encouraging me to be more assertive and go out in the world and be someone. We both know that the majority of men they want their spouses under their thumb, they want to be in control."

"I am so pleased darling you are thinking that way, I feel like we revert back in time. We used to talk then a lot about roles in the society and stereotypical attitudes and you and I were always a bit different, always more 'avant garde' than all the people we knew at the time. Of course we both are successful in our professional careers and I don't regret that, we produced a lovely child who is now a confident and independent woman and I feel that it is an excellent moment for both of us to redefine our roles, not in any dramatic way, just be ourselves and be comfortable about it."

"You!, you are so clever if you want to achieve something, so full of correct arguments; all right you managed to convince me, I guess we have to talk about some practical issues now." She stopped to finish her coffee and continued, "But we have our morning activities pending, I am off to the Gym, I am meeting Tania there today, she will love to hear the news about the coming change in your life and I gather you have your supermarket shopping to do."

"I am glad you agree Pam, but could you please not tell Tania anything for the time being? We still have to define some practical issues and we better do that before we announce our new plans to the outside world including Tania and our daughter. How about meeting me for late lunch at Mario's at about 2.00pm. By that time we both would be through with our morning chores."

"All right then, lunch at 2.00" she said and rushed out of the room leaving me behind to wash up and tidy up the kitchen."

When she was gone I stayed for a few moments to finish my coffee, all excited; things were going as I more or less planned them. And Tania was our closest friend, the one who knew more about me and my inner thoughts, the one who would understand more than my wife my inner need to play that role in the house, she knew both my cross dressing tendencies and my love for housework, but I wanted to conclude our conversation with Pam before any announcement.

I was quite hungry and in a great mood when I arrived at Mario's restaurant a bit after two in the afternoon. I found Pam sitting in a corner table and sipping her favorite char-donnay. "Hi darling", she said cheerfully, "You are a bit late, have you finished your chores?"

"Yes I did Pam, the supermarket was a zoo this morning, all those mothers with their screaming children, but I managed to get all we need for the coming week."

"You know Nick, starting next month you will be able to plan your supermarket shopping in the middle of the week like a good housekeeper and avoid Saturday shopping; leave that day for the full time working people."

I was slightly hurt but also thrilled with her remark. She was already forming in her head my new situation. She started seeing me already as the house help.

We had our favorite pasta with plenty of wine and we were both a bit tipsy when we resumed our morning conversation. Pam had the tendency to get bolder when slightly drunk and often speaks her mind more openly. Her voice also tends to become sexier and I feel I can be more open with her.

"You must lose weight darling, you have to lose your executive bulges around your waist. Now you are going to do more menial work you have to look the part; and it will be healthier for you."

"I agree, I have been thinking that myself. The menial work will be good for me, it will be my gym" and getting bolder I added, "and probably my aprons will fit better then."

"I know you love your pinnies darling, I know you have a huge collection stashed somewhere together with your 'other clothes'. Now you will have the opportunity to wear them, your aprons I mean, much more often and yes if you lose some weight they will look better on you."

She mentioned my 'other clothes' without any further comment but it is a good sign; she acknowledges their existence together with my pinnies.

"But lets' get a bit more serious here," she continued making an effort to hide her slight drunkenness, "You think that you are familiar with housework, you think you know how to manage a house because you have been doing various chores around this house for years now. But let me tell you this. It is not going to be easy for you, it is going to be repetitive, tiring and time consuming and on top of that you know me, I am a perfectionist and I demand a perfect job. Do you understand what I mean?"

I felt a bit uncomfortable then but I managed to answer in a convincing way, "Of course I understand Pam, I know what a fuss pot you are and I want to be a competent housekeeper. In fact and if you agree with me I am going to ask Linda to show me some of her tricks. For instance she has a way of doing the floors and also the cleaning of our five bathrooms is another issue and..."

She interrupted me rather abruptly, "before you continue I must add something to you. If you are going to do this job, I want you to do a market research and start using eco friendly products as cleaning materials, I disagree with the stuff Linda is using, it is very harmful for the environment and you know how concerned I am for the whole global warming issue. So you should be. That's why you shouldn't bother to ask her, simply do your own research."

I was a bit surprised by her mean tone of voice, but I also felt peculiarly excited. My dormant submissiveness was awake. I could here a potential employer giving firm instructions to her future employee. I managed to say, "Yes Pam you are right, this is a great idea,

and I'll do my research. And then feeling a bit bold again I added, "and of course I must get used to receive instructions from you; strictly speaking you will be my employer in the future."

"Now Nicky you put ideas in my head!" Pam said in a slightly drunken voice, "I probably will be acting as your employer in those terms, after all you are going to be my domestic employee but I don't want to lose my witty husband, I want you to be able to adapt to your new rather subordinate role without losing your personality and your ability to act as my equal partner, will you be able to do that?"

I sensed danger here, Pam was sort of accepting my new role in the house, but her female instinct was warning her that the relation would probably take a different turn and she wasn't prepared for that. I had to reassure her instantly.

"I am not going to change Pam; I am going to be very much the same person you know all those years. I will be probably less stressed, housework and cooking are not exactly a CEO's job but I reassure you once again that I abandon my professional life with no remorse at all. In fact my concern is that you will be working as hard as ever and I will be feeling a bit guilty having all that extra time in my hands."

She answered in a relieved manner, "I am glad to hear that, though I am not certain how we will be feeling in a few months from now, life plays funny games sometimes." She stopped for a wine sip and continued more firmly now, "as for my work I must clear it here and now, don't feel guilty or worried about me, I love my job, I love my creative role in the company, I am 48 and I am looking forward to at least another 10 years of a very active professional life."

I looked at her skeptically, she was quite perceptive, she was right; it is true a new phase in our relationship was about to start and we certainly couldn't tell which way would go. Deep in my subconscious I was hoping for a relationship that would enable me to bring out my dormant, for many years, more feminine and submissive side. Would I be able to do that?"

It was late in the afternoon when we arrived back home; we collapsed in the living room sofas for a much needed siesta after all that wine. To our great surprise we made love after a long time in the middle of the living room.

CHAPTER 3

The next couple of weeks were quite hectic. I announced immediately my decision to retire and the count down started at once. I had to work very hard and overtime to bring up to date all the files and projects I was handling, in order to pass them on to the person who were going to replace me.

I also announced to Linda our cleaner that we would let her go at the beginning of next month. She had mixed feelings. She was leaving us after many years but she felt relieved, she would be able to go back to her family in Philippines. She was also extra pleased with the generous bonus we gave her.

She was quite skeptical when I announced to her that I was going to take over the care of the house. She knew of course my inclination for housework and all related matters but

she repeated what Pam said to me, "It is going to be quite hard Nick, it is not just doing a few chores now and then or some cooking, you have to be constantly committed and involved." It was indicative that for many years she was using my first name to address me, but she always called my wife 'Ma'am or Mrs. Pam'.

Somehow I had to calm her down, "It's all right Linda, I'll try it for sometime and if I see I can't manage the house, or I am getting bored doing repetitive things all day long I'll go out in the market and get another cleaner for part time work."

She immediately added to that, "I will leave with you the phone number of a Filipino colleague who runs a domestic agency in town; she will be able to find someone suitable for your house. She knows of you, I talked to her a lot over the years about what a wonderful family you have and how good you are with housework. Her name is Annie de Laurentis."

I thanked her for that and I reassured her that I would ask for her assistance if needed.

A week before my final departure from work I had to be present with Pam to a 'farewell' reception. All my colleagues were very warm and some of them openly jealous for my early retirement. They all called me a 'lucky person'. Very few asked me though what I was going to do from now on. My answer to that was vague. I was telling everybody that for the time being I'll rest and try to organize my thoughts before any future movements. I deliberately didn't mention anything about my new role in the house.

The people though who knew about my new role in the house were Pam's three closest friends, Tania of course and then Melissa and Eva. Tania, as I expected was very enthusiastic. "Oh, Nicky, I am so pleased for you," she said when we met for drink, waiting for Pam to join us. And she continued, "I always knew that someday you would be able to do what you love most, take care of your gorgeous house without the restraints and obligations of a professional life. You will be able now to organize your life the way you always wanted and more important with the blessings of Pam; isn't that wonderful?"

Tania was so sweet and always full of enthusiasm. I answered back in a controlled way barely able to hide my excitement, "You are right honey." Tania was always 'honey' to me. "It happened so quickly; in a week from today I am 'home alone' for endless hours; I hope I will not be bored."

"I know you well enough to tell you won't be bored. It is not only the housework that you love anyway, you have endless other tasks which they will appear in front of you in a few days. And of course you will be able to wear your favorites clothes, Am I right?"

For the first time I blushed, "it is too early to say that Tania, you know me I have to be very careful with Pam I don't want to hurt her, I have to be moving with small steps."

"It sounds to me that you already decided which way to go, it is simply a matter of time to express yourself more freely," Tania said and added hastily because she saw Pam approaching us, "but I totally agree with you, nothing behind Pam's back, you have to win her with your attitude."

We all had then a very jolly drink, Tania was unique in lifting up spirits and Pam was extra pleased with developments at work. As I was sipping my chardonnay, sitting between those two charming ladies, I couldn't stop thinking how would love to be part of

their feminine world, not knowing exactly how, but even that vague thought was intriguing.

The rest of the week went so quickly that I didn't even have time to think. I simply moved like an automaton, trying to close all my open issues. Three days before my departure I met my replacement, a lady in her thirties from another department whom I knew only in face. She was very accommodating and full of respect and concern about my departure. But deep inside me I could tell that she was looking forward to take over my office. For her I already was a retiree.

Finally on a Friday afternoon I put all my personal belongings to a cardboard box, such a familiar pictures from endless movies and after I said a final goodbye to all my immediate colleagues I went down to the garage and drove off in my expensive executive Volvo. At this particular moment I felt emptiness in my stomach, everything finished so quickly; nearly 25 years of work in the same company vanished in two short weeks. For the first time since I decided to retire I felt a certain uneasiness. Was it a correct decision or I was going to regret it. I was going to be one of the many from now on, not Mr. High executive. I even felt that the car I was driving was not appropriate for me anymore.

I arrived home before Pam and I fixed a drink for myself, then I decided to ring her in her mobile and ask her out to dinner, I didn't feel like cooking. She answered in her usual busy tone, she must have been in the middle of a meeting because she was very abrupt, she simply said that she would be late tonight, something urgent came up and she would like to eat something light and go to bed. After all it was Friday and she usually was exhausted at the end of the week. I tried to be understanding as I put the phone down.

I couldn't stop thinking again that this is another sample of my life from now on. I will be the one at home waiting for my hard working spouse to come back. Another small blow to my already fragile ego.

Then I tried to 'pull myself together'. I pushed for this early retirement option, I wanted to become the house partner, I wanted to take up all the house responsibilities and I have to act accordingly from now on.

I prepared a nice green salad and some smoked salmon on brown bread, a very healthy and light meal and I waited patiently for my wife to come home.

The weekend was very uneventful. We followed our Saturday routine and we spent a very quiet Sunday at home eating eggs and bacon brunch and reading our Sunday papers. Pam was very sweet and asked me about my last day at work and if I was still positive about my retirement decision. I insisted that I felt great and I was looking forward to the next few weeks, which we both called adaptation period. In fact we spent sometime on Sunday talking about various chores in the house nobody did for a long time, like spring cleaning of cupboards in the kitchen, all bathrooms and all bedrooms excluding our daughter's bedroom which still was 'untouchable'. We agreed that in a few days I would present a timetable for those extra jobs to Pam for 'employer's approval' as she called it half jokingly.

Linda was going to come for another two days next week (Tuesday and Thursday) and then she was on her way as well, back home after many years.

Monday was an unusual day for me; I haven't stayed home in a weekday in years and the feeling was weird, in particular after Pam gave me a quick kiss and departed hastily for work. I tried to gather my thoughts with another cup of strong coffee. I decided that I would move slowly this week in order to adapt. After all Linda would be coming tomorrow and Thursday and I would be joining her for some housework. She said that she would try to give me the 'housekeeping' guided tour those two days.

I did the basics like tidying up our bedroom and bathroom; I noticed that Pam leaved behind her a bigger mess than usually, towels in the bathroom floor, her dirty underwear next to the bed and her nightdress thrown in the back of a chair. Is she feeling already the presence of a maid in the house, even subconsciously?

I tidied up the kitchen afterwards and I decided to go out for some shopping. I wandered aimlessly in the nearby shopping center for a couple of hours, I had a light lunch and back to the house to do some cooking for this evening. I prepared a fairly elaborate dinner and at about 6.00 o'clock I sat down to a cup of tea waiting for Pam to come home.

She arrived a bit after 7.00pm. I heard the garage door and I let her in wearing one of my many aprons, a clean one though, over my house pants and shirt. I wanted to slightly emphasize my new role in the house. She said a quick hello, kicked her high heels and collapsed in the sofa. Knowing her I followed with a glass of white wine. She thanked me, had a sip and gave a big sigh, "My feet are killing me today, those shoes are quite uncomfortable, probably you could learn to give me a foot rub occasionally." She said it in such a natural way that it took me a few seconds to take it in.

I was quite excited from what I heard and I answered spontaneously, "Yes, darling, I'd love to do that and I don't think I have to be particularly experienced, I guess all I need is some proper ointment and gentle hands."

"Not really, it's not that simple, you have to do a bit of homework there, I'll get you a book on that subject, do you agree?" She stopped and looked at me for the first time seriously. She smiled and said, "Look at you in your pinny, the picture of domesticity, did you enjoy your first day at home?"

I told her what I did and I explained to her that I was going to move slowly this week, catch up with Linda's suggestions and then tackle the house seriously starting next Monday.

She didn't object to that, but she repeated that she expected me to search for organic cleaning products. She seemed to take this issue quite seriously. I reassured her that tomorrow I would do a Google search.

She then added with an edge in her voice, "All of a sudden I am famished what we have for dinner?"

We went to bed quite early that night, we were both quite exhausted.

CHAPTER 4

Tuesday morning I found Linda already in the kitchen, making breakfast. As usually she let herself in with her own key. I should remember to get this key back on Thursday. I joined her for a cup of coffee and I waited for Pam to come down.

Pam said a quick good morning and moved to the dining room for breakfast. When Linda was in the house we took breakfast in a more formal way in the dining room. The other days it was the kitchen table. I joined her and we chatted amicably for ten minutes. As she was getting up to go she said to me, "Don't take everything that Linda tells you at face value. She is a willing and kind person but not necessarily the best cleaner. I often find dust in very obvious places, you must have noticed that yourself. I expect you to be a much better cleaner than her; after all you claim that you enjoy that sort of work. She is an excellent ironer though and there you will need some coaching from her, ask her on Thursday when she does her ironing." She stopped and looked at her watch, "It's getting late, I better go, good bye darling." And she left before I had the chance to answer.

I gathered the breakfast things in a tray and moved them to the kitchen. I had to join Linda in her morning activities. She had a routine and she didn't like to deviate as she was a creature of habits, but I couldn't do much at that point. I simply watched her and asked the occasional question. I mentioned to her though Pam's suggestion about an 'ironing lesson'. She agreed to show me some tricks, as she called them, on Thursday.

It was midday and I was preparing sandwiches and coffee for a quick lunch when I heard the front door bell ringing, then Linda's voice from the hall, "I'll get it Nicky."

A few moments later I heard voices coming towards the kitchen. My hands were greasy and I had my apron on. Not enough time to react. I turned grabbing a tea towel to wipe my hands when Linda entered the kitchen followed by a 'petite' very pretty Asian lady.

"May I introduce to you Miss Annie de Laurentis Nicky? She said using her polite voice, "She is the lady I mentioned to you the other day who runs the domestic agency. She was in the neighborhood and I asked her in for a cup of coffee. I wanted you very much to meet her."

I was taken completely off guard. I managed to say a "Nice to meet you Miss, I am about to make some coffee, would you like some?"

"Please call me Annie; yes please I would love some coffee."

"Let's sit here around the kitchen table it's quite comfortable" Linda said and offered Annie a seat and she sat opposite leaving me making the coffee still with my apron on. For a moment I wondered who is the boss and who is the maid in that case, but I secretly started to enjoy this encounter, the first one in my so called 'new position' in the house.

Soon we all sat around the kitchen table sipping our coffee. I realized that Annie was not only very pretty but also impeccably dressed in a very elegant manner. I guessed at that moment that her job was to deal with the rich and famous if she was providing domestic staff for them and she had to be always dressed accordingly.

She must have read my thoughts because she said quite amicably, "I was visiting a house a couple of blocks from here because they were asking me for a live in maid. I always check the premises of where my girls are going to work. I want to be certain what kind of people are hiring them." She paused for a moment to have a sip of her coffee and continued, "Linda announced to me that she finally took the decision to go back home and at the same time you retire and want to assume some house responsibilities, I find that very remarkable and unusual and I wanted to meet this brave man who is able to do that."

I felt a bit embarrassed and slightly annoyed with Linda, she shouldn't be talking to strangers about my situation. She must understand that because she rushed to speak, "Don't take it wrongly Nicky, it only came naturally in our conversation because when I announced to Annie that I am going back home, the first thing she asked me is if my employers would need a replacement and then I had to say the truth, that you intended to assume housekeeping responsibilities to start with. I don't go around gossiping about my employers, in particular dear ones like you and Mrs. Pam".

"It's all right Linda, there is nothing to hide, you know how I feel about housework I enjoy doing it and I enjoy all sorts of other house activities. It might be unusual and not very 'manly' but that's the way I feel."

"Fair enough", Annie said "I truly admire you for that and if I can assist to anything in your new activities please let me know. And if in the future you decide that you need some outside domestic help let me know again."

Then it dawned on me, probably I could have an answer here, "In fact I could ask you for something since you are in the housekeeping field. My wife made a request or should I call it an employer's demand. She asked me to do some research and start using eco friendly cleaning products. Do you have any idea where to find them?"

Annie with a broad smile answered, "You came to the right person Nicky, could I call you Nicky?"

"Of course you could" I said waiting eagerly for her answer.

"I represent in this town a Swedish Firm which specializes in eco friendly products. They are the best in the market, I'll tell you the brand name and you can Google them."

"That's very interesting" I said more eagerly now, "Could you make a suggestion of cleaning products for this house?"

"Of course I can. In fact I know quite well this house, Linda described it to me quite well over the years, and probably she told you that our friendship extends many years back. I met Linda when I was a young domestic myself over twenty years ago. I was lucky enough to climb the social ladder after that." She said the last phrase in a rather modest tone of voice but I could tell she was quite proud for her professional achievements. Good for her!

"Could you please?" I said quite expectantly now, "If you e-mail me a list by tomorrow with a cost I can discuss it with Pam and place an order which I can pick probably on Friday so I can have them all for next Monday, my first day really as a housekeeper in this house."

"Consider it done," she said quickly "in fact I would love you to come over to my Agency on Friday. I have an adjoining shop with all sorts of house products including housekeeping uniforms. You might find something that interests you, I stock quite nice unisex cleaning uniforms and of course traditional maids' dresses." She stopped and looked at my apron that I insisted having it on, "And you might find some practical aprons for housework, you know the ones that protect you well."

Linda then added looking at me in a mischievous way but really addressing Annie, "You can tell that Nicky loves his aprons, he has quite a collection, I know them all, after all I have been washing them for years."

I was blushing all over by that stage knowing that she was washing not only my aprons, but my panties and my nighties, she knew quite a bit about my proclivities. But I managed to keep my cool and said, "It's true I love my aprons I can't hide that, Linda knows, Pam my wife knows, our daughter knows and some of our friends know. It is one of my weaknesses I am afraid, a harmless one I hope."

Annie smiled warmly and said, "It is not only harmless it is more than that it is beneficial for the people you love, like your wife. The apron will be a very useful piece of clothing for you in the future, and you will be having the chance to wear it a lot. How lucky your wife is; she has someone to look after her the moment she is out there pushing her professional career." She looked at her elegant wrist watch and added, "I am afraid I have to go I have to pay another house visit, see you on Friday Nicky."

She left very quickly. Linda took her to the door and hugged her dearly, she clearly loved this woman.

Linda came back and we sat down to eat our sandwiches. I was curious about Annie and asked about her. She was quite eager to tell me her story. She was born in this country from Filipino parents. She started to work as a maid at the age of 17 but she managed to finish high school and she took college classes by correspondence. She was very bright and she used cleverly and ruthlessly the system to create her own business at the age of thirty. After that she never looked back. She imports maids to be from SE Asia but she is very protective of



them. In the few cases the maids were abused she took the employers to the court. She has a very good name in the market.

At dinner that night I said all my news to Pam, presumably very mundane news for her high executive life, I knew that, I was at that level only days ago. But she was quite eager to listen and quite intrigued when I said that I was going to visit Annie's premises on Friday to collect all the cleaning material.

"Before you go to buy this material shouldn't I agree first?" she asked in a rather sweet tone. And she continued, "We should probably look at that material together," then she paused to think and added "No, probably not, you look at it yourself, do your home work and if you are convinced let me know and we'll go ahead. Now that I have a housekeeper I don't have to kill myself with unnecessary decisions."

"I think this is better Pam, you don't have to be involved with decisions that your housekeeper can take, and after all I am here for those chores from now on. You have to give the guidelines and general instructions like any employer and of course if you notice something you are not happy with, you have to mention it to me."

"Of course I'll mention it to you, in fact it will be easier for me to reprimand you than say Linda or another servant, you are closer to me and I feel that I have that option."

I looked at her. For the first time since we started this new arrangement she referred to me as a servant even if it was an indirect remark. In her head I was replacing her servant so this is what I was. I quite liked that, at least my submissive part liked it, but I was a bit scared as well. Pam was moving faster than I thought and the next few sentences confirmed that.

"I have been thinking Nicky about your Volvo car it is too executive and serious for your current status. Would you consider swapping cars? During the week I can take the Volvo to work, I love driving that car and you take my smaller VW Golf, much more convenient for shopping and running your errands outside the house." She stopped and looked at me waiting for an answer.

"It's funny you mention it, I have been thinking the same myself. Volvo is too serious for me at the moment. I can't really go to the super market with that car and on Friday when I go to pick my eco friendly cleaning materials, I would feel silly driving it. In other words yes, I agree."

She looked quite pleased with my answer; it was easier than she anticipated. She knew how I loved this car so she thought of adding something more soothing, "In fact during the weekends when we go out together I'll let you driving it." She said it as she was doing a concession to me, as she already owned this car. Human nature and character never ceased to surprise me; it was amazing how Pam was adapting to a more authoritarian role towards me. But it was equally amazing that I was giving her very willingly that option, I was putting myself under her authority in a quick but still quite subtle way. I was curious how far I could go myself in that direction. It was new to me as well. The only certain thing was that an 'inner force' if I can use that word was driving me towards that direction. Her next phrase brought me back to reality and confirmed my theory, Pam was moving fast now.

"Did you mention to me before that this lady Annie, who runs the domestic agency, has unisex housekeeping uniforms and maids' dresses? Would you be interested to get a few?"

A jolt went through me like an electric current or even worse like an earthquake shock. Did I hear that right? She was asking me to buy a housekeeping uniform? She even mentioned a maid's dress! I felt flutter all over my stomach. She understood that her words impressed me because she continued.

"Before you react to that positively or negatively let me add this. Starting Monday you will be staying at home cleaning, cooking, doing the laundry, ironing and all sorts of other mundane chores. Knowing you, you would end up wearing probably a skirt and a top or a housedress covered by a pinny, don't blush I know that one of the reasons you are taking up house responsibilities is that." She looked shrewdly at me as I was blushing and feeling uncomfortable and added, "Am I right to assume that?"

I had to answer and be frank about it. Pam hated people lying. She was asking me a direct question; I had to give a direct answer, "You are right Pam, I thought of that though I wasn't going to start immediately, I try to move slowly to that direction. You know me, I don't want to do something that would annoy or offend you."

"This is exactly the reason why I try to establish an understanding between us two from the beginning, I have been thinking that it would be more practical and appropriate if you would wear a housekeeping uniform for doing your chores, they are made from hardwearing material, they wash easily and they don't need elaborate ironing, in other words they are designed for menial work. I can suggest the unisex one, I've seen the cleaners in our company wearing them, trousers and top in light blue or green color and comfortable white shoes." She paused, smiled mischievously at me and added, "But then again, since you like your skirts you would prefer probably a comfortable maid's dress, you know the ones that button through in front or have a front zip, also in colors like light blue, mint green or even dove grey. What do you think?"

The stomach flutter was getting stronger, I tried to keep my calm and not showing the great emotion I was in at the moment. I said calmly but in a slightly trembling voice, "You wouldn't mind seeing me in a maid's dress and apron? You really wouldn't mind that?"

She was more serious now, "I have to be a bit clearer at this point I think. I don't want you to become a servile maid in a black and white outfit curtsying and answering with a 'yes ma'am, no ma'am'. No, I certainly don't expect that. You will simply wear a housekeeping outfit, yes a maid's dress since you love your skirts, but you will still be my Nicky, looking after our house and sharing my food and joining me in bed at night. I am not turning you to a real maid, I simply add a bit of satisfaction to your new duties in this house. I know you would be happier working in an outfit that you like and a happy housekeeper is an efficient one." She said her last sentence in a joke way.

I looked at her now admiringly. She was a much better psychologist than I thought. She assessed me very cleverly, she read me like an open book! But she clearly avoided calling me a maid, not just yet anyway. At this point I understood that Pam was as confused as I was. What was happening was new to both of us; we were searching each other's reactions as we were adapting to our new roles gradually.

CHAPTER 5

Linda's last day was quite sentimental. Even my wife delayed her departure for work and stayed an extra half hour to talk to her. I made some extra coffee and we all sat around the kitchen table reminiscing about the years she was with us. We gave her a very nice present followed by a slightly tearful farewell with Pam.

After Pam's departure I said to Linda not to bother with her usual cleaning. She could tell me a few things about ironing and then perhaps she could go early. She didn't have to stay until 5.00 in the afternoon.

She reluctantly agreed and we spent the next couple of hours in front of an ironing board. I knew already quite a bit about ironing but I listened to her patiently as she was explaining to me her various 'secrets' as she called them, about level of temperature, type of material, pleats etc. She was a good ironer but I was quite confident myself. I realized that ironing was going to be one of my favorite house activities.

We had our traditional sandwich lunch prepared by me and then it was goodbye time. Another hug a few more tears from her part and she went to collect her few personal belongings. On her way out she turned and asked me, as if she just remembered something, "I forgot to ask you Nick, did Annie send you a list of those eco friendly products? Are you going to see her tomorrow?"

"Yes Linda, Annie was very correct, she sent me yesterday a list of cleaning products, I looked them up, I discussed the whole thing with Pam last night and I placed an order. Tomorrow I am going to collect them and on Monday hopefully I'll start using them."

Linda appeared a bit skeptical, "You might think I am a bit old fashioned Nick but I don't think the eco friendly products clean that well, they don't seem to have the same cleaning force as the traditional ones. A maid I know who is obliged to use them because of her employer said to me she has to try harder and she spends more time to achieve a satisfactory result."

I looked at her, being skeptical myself this time, "I can see your point Linda, probably you are right, after all those products are new in the market and not yet completely tested. I guess I have to see for myself starting on Monday. If I am not happy I will have to bring it up with Pam again, but I more or less know her answer. She will insist that the extra effort is worth it. She will be probably telling me that I have the time to put some extra effort in it."

She looked at me with a quizzical look, "I still can't believe Nick what you decided to do; to take up the whole house responsibility. I can see that you already face Mrs. Pam as your employer. It is quite unusual. But I repeat to you, if you ever need help or if you decide to stop all together being the housekeeper call Annie. She will have the answers for you."

"I will Linda, I will," I said a bit impatiently now, "Annie is a very professional lady and I am certain I will need her in the future." I said that thinking of Annie's shop with all the domestic uniforms. I was really looking forward to my visit there tomorrow.

Another hug, a few more tears and Linda departed from our life. She even remembered to give me back the house keys. From now on I was truly 'home alone'!

CHAPTER 6

Friday morning I was on edge. We had a quick breakfast with Pam, me in my usual morning outfit of nightie and apron, a total contrast to my wife's very elegant power suit.

As she was getting ready to go she turned to me and said, "Today is the day you are going to collect your new cleaning material isn't it?"

"Yes it is Pam; I have an appointment with Miss de Laurentis at 11 o'clock. The order is placed and I'll leave here at 10.30. I think I have enough time to straighten up the house before I go."

"That's for you to decide dear" she said in a rather condescending way, as if I shouldn't bother her with my domestic activities. "I hope you buy some neat and practical domestic uniforms in that shop and I certainly hope that starting Monday you will be wearing something more appropriate in the morning. I am tired seeing you in this nightie and apron outfit. Nighties are for bed."

I was slightly shocked, I found her rather rude this morning. I decided though not to spoil anything so I simply said, "Yes Pam of course I will buy some housekeeping uniforms, you know how much I am looking forward to that."

"Fine, that's settled then," she said as she grabbed her bag. Then she looked at me again in a softer mode. She approached me and gave me a light kiss, "Bye darling, don't take me seriously if I am a bit abrupt sometimes, I mean no harm. You know my feelings for you." And in her usual manner she turned and left.

I was relieved with her last phrase that was some sort of apology on her part. She obviously realized that she was a bit more abrupt than usual. But my submissive streak was signaling at me again. That part of my personality wasn't reacting negatively at all!

Just minutes before 11.00 in the morning, driving the small VW Golf, which was going to be my car from now on, I managed to park opposite the domestic agency and shop of Annie. It was a part of town I wasn't coming often; otherwise I certainly would have noticed the window shop prominently displaying an array of various domestic uniforms. I hesitated for a few moments to step out of the car, this was about to be a major step in this fast developing new phase of my life. 'But I want that don't I?' I silently asked myself. 'Yes you certainly do!' my inner voice answered. So be it I thought and I stepped out of the car!

The premises had two separate doors. I used the one with a brass plaque saying in bold letters 'DOMESTIC AGENCY' and underneath in smaller letters, 'ANNIE DE LAURENTIS General Manager'. The premises were bigger than they looked from the street. A young secretary asked me politely if she could be of assistance. I said my name and that I was there to see Miss de Laurentis. She dialed an internal number and after a brief moment she said to me, "Please go straight ahead, the door on your left, Miss de Laurentis will see you now".

I felt as if I was going for a job interview, as a matter of fact that's what probably the young secretary thought. I knocked at a door with Annie's name outside and I heard her melodic voice, 'come in'.

I entered an opulent office, nice carpets and elegant furniture. She raised her eyes and smiled at me, "Ah Nick you are here, right on time, I am pleased to see you again, please take a seat; I'll be with you in a minute." Her tone of voice was slightly different from the other day we met in the house, polite yes, but probably not as friendly, a bit more impersonal perhaps?

A couple of minutes later she looked at me keeping her polite smile, "So how are you? I gather yesterday was Linda's last day; she talked to me on the phone last night, she was quite sad she was leaving you, but she knows that it is time." She stopped briefly and then continued in a more professional tone, "So Nicky, as of today you assume full house responsibilities. Are you still positive about that or you have second thoughts?"

I've noticed she called me Nicky, she wanted to put me at ease, probably she could feel my tension. I answered in a polite tone of voice, I needed Annie's help at the moment, I had to bring up the issue of uniforms as well. "Yes, thank you for asking, I am very positive. I know I will need some time to adapt and it is going to be quite an adaptation, several scales down from my previous high executive job."

"And I admire you for that;" she answered immediately. "I already mentioned that to you the other day, not many people have the courage to change their life so dramatically. Of course it matters that you have your wife's acceptance, you couldn't do it otherwise. I am quite positive it will be beneficial for both of you. Now are you interested to see my collection of domestic uniforms? There is quite a collection in my shop next door. You could look at the aprons as well."

There is my chance I thought as I started answering her, "Of course I am interested, in fact I have to ask you a delicate question. My wife who knows I have a certain preference for feminine clothes suggested that I buy a couple of dresses and matching aprons, rather than those unisex uniforms. She feels that I will be a happier domestic worker if I can wear something of my choice." I finished my sentence blushing all over. But I said it!

"And I couldn't agree more," Annie exclaimed looking at me in a different way. "Your request is quite unusual but totally acceptable, you have to feel happy and comfortable in your working clothes, I wish my girls that I send out to work as maids were feeling the same way, they usually feel very down when you tell them that they will work in a uniform." She stopped and looked at me again, "Could you please stand?" she asked abruptly like giving me an order.

"What for..." I started saying but she interrupted me, "I simply want to evaluate your size."

I stood up and walked a few steps back. She looked at me and said. "You are a comfortable 16 and if you loose a few pounds you could even fit in a 14. But I would suggest a 16 for now, you must always feel comfortable in a working dress, I always advice my girls to take a size larger when they get their uniforms."

I was still blushing as I stood there uncomfortably. She looked at me again and said, "You can go next door to the shop from the side door, Estelle my sales lady is there to as-

sist you choose. It's up to you to tell her if the dresses are for you or for someone else, that's why I suggested the size. Feel free to choose and come back here afterwards to collect the cleaning materials, already packed for you; then we can settle the bill together. I think Nicky you deserve a good reduction, I don't get everyday as client a refined gentleman who wants to become a housemaid. Good for you!"

Her voice had a slightly authoritarian tone now, I think I was becoming fast 'one of her girls' I was about to choose my working clothes and then pick my cleaning materials, my new status in life was more defined now. But I liked this woman, she knew how to win you and of course she was a great business woman, she was about to charge a fair amount to my credit card.

CHAPTER 7

An hour later I left Miss Annie's premises loaded with parcels. I had a wonderful, though slightly embarrassing time picking my new working clothes. Estelle was very helpful and an excellent sales person. I stopped pretending after a few minutes and though it was never mentioned openly, it was obvious that I was picking clothes for myself. I picked three dresses in the colors Pam suggested, light blue, mint green and dove grey. All had white collars and white piping around the short sleeves and the front pockets. The blue and the green were front buttoned and the dove grey had a front zip. I bought two white bib aprons, a white waist apron and three striped tabards in matching colors with the dresses. Estelle insisted that the tabards are very protective and look quite smart on top of the housekeeping dress.

I settled the account with Annie and as I was saying thank you and good bye she said to me, "Good bye Nicky and good luck to this new phase of your life. I hope you adapt well and I'll certainly visit you during the next few days, depending on my schedule. I want to see for myself how you adapt in your new domestic duties and obligations.

I thanked her again and as I was departing she added, "I forgot to mention to you that I organize occasionally housekeeping seminars especially when a bunch of my girls arrive from Philippines. They are already well trained in domestic sciences but they get what I call 'an adaptation course'. They have to learn various aspects of the attitudes and habits of their future employers in this country. Probably it would be beneficial for you to participate in one of those seminars. At the moment you still mentally belong to the employers' side. Your education, previous work, experiences are all connected with that side. Probably this course will teach you some aspects of humility and what it means to be in the domestic employees' side. Would you be interested to join a seminar of that kind?"

Her words made again my stomach flutter from excitement. She touched one of my well hidden submissive chords. Of course that would interest me. To mix with all those Filipino girls as being one of them! That would have been quite an experience.

"Of course that would interest me Annie and thank you for telling me, but I think there would be some practical problems. For a start I would stand out too much, a white male mixing with all those petite Asian ladies. And then how I could explain my presence there, they would see me as an intruder."

She looked at me with this partly serious partly amused look. She looked quite pretty like that, "But my dear Nicky I expect you to be one of the girls when you join us for a seminar of that kind. You are right, those girls would never accept a male being present in their classes; they are very catholic and quite conservative socially. But with a makeover you could be quite convincing, you have small hands and soft features for a male. Of course you will be definitely older than them; they all are in their mid to late twenties, but that I will have to explain. A person of a certain age who has her own reasons to work as a domestic. They would have to accept that. Don't forget that they are in a totally new environment and they can not explain all the oddities they will be seeing."

She was talking about a makeover that excited me even more. I still had my doubts though, "But then it is my voice, I certainly can't hide that, it is too deep to be considered as a female voice."

"You would be surprised how much you can modify and adjust your way of speaking; you must forget your normal booming voice. You will learn to speak in softer tones, nearly whisper. You can always say that you have a problem with your vocal chords. Then again, you are not obliged to talk that much, simply a yes or no, or small phrases. After all domestics are not supposed to talk a lot, you must have heard the expression, 'a maid is seen but not heard'.

I looked at her full of surprise and admiration, "I am amazed how much you know about people like me, have you dealt with a cross dresser before?"

"Of course I did, my brother back in Philippines is one of them. He or rather she by that stage had SRS, sex reassignment surgery, if you don't know the term, in Bangkok, Thailand. Dr. Chettawut and his team did an excellent job. Angelita, this is her name now, stayed in Bangkok and works as a nurse in Dr. Chettawut's clinic. She already had an experience as a male nurse back in Philippines. She is my young sister now!

Her last phrase left me speechless. What an incredible story! I looked at her in admiration, "Wow! What a story. I don't know what to say Annie."

"Don't say anything Nicky, just go home. I know you are dying to try on your new clothes. We will talk soon."

She posed for a second and continued, "And probably I run quite fast myself, I already suggested too much to you. You are in the beginning of a new phase, you might be a cross dresser but you have a wife and a daughter and other obligations. It is really premature to suggest a makeover. Your wife who is your employer from now on will have to take some decisions concerning your future. Now run along dear."

I nearly said 'Yes Miss' as I was leaving but I restrained myself. But in my mind Annie was already someone of authority, someone who could guide me in my new station in life.

CHAPTER 8

I arrived home and rushed upstairs with my parcels, Annie was right, I was dying to try my new clothes on. I took everything to the spare room. Then it occurred to me that I probably should need a room for my everyday use now that I would spend most of my time at home. I should discuss that with Pam tonight.

I tried everything on in a hurry because I still had housework to finish and then start dinner. Everything I bought fitted beautifully, Annie was right. A working dress should be more comfortable. Still I decided to keep the promise to myself to start losing weight. I desperately wanted a thinner waistline.

I rushed downstairs to continue with my chores. It was about three in the afternoon when the phone rung. I picked the receiver and heard Pam's confident voice, "Hi darling, have you started dinner?"

"No, not yet Pam, I am about to start now, anything changed?"

"No, not really, I wonder if you have enough food for another person, Tania is coming over to pick me from work at six, we have drinks at Mario's and then I thought of asking her to join us for dinner. Is that ok with you?"

"Of course it is darling, you know how I feel about Tania, she is family and yes I have enough food. I shall expect you then about seven?"

"Yes, seven, seven thirty." She paused for a moment and then continued, "Tell me Nicky have you picked your cleaning materials and new working clothes from that agency?"

I sounded quite enthusiastic when I started answering that question, "Yes Pam I did and I am very excited about the whole thing, you have to see my new uniform dresses, I have to show them to you and the matching"

She interrupted me by saying, "Listen Nicky, would you like to be a bit daring tonight and have some fun as well?"

"What do you mean by that? What kind of fun?" I was genuinely puzzled. It wasn't Pam's usual style to talk in riddles.

"Well, I have been thinking, you are going to start cooking in a minute and knowing you well, you will probably wearing one of your new uniforms with a matching apron etc... Would you like to stay dressed for us and welcome us in the house acting like a proper maid? If you think I ask too much just tell me so, I will never ask you to do something against your will, I value you too much for that."

I was stunned! Pam was asking me for something that I would never dare to suggest myself. I was thinking fast. Should I do it? I had to answer, "I love your suggestion Pam, but I will be simply a guy in a dress and apron, unless you suggest of course that I can dress up completely, wig, and make up, the lot."

"No Nicky, I don't want you to go all the way, it is not the time yet, just stay in your working clothes and yes, why not, be a boy in a dress, a male maid. It is nothing wrong with that. I keep seeing you in a nightie and apron and Tania saw you endless times in an apron. I simply think it will be fun to be received in the house a bit more ceremonially than usually, a bit more theatrically, if you know what I mean?"

All of a sudden I was convinced. What the hell, it's nothing dramatic. Isn't that what I want after all?

"All right Pam, it's a deal, I'll be the boy-maid when you come home, but then I'll sit and eat with you. Do you agree to that?"

“Of course darling, I don’t want you to be the maid for the whole evening, of course I expect you to eat with us, but then you will have to change to your own clothes. Bye for now, I have to go back to work, I have an important meeting at four and I still have to prepare myself.” And she hanged up.

I sat by the telephone thinking. There is acceleration to everything in the last couple of days. It seems that Pam goes along with my plans remarkably well. In fact sometimes she moves faster than I expect her to and she surprises me pleasantly like she did only minutes ago.

I better move fast now. I have to prepare an elaborate meal and Tania is quite a gourmet eater and then set the table and then have a shower and dress for the occasion. Nicky the boy-maid, what fun!

CHAPTER 9

It was nearly seven when I finished tidying up the kitchen. I was quite nervous anticipating the arrival of Pam and Tania. I was about to face them dressed as a housemaid, a ‘boy maid’ as Pam called me earlier on the phone. I was wearing my dove grey dress covered modestly by a full white apron. I thought the grey dress would look a bit more formal and certainly the white apron was adding to the proper look. Black tights and comfortable house shoes were the other feminine accoutrements I added to my attire.

I couldn’t resist looking at myself in the mirror; I loved my neat appearance, I loved the crisp white apron covering modestly the front of my grey dress, the picture of domesticity. And yet I had an uneasy feeling. Probably I was exposing myself too much. Was I prepared to face my wife of thirty years dressed like this? Probably she would look down on me. But she is the one who encouraged me to buy my domestic uniforms; she is the one who suggested my appearance for tonight in front of one of our closest friends.

And then I heard the car coming in our drive and the noise of the garage door as it started to open. My god, they arrived, big flutter in my stomach, the moment of truth is here!

I rushed to the hallway, normally Pam uses her own key to come in, I wasn’t certain what to do, I felt vulnerable and exposed. I heard their voices giggly and loud. Probably they were a bit tipsy already, that could make things easier for me, they would be less critical and more fun.

I heard the front door bell ringing. I approached the door and opened it cautiously, then I moved back a few steps to let them in. “Hi Nicky” they said in unison even before they looked at me. Tania was the one, who looked at me first, “Of my God! Nicky you look adorable!”

She rushed forward and gave me a big and warm hug as she continued talking, “You are so neat and proper, look at this pristine white apron.” She must have felt the straps of my bra as she was hugging me because she winked at me and said in a low voice, “You are naughty, you even have a bra on.”

I blushed all over as I started to turn towards Pam. She had a look that I couldn’t decipher immediately. A mixture of amusement and contempt? I wasn’t sure, I had to try and

be as accommodating as possible tonight, I had to win her back, in case she felt a bit uncomfortable with her 'boy-maid'.

I smiled and said in a polite voice, "Can I offer you some drinks ladies?"

"You certainly can" Pam said in a jovial voice, gaining her composure and feeling her confident self again. "White wine for me please."

Tania added instantly, "The same for me thanks Nicky."

They moved to the living room and I rushed to the kitchen. I filled two glasses of sauvignon blanc, Pam's favorite and I put them in a tray together with a plate of smoked salmon pieces on brown bread. I knew Tania's persistence of accompanying a drink with something small and savory. 'You don't get drunk that easily', was her usual remark.

I offered them the drinks and the smoked salmon feeling quite awkward. Acting as a maid was still a novelty to me, reality is different from fantasy. I remembered fantasizing about this moment endless times in the past and yet now in real life I needed some moral support.

Tania was the first one to break the awkward silence, "Nicky honey, I am so happy for you, I love the way you look and act, you are completely taken by your role as a maid. And those legs of yours! Many girls would be envious of those slim ankles; you would look great in heels."

I blushed again as I said in a low voice, "Thank you Tania you are very kind, but I have a long way to go to feel more presentable. I should lose quite a bit of weight to start with."

"That would be the day," Pam added a bit sarcastically and continued with a slightly drunken voice, "I agree with Tania, you look neat and proper but as you just said, you have to lose weight. I am curious how



successful you are going to be this time; we both know how many times you failed in the past.”

“Don’t be hard on him Pam,” Tania said, “He just started his new phase, he certainly needs lots of improvements to become more realistic on his maid’s role.” She paused and looked at Pam in an inquiring way. “Are you thinking of letting him go to a more drastic ‘makeover’ phase? I know he would love that, but of course you are his partner and probably I should add employer from now on.”

I was standing in the middle of the room, feeling silly but also singularly excited. Tania’s presence was becoming catalytic. She was bringing the conversation to topics that I wouldn’t dare to touch with Pam. The ‘makeover’ issue was mentioned for the second time today. The fact that already both ladies were slightly drunk made them bolder in speaking their mind.

Pam looked at Tania first then at me as I was standing in the middle of the room, playing uncomfortably with the edge of my apron. “I’ll try and answer your question Tania though I am not completely certain myself and of course Nicky has to agree as well. From the very beginning I said to him that I will not force anything. All movements and steps taken so far had his full consent. Isn’t that right Nicky darling?”

I rushed to answer, “Of Course Pam, everything that happened so far has been totally accepted by me. In fact in some cases I even tried to push things a bit further. And I mention again here in front of Tania as well, that I have no regrets so far. I am quite pleased and excited and I want to move ahead.”

“You heard that Tania?” Pam said in an exasperated tone of voice, “Our Nicky here is very willing and eager to proceed. So I simply follow his wishes so far.” She stopped and looked at me again. The expression was undecipherable again, amusement, contempt, anger, compassion? I simply couldn’t tell!

She turned to Tania and continued, “But there will be a moment that I will start imposing my own rules. I still think about them. He wants to be a housekeeper or from what I see in front of me today a housemaid, then he will be a proper one. Rules will have to be followed. And of course if he is willing he can have a makeover. Again he is responsible how far he wants to go and how many irreversible things he is prepared to do in his body.”

She turned towards me again, “You have any objection Nicky to what I just said?” she said that phrase in a nearly accusing tone of voice.

I felt uneasy, Pam was attacking me; that was not good; I had to maintain a nice and jovial atmosphere tonight. Tania rescued the situation again.

“I know it is something totally new for both of you and there will be an adaptation period, but I strongly feel that a balance will be established fairly quickly, I can see it happening already. Nicky is very eager for this, he has been ready for many years now.”

She stopped for a second, looked at me and continued, “And I will add only this and say no more; I feel that Nicky is also ready for some rules, how ever strict they are going to be, he freely chose to take a somehow subordinate role in your day to day life. So it’s up to you Pam to act accordingly from now on.”

I felt instantly the impact of Tania's words to Pam. She looked at me for a few seconds as I was standing still in the middle of the room and said in a half jokingly commanding tone, "Right maid, here is my first rule; you stay on maid's duty for the rest of the evening, you do the serving and you can have your own meal later in the kitchen like a proper servant. Now run along, all of a sudden I feel very hungry and I bet Tania feels the same."

I looked at her, then at Tania, who slightly winked at me as if saying, 'do as you are told sweetie'. I looked back at Pam and nearly curtsying said in a formal manner, "Yes Ma'am!" as I started going back to the kitchen.

CHAPTER 10

The evening became very jolly. The ladies enjoyed their meal, praised my cooking but several times corrected the way I was serving them. In a half joking manner both of them said that I had a lot to learn in that field. At one point Pam turned to Tania and said loudly enough for me to hear. "I can tell, Nicky needs lots of coaching in that field. It will be some time before I decide to organize a formal dinner party inviting some people from work in this house."

Tania looked slightly puzzled but she laughed happily and said, "Wow, I bet Nicky will love and dread this. Imagine the exposure. I should be here to see for myself!"

"Of course you will be invited" Pam said loudly, "Nicky will probably need you for moral support." She said that and they both started to giggle uncontrollably. They certainly were tipsier now and they were enjoying themselves.

As I was coming and going to the kitchen being a committed waitress I had an 'extended ear' to pick parts of their conversation; I totally felt like an eavesdropping servant! I was standing by the kitchen door, not clearly visible, when I heard Tania saying to Pam, "You shouldn't worry honey, Nicky will be fine, he loves what he is doing and you might as well try and make the most of it. I'd love to be at your position. I think Nicky will adore you even more if you become more assertive and take the initiatives, he wants to be the 'kept partner' at this stage."

Then something I couldn't hear clearly was mentioned by Pam and I heard again Tania saying, "But of course honey you can suggest it, Nicky is like putty in your hands at the moment. You can mould him anyway you want especially if you encourage his strong vocation to adopt his preferred role in life."

I was intrigued; I wonder what Pam wanted to suggest to me? Obviously something that Tania thought would have been easily accepted by me. As she said, I was 'putty in Pam's hands'. A contradicting feeling that I had on and off all those days of my transition to my 'preferred role', as Tania called it, came strongly back. Am I doing the right thing or not? I truly couldn't say, what I could say though was the strong inner need to explore my 'other side', the one hidden for many years. Now was the chance and somehow things were moving faster than I predicted.

Pam's voice brought me back to reality, "Could we have some coffee please Nicky?"

I rushed to put the kettle on, and then I should start the washing up. The kitchen was quite messy at the moment.

I served the coffee; both Tania and Pam looked exhausted by that stage and ready to collapse. It was nearly midnight and we all had a long day. I was still quite alert though, I had very little to drink and eat, being a serving maid can be beneficial for a person on diet, you simply forget to eat. I left them finish their coffee and I retreated to the kitchen to start the washing up. I put my stripy tabard on top of my white apron and some rubber gloves and I started filling the sink with soapy water. I decided not to use the dishwasher tonight, I felt like washing up the proper old fashioned way.

I was halfway through when I heard Pam's voice, "Nicky, could you come here for a minute?"

I hastily removed my rubber gloves and rushed to the living room. Tania definitely was ready to go. Pam looked at me and said, "Probably you could give a lift to Tania, you seem quite sober to me."

I was totally taken by surprise. I was expecting Tania to order a taxi. I said in a slightly panicked voice, "But I can't go out dressed like this, I should go and change and I am in the middle of washing up and..."

"Don't be silly Nicky, at this time of night who could see you, just put on something warm on top of your uniform. Nobody will pay the slightest attention. Just take the Golf and go."

Tania started saying, "Don't push him Pam, I probably should phone for a taxi, it's late and Nicky did a lot today, let him finish his washing up."

But at this moment I decided to take the risk and said, "Its fine ladies I can do it, give me a couple of minutes."

Tania looked at me and said very warmly, "Thank you honey, you are a doll, I appreciate that."

I rushed back to the kitchen, removed my tabard and white apron and then grabbed an old black cardigan I was using for inside the house. I put it on and rushed back to get Tania.

She looked at me and giggled, "You look fine Nicky, like a nurse that goes back home after the end of her shift."

She said goodbye to Pam with a big hug and kiss. I turned and said to Pam, "See you in a minute darling."

"I'll probably be in bed before you are back; just you make sure you finish in the kitchen before you go to bed. That will be another of my coming rules. The kitchen should be impeccable at the end of the day. No dirty dishes for the next day."

I didn't answer to that; I just followed Tania to the garage through a side door.

I felt quite nervous and excited going out of the house in a maid's dress.

I could see Tania was very tired, she was yawning all the time. I couldn't resist the question though, "So what do you think Tania about today? How you found Pam? I am very nervous about her reactions, I am not certain yet that she approves of my change."

Tania made an effort to put her thoughts together; she was too kind to ignore my question, "Truly Nicky I think Pam is reacting better that I would expect. You saw her this eve-

ning. She enjoyed herself, she took quite an assertive attitude towards you, she acted like the boss you want her to be."

She stopped to yawn and continued, "I'm sorry, I am so pooped; but coming back to your question, you have to give Pam some space to react. If you really enjoy that role of a crossed dressed maid as much as you were telling me all these years, you must let yourself go free; you must try and develop a humbler attitude to life, not necessarily subservient, just humble. You like to serve; you like to look after the needs of other people, so make a habit of it starting with Pam. You can anticipate her needs, you can become her personal maid as well, and that can have a very erotic effect in your relations if you play it carefully. Do you know what I mean honey?"

I looked at Tania sideways; I had to be careful with my driving. Again she was saying in different words the same things Annie mentioned earlier today, asking me to give up my previous way of life and adopt a new persona. An 'adaptation course' as Annie called it earlier.

"You are so clever Tania; you should have been a shrink. You analyze me so well. I will definitely try to adopt a new 'persona', you know how much I need that, but I am worried all the time that Pam might look down on me and stop liking me all together. I don't want that to happen, you know how much I adore her."

Tania stayed silent for a bit, obviously thinking what I just mentioned. Finally she said, "Yes, I admit there are certain risks in this new role you assume in the household. I can see two extreme case scenarios here Nicky, do you care to hear them?"

"Of course I do Tania, I am very intrigued."

"Well, the best case scenario is that you become Pam's housekeeper or maid on a daily basis, but you continue being her erotic and intimate partner and she continues loving you on a somehow different basis. The worst case scenario is that you end up being just a servant in her eyes and she loses all other interest in you."

"That worst case scenario appears very grim to me" I said though I wasn't certain if I truly believed that. My deep inner self wasn't rejecting completely the 'total servitude' role.

"Honey I truly believe that a balance will be developed between Pam and you very quickly without any alarming results for either of you. Just follow your instinct, you told me in the past that you have a woman's intuition, so just follow that."

We drove in silence after that; in fact very quickly Tania started dozing. I didn't try to wake her up, I just drove very carefully deep in thought. That was probably the longest and most exciting day of my adult life. So many things happened this Friday, so many taboos were broken; and this was only the beginning, or at least this is how I felt.

CHAPTER 11

Back in the house everything was dead quiet. Pam was in bed, probably deeply asleep by now. I had work to do though. I donned my tabard and attacked the mess in the kitchen. It took me a full hour but at the end everything was back in order. I even mopped the floor. By the time I was ready for bed it was past two in the morning. I was quite ex-

hausted by that stage. I joined Pam in bed very carefully I didn't want to wake her up. I was asleep in minutes if not seconds. Physical exhaustion is great in that sense.

It must have been in the middle of the night when I felt her hand caressing me; she was touching my inner thighs through the thin fabric of my nightie.

"Aren't you asleep darling?" I managed to say as I was getting aroused.

"I am half asleep but I am excited, I want to make love to my little maid" she murmured in a seductive tone.

"I'd love that Mistress" I said in a whisper. I was totally aroused by now.

She rolled over on top of me, leaned and kissed me as I moved inside her. It was bliss. She whispered in my ear, "You are mine Nicky, tell me that you belong to me."

I was reaching a thrilling ecstasy, "I do belong to you Mistress, I always have been since you married me, I am your love slave." I said as I was approaching the no return point.

She stopped me with a hissing voice, "Don't you dare to come just yet slave, I still need you strong inside me, keep thinking that you are mine, I love that thought."

I made a huge effort to slow down. I started thinking how to please Pam and bring her to a no return point. I was whispering in her ear a phrase that obviously was turning her on, "I belong to you Mistress, I am all yours body and soul, I want to be your servant for life."

It was at the end of that sentence that she yelled at me, "Come now slave, come my darling!"

We reached a glorious orgasm simultaneously. I came with little cries of joy, little feminine cries of joy. I was in seventh heaven. Pam was equally vibrating on top of me in a frantic ecstasy.

Oh boy, oh boy, what an explosion! We stayed attached together trying to catch our breath. It was the first time I had such an intense sex with Pam. All those years and it was the first time!

She must have felt the same because she turned to me and said, "That was great Nicky, what have we been missing all those years!"

We both went back to sleep in each other's arms, as dawn was about to come.

CHAPTER 12

It was past ten in the morning when I checked my bedside clock. I jumped out of bed and rushed to the shower. I had to prepare breakfast and serve Pam in bed this morning. At least that was my plan. I wanted to pamper her this weekend, act like her personal maid. Housework could wait till Monday.

I was a bit hesitant what to wear. Could I wear my morning housekeeping dress and matching tabard? I still was a bit embarrassed to appear dressed like this in front of Pam. I still had a fear of rejection; that she might act abruptly and say to me something like this,

'What on earth you are wearing, go and change this instant, I don't want to live with a husband dressed like this'.

I overtook the fear of rejection; put my light blue morning uniform on and started breakfast. Fresh orange juice, nice strong coffee, toasts and marmalade was her favorite breakfast in bed. I arranged everything nicely in a tray and went to the bedroom. I decided to make it more formal and knocked at the door.

I heard her sleepy voice, "Come in Nicky, I can smell fresh coffee."

I entered hesitantly saying in a low voice, "Good morning Ma'am, do you want your breakfast now?"

She opened her eyes and sat in bed when she heard my voice addressing her in a formal way. I put the tray down and rushed to adjust the pillows behind her back. She looked at me again and said, "You smell nice, you obviously had a shower already. Come on bring that tray I am famished."

I secured the tray in front of her and retreated in the middle of the room feeling a bit awkward. What now. Do I stand like a fool in the middle of the room?

She enjoyed her freshly squashed orange juice. That was the awaking signal for her. She looked at me again more carefully this time with an expression I couldn't decipher easily. Was she pleased or annoyed, I couldn't tell.

She finally gave me a smile, what a relief, and waved at me to go and sit at the edge of the bed. "We can talk as I have my breakfast," she said in a flat voice.

I stayed silent looking at the hem of my light blue dress waiting for her to start. It didn't take long.

"Thank you for last night darling, it was wonderful, I felt quite taken by your eagerness to please me. If this is connected with your 'new phase' in life as you call it I wholly approve of it." She had a bite of her toast and continued, "I presume you had breakfast already, would you like to join me with some coffee?"

I was blushing like a young girl as I remembered last night's intense erotic involvement with Pam, I managed to answer her question, "I had some cereal this morning and a cup of coffee, you know I try to lose weight Pam."

She looked at me for the first time in 'inspection mode' taking in what I was wearing, "I suppose this is your working outfit, stand up I want to see how you look like."

I went back in the middle of the room straightening my dress and adjusting my tabard.

"You look very neat, much better than that nightie and apron outfit you insisted wearing lately. I like also your black tights and sensible shoes; you will feel quite comfortable working in that outfit." She paused to have another bite of her toast and patted the bed next to her, "Come and sit here, we can continue our talk."

I wanted to talk about last night, how immersed I was from our love making, how I really meant what I said to her; but I couldn't, the last few days I somehow learned to leave the initiative to her. Probably that was a first sign of my new status in the house.

She finished her toast, had a sip of her coffee and continued, "That breakfast was great, you spoil me Nicky but this is what you want isn't it?"

She gave me the initiative I was waiting for. "I love doing that for you Pam, I do want to look after you, it's so natural for me. In fact since yesterday that I started wearing my housekeeping clothes I feel very much at home, how can I explain that to you, I feel 'proper', 'correct', I am not certain which word to use. Do you know what I mean?"

She had that skeptical look again, "I believe you Nicky, you have been trying to tell me the same thing in different words, for days now. Of course for a person like me with my career to think about and my work ambitions is not an easy concept, but I have eyes to see and a critical mind to judge. Stop worrying, you are the housekeeper already and you will be the housekeeper for the foreseeable future."

I decided to become a bit bold again, "Can I make a suggestion Pam?" I asked cautiously.

"Provided that is within your new duties yes, I would expect my housekeeper to come up with useful suggestions; I certainly don't want a dumb maid."

I decided to go straight to the point, "You mentioned yesterday during dinner that I would need some proper coaching in various aspects of domestic sciences. Like learn how to set the table correctly and serve properly at a dinner party etc, etc..."

I stopped to see her reaction but she simply waved with her hand a 'go on' sign.

"Annie de Laurentis, the lady who owns the domestic agency and uniform shop mentioned to me yesterday that she organizes periodically housekeeping seminars or 'adaptation courses' as she calls them for future housekeepers (for some reason I decided not to mention the 'Filipina maid' element, I would be embarrassed to mention that to Pam). She suggested that I might be interested to join one of the future seminars. Of course I said I had to mention that to you first."

"My God, you are so determined to proceed in this!" she said in a slightly accusing way. "I give you the green light for something and you instantly bring up something else, more advancing, a new step."

I had to back off urgently, "Of course is not something that will happen tomorrow, I am not prepared myself yet to appear in public. And of course how I appear in public, as a male or as a female?"

"Now you touched another controversial subject, the 'makeover' that Tania mentioned yesterday. I know you are about to explore your feminine side, but don't fool yourself, you can't become a woman with a visit to a beauty shop. You can pretend, you can even be fairly convincing, but you will always be a man in drag."

She saw my hurt look and added, "I am a pragmatic person Nicky, I know how strongly you feel about this current transition period, but I say it again, don't have illusions. And of course I always presume that you haven't reached a Transgender stage. I think you still love to be a heterosexual male in your erotic encounters, at least this is the impression you gave me in bed last night."

Boy she was so strong and so correct in what she just said; she managed to bring me back to reality. And the reality is that I am already a male maid in this house and I might as well try and make the most of it.

The only thing I managed to say was, "Yes, you are right Pam; I shouldn't accelerate the situation, I should adapt to my new role more gradually. And I can add something here; It will be more exciting for me, a step at a time, always something new to look forward."

I felt she was almost relieved with what I just said. She smiled at me and said, "Right maid, I have tasks for you today, not housework, other tasks. I think we have to rearrange slightly our living arrangements in this house."

CHAPTER 13

I was kicked out of the master bedroom! That was the end result of what Pam called this morning 'a slight rearrangement of our living conditions'. I was working for five hours and still I had a lot to do. The instructions were to remove all my clothes and other personal belongings from the master bedroom and install myself to the guest room that had a small adjoining shower/WC facility.

As usual Pam's reasoning was quite solid. I should have my own space; I needed a space in the house now that I was going to be a full time housekeeper. Then there was lack of space in the big walk in closet in the master bedroom. She suggested that I move all my business suits and my extensive collection of designers' shirts and shoes and ties in the attic store room and keep only some informal clothes for my day to day needs. Then I could keep those plus my housekeeping uniforms and my few feminine items in the much smaller closet of the guest room.

I couldn't say I was totally against it; I was going to suggest that anyway, I needed my own space in the house now. But my formal expulsion from the master bedroom had a symbolic value. I was no longer an occupant of that room; I was going to enter that room in my capacity as the housemaid from now on, to tidy up and change the sheets and clean the bathroom etc...

Of course Pam was very careful when she asked me to move, she said repeatedly that I would be always welcomed in 'her' bed, as she called it, that she would always need my presence. But, it was to be her discretion from now on to ask me to join her, it wasn't automatic anymore.

It was early afternoon when I sat down for a cup of coffee and something to nibble. Pam was out following her Saturday routine, gym, shopping, meeting her friends for lunch. This time she was going to meet her other two friends, Melissa and Eva, I am sure she was going to tell them a few things about the new arrangements in the house.

And as if there was a transmission thought, the phone started ringing. I picked it hesitantly and I heard Pam's jolly voice, "Hi Nicky darling, guess who are sitting next to me in Mario's bar?"

"I probably can guess, is it Melissa and Eva?" I answered knowing very well it must have been them.

"You certainly guessed right darling, I just mentioned to them we had an excellent dinner last night with Tania, cooked and served by you and they are ever so jealous. They want to be treated the same way."

“By all means”, I said thinking that sooner or later they were going to see me in my new role, “Just pick a date.”

I heard her talking to them, then back on the line, “How about next Friday, it is a convenient day for all of us and I’ll contact Tania as well. It is going to be an all girls night taken care of by my new housekeeper.” She said and I heard all of them giggling happily.

“That’s fine by me Pam, I’ll think of something nice to cook.”

“Great darling, I better move on now, we might go to the movies later so I won’t be back for some time. Have you finished the rooms’ rearrangement? I expect you to spend the night in your new room, remember?”

“I am about to finish; I just stopped to have something to eat. Would you like some dinner tonight?”

“No Darling, just take care of yourself and don’t forget your diet, remember you have to lose a lot of weight. And don’t wait for me, if you are tired go to bed, you have your own privacy from now on. Well, I better go now, Bye.”

And she hung up in her usual abrupt way.

I felt a certain amount of loneliness then; Pam started moving independently. In normal conditions she would have asked me to join them to the movies, but she didn’t tonight. Was it a sign of attitude change or she simply wanted me to finish the rearrangements in the house. I couldn’t answer that.

By six o’clock I had my new room ready. Single bed, small bedside table, a dressing table with a mirror (my future make up table?) and a built in closet where I put all the clothes I expected to use from now on. In another small table I installed my computer and an old TV next to it. I could picture myself already spending quite a bit of my free time in this room. I was making myself comfortable in my new maid’s room!

It was past ten o’clock when I finally retired to my new space. I fell asleep with the TV on. I never heard Pam coming in, but it must have been well past midnight.

I felt strange waking up in a single bed in an ‘alien’ room. I rushed to the door and opened it quietly looking at the end of the corridor. The master bedroom’s door was firmly closed. Pam was in and obviously fast asleep. The same feeling of loneliness came back to me; I was not belonging to that room anymore. I had to knock at the door to go in.

Back to my room I had a moment of confusion what to wear. It was Sunday. I should probably stay out of uniform today. Was Sunday my day off? We never had that sort of discussion with Pam. I needed more guiding lines. I should probably ask later.

But I badly wanted to stay out of my male clothes; I decided to wear a casual blouse and skirt outfit. I picked a jean skirt and a simple cotton black blouse. Black tights and my usual comfortable shoes completed my outfit.

Sunday developed to be a rather quiet and boring day. Pam appeared late with a hang-over from last night and after a shower she went back to bed where she spent most of her day recovering. I prepared something light for her to eat and I kept to myself for the rest of the day.

I tried to ask discreetly how she managed to have such a horrific hangover and the only answer I got was a bit cryptic, "You don't want to know darling, Melissa took me to her private fetish club and we were there until two in the morning. Quite a place but you have to be a member or be escorted by a member to go in. I saw quite a few people like you there."

When I tried to inquire further she stopped me and waved me out of the bedroom. "Please darling I have a splitting headache, go and organize yourself in the kitchen, tomorrow you start officially your housekeeping duties. I want you to be fully prepared for that. Go now, let me rest please."

I left 'her room' quite intrigued. Something new came up. I knew Melissa was a bit kinky, she often hinted to me about her 'particular' tendencies but I had no idea she was a member in an exclusive fetish club. And what Pam meant when she said 'she saw people like me there'? Submissive husbands or boy friends? How exciting. I hope Pam would tell me a bit more about that experience.

I spent the rest of the day sorting out my cleaning materials, reading instructions and planning how I was going to tackle the house tomorrow morning. I checked on Pam before going to 'my room', she was already fast asleep. She obviously needed that rest.

CHAPTER 14

"Now then," Pam said quite firmly just before her departure for work, "I want the master bedroom and bathroom to be cleaned very thoroughly. Change sheets and towels and tidy up all my clothes. I left a few things on the bed to be hand washed. Be very careful with my cashmere cardigan, I am very fond of it. Read the washing instructions."

She stopped to have a last sip of her coffee and gave me one of her inspection looks, "You look quite neat this morning Nicky, this is a correct domestic outfit, very serviceable, and mint green suits you as color."

I blushed and managed to smile, "I am a bit nervous this morning Pam, this is my first full day as housekeeper and I have all sorts of issues to tackle. But I am sure I'll be able to do it all."

She looked at her watch, "I should go now, its past my usual departure time, and I have a long day as well, lots of meetings and other issues to tackle."

She rushed to the door, "Check your e-mail later, I'll send you an e-mail with further instructions. Bye for now."

I worked solidly for two hours. This is how long it took me to clean and tidy up the master bedroom/bathroom complex. Pam left quite a mess behind. I did the bathroom very methodically using my new cleaning materials. My green rubber gloves definitely added to my cleaner's appearance.

I made a cup of coffee and went to my new room to check my e-mails. And there was one from Pam flashing to be opened. I was a bit nervous with some sort of trepidation; she said I should expect further instructions. Once more the familiar stomach flutter. My body was pumping adrenaline again. I had a sip of my coffee and opened it. Gosh, it was quite long. I started reading,

'Dear Nikki,

No, this is not a spelling mistake; this is your name from now on. It sounds the same but the spelling makes the difference. You said to me in the past few days that you wanted to explore your feminine side, so let's start with a symbolic change of name.

I have been thinking again about your new status in the house and your obvious need to serve. This started bringing out on me a dormant dominant side I always had. Probably it is not accidental that you and I got together at first place.

The last few days, in particular Friday and Saturday I had a need with strong sexual nuances to dominate you. I immensely enjoyed our love making on Friday night but I loved also giving instructions to my maidservant. I never thought that this would mark me so strongly.

So Nikki, I took some major decisions yesterday. I was in bed all day with a hang-over but this didn't stop me to think how I want our life to be from now on. So those rules we were talking about the other day with Tania are finally formed in my head. Those are rules that I dictate and you follow. My strong impression is that you are prepared fully to accept them; you gave me plenty of hints ever since you decided to give up your professional life and become a live in domestic.

Rule 1- Dressing code

You will be fully dressed as a female or in unisex mode from now on.

More particularly:

- You will be in your maid's uniform during working hours, roughly between 7.00am and 9.00pm Monday to Saturday.

- You will be wearing simple female clothes on a Sunday when indoors.



- You will be wearing simple unisex clothes like track suites, T shirts and sport shoes when out shopping or running errands until you are confident enough to appear fully dressed in public. Of course your underwear will be your standard feminine one and you will keep your bra on without breast forms.

Rule 2- Makeover

You should have an adequate makeover as quickly as possible. Try to organise it with Miss de Laurentis. If I remember well she suggested a friend's place. You should do your hair; it is long enough for a more feminine style. Try to keep it modest and neat though.

Rule 3 – Housekeeping education

You can follow the housekeeping seminar of Miss de Laurentis, presumably after your makeover so you can be present in your female persona.

I would encourage also any other domestic courses you could take like basic sewing, embroidery, cooking, you can make enquiries where and how.

Rule 4 - Further education

At a later stage when you are more comfortable in your new role as a female domestic, you might take a course in 'body hygiene and cosmetics' like foot rubs, body massage, manicure/pedicure and basic hairdressing. Then I could use you more as a 'lady's maid' and you can look after my more intimate needs.

Rule 5- Financial conditions

You will keep a housekeeping budget from now on. You will have a weekly allowance for the basic house shopping and you will give me a fair warning if you have to spend money for something bigger.

I am afraid you have to give up your financial independence. You will be paid standard wages for your position as a maid/housekeeper. I'll consult with one of the lawyers in our Firm. Of course I'll cover all expenses for your working clothes.

I will cancel all your credit and debit cards.

I will become your formal employer and I'll register you as my domestic employee with all proper social benefits.

I will have to check the legal aspects of that since we are still formally husband and wife but I'll work around it. But our common assets like property, investments etc... remain untouched. That means that in a long term basis you are secure financially.

All I try to do is create a realistic environment for both of us in our new roles as employer and domestic employee.

Rule 6 – Social status and behaviour

This rule is going to be the hardest of all but I think it is imperative to be applied. You will call me Mrs. Manley or Ma'am from now on; yes, I'll use my maiden name, I think it is essential to take a distance at this moment from our common family name. That way will be easier for both of us to adapt. And as you remember I kept my maiden name for professional reasons, all my colleagues know me as Mrs. Pamela Manley.

I know, in the beginning it will be like a joke for both of us, but with time and the proper attitude from you it will become automatic.

Tania and Melissa are aware of the six rules above and they both find them very appropriate. Eva is still not fully informed but she will find out on Friday during the dinner you will prepare and serve to us.

I expect you fully dressed in your grey dress and white apron tonight. You can use your wig and breast forms and light make up. Try to be as convincing as possible, but do not exaggerate. I want a neat and dapper domestic in my home not a sluttish creature. That way it will be easier for me to see you as Nikki my maid form now on.

I better conclude here this long e-mail. I must admit it was easier to outline the six basic rules of our relationship in this indirect way. There will be undoubtedly variations and adaptations in the next few weeks, it's only natural, but I think you have your guidelines now.

Nikki, if you agree to all the rules I mentioned above and if you are really and truly ready to commit yourself to them simply answer to this e-mail with the words, 'I fully agree Ma'am to the above rules and conditions, your devoted maidservant Nikki!'

Mrs. Pamela Manley.

Wow! What a letter! I was trembling from excitement and anticipation. Is this really happening to me? Pam turned overnight to a severe Mistress. I simply can't believe it. Is it some kind of Joke? Then I remembered that her whole attitude changed dramatically ever since she has been to that fetish club with Melissa. That must have been the turning point for her. She found out her dominant streak and she realised that she has a submissive partner next to her who could become her servant on her own terms willingly.

Was this what I really wanted? Now was really the moment of truth for me. I had to give an answer at once. I read again the rules. I found the financial one the most difficult of all. This was turning the whole thing to something definitely bigger than a game. This was making me totally dependent on her. I read it again.

Yes I am going to do it! I want to become a female servant, all my life I was longing for something like that. But I thought to add a small sentence asking for a six months trial period. Would she accept that? And what if she declined it?

I pressed the answering button and I said, "I fully agree Ma'am to the above rules and conditions, your devoted maidservant Nikki!'

Then I added another sentence, 'Would you consider Ma'am a trial period of six months?'

I stood in front of my screen several minutes looking at Pam's e-mail and my short answer. I was trying to think of more practical matters in our everyday life, possible obstacles, our daughter (how I was going to face her), my ex colleagues from work who would try to contact me. But I couldn't think clearly. I was concentrated in Pam's offer and I couldn't face anything else. My entire world at this stage was focusing at this proposal. Everything else was minor. I simply pressed the 'send' button.

I stood in front of the screen for several minutes waiting for Pam's answer. Finally it came. I read,

“Nikki,

As of today you are formally employed as my maidservant for a period of one (1) year with the conditions and rules you agreed already, with a renewal option if we are both satisfied at the end of that period. We will both sign a formal ‘Employment Document’ at a later stage. My Firm’s legal department will draft one for me.

I trust we will have a satisfactory work relationship and I expect you to be a loyal and committed domestic worker.

Your Employer and Mistress,

Mrs. Pamela Manley

It finally happened! I was formally employed as a maid. And I would have to sign a one year contract at a later stage. It can’t be more real than that!

CHAPTER 15

I was elated but scared as well, by this unexpected and quick development. For the first time since I started this transition period I was scared. Losing control of finances is not going to be an easy step for me. It never happened before and I felt quite vulnerable. I had to rely on the good will of Pam or Mrs. Manley as I should think of her from now on, for any needs above my meagre wages. But I always chased the ‘true experience’; finally I was about to get it and I had to pay a price for it.

I did my best to be as ‘true and convincing’ as possible for the arrival of my Mistress/employer. I was dressed as Nikki as best as I could. Short wig on, breast forms, light make up, a bit of lippy, transparent nail polish. My grey dress and white apron and low heel black court shoes completed my appearance. I looked at the mirror; a somehow androgynous face looked back at me. My face was not very feminine, but not masculine also. It was me with a ‘softened’ appearance. I knew that the ‘makeover effort’ could do miracles and produce a definitely more feminine face. I had to call Annie de Laurentis for an appointment with her beautician.

I checked the time at my small wrist watch; it was past four in the afternoon and I had to start preparing dinner soon. It occurred to me then that I probably had to set the table for one person tonight.

I was in the kitchen busily sorting out dinner when I heard a car pulling up at our drive. Who could be at this time of day, it was too early for Pam. I rushed to the front of the house and looked cautiously out. Annie de Laurentis was coming out of her car. Amazing, she was going to be the first person to see Nikki! I checked quickly my appearance in the mirror, removed my working tabard and straightened my white apron. I started walking towards the front door, slightly shaken, as the bell rang.

I opened the door cautiously and smiled awkwardly, “Good afternoon Annie, what a pleasant surprise, do come in please.” I tried to use a softer and quieter voice.

“Well, well,” Annie looked at me from top to bottom with her critical eyes. “I was again in the neighbourhood and I thought of calling in to see how you settle in your new

role. I certainly am impressed Nicky. On Friday you were buying the uniform and on Monday you dress the part and very convincingly too."

"Well, lots of things happened during the weekend, in fact I was about to call you, I will need your help. But can I offer you a cup of coffee first?"

"I'd love one; I follow you to the kitchen."

I picked my tabard from the hallway chair and I rushed to the kitchen. I tried consciously to walk in a more feminine manner, shorter steps, legs together, wiggling my hips. I was getting bolder by the minute!

I put the coffee machine on as Annie sat in a chair by the kitchen table. She looked at me with an amused look this time. "Somehow I knew when I first heard about you from Linda. I knew that you would make an excellent maid." Then she added, "What I didn't know though was that you would be able to assume a female role so quickly. I am certain that your wife pressed the right buttons here."

I started answering, "You are right Annie, in fact..."

She stopped me with her hand, "Should we establish a correct protocol before you go any further Nicky; you are the maid now and I always ask all my girls to call me Miss Annie. So you can't be an exception, I consider you as one of my girls now."

I blushed all over as I answered, "Of course Miss Annie, you are right; I am only the maid now." I turned off the coffee machine and continued, "And in fact Miss, my name is spelled differently now, I am Nikki with a double k, and i. My wife who is my employer now decided that this is more appropriate."

I served her the coffee making sure to use a small tray and then I stepped back standing by the sink. I decided not to sit; it was a gesture of respect from my part.

"You said you wanted to ask me something, go ahead then, I am afraid I have to rush to work after I finish my coffee."

"Well Miss, my employer asked me to get an appointment for a makeover and I remembered you mentioned the other day that you know a beautician who could do it for me."

She liked what she heard, "But of course Nikki with double k and I, I have a very good place, my good friend Jennifer could deal with you, she dealt before with cross dressers."

She got all excited herself as she was speaking, "How soon you want an appointment, she will be able to soften your features and she will do marvels with your hair, you have good and strong hair, quite unusual for a male of your own age, but then again, probably you have in your blood stream quite a strong presence of oestrogen, some men do you know."

I blushed all over again; this woman had a way of saying things. "I would like to be ready by Friday Miss, I cook and serve dinner on Friday for my employer and her three closest girl friends. I would like to look my best for the occasion."

"Ok then, I'll make an appointment for you on Wednesday, I'll let you know tomorrow, I have the house phone number, or I probably could send you an e-mail."

"Thank you Miss Annie, you help me tremendously, I wouldn't be able to achieve all that in such a short time without your assistance Miss." I stopped and then added, "And my employer said to me that I can follow a housekeeping seminar, whenever that happens."

"I knew you would eventually join one of my seminars," she said triumphantly, "In fact I have planned one two weeks from today. You will have to take five days off, Monday to Friday until 3.00 pm; you have to ask permission from your Mistress about that."

"Of course I have to," I answered "In fact I have to organise my housework differently during those days, I'll work more during the weekends before and after and I will be able to prepare dinner for my Mistress if I am back by three in the afternoon."

Then I remembered that I had to pose as a female for the seminar and I panicked.

I had to be reassured. "But Miss, do you think I'll be ready in two weeks time to pass successfully as a female among those girls of yours? I am worried."

She looked at me and said, "Don't be silly Nikki, you will be ready because you want to be ready, you want to be a female servant, somehow it is in your DNA. And Jennifer will be able to improve a lot your looks. You have to practice your voice; I'll send you by mail a tape that explains a lot. I kept a copy from my brother turned sister. Remember the case?"

I nodded hesitantly as she continued talking, "And I told you before and I repeat now, those Filipino girls are in their mid 20s, their English is below average and they just learn about this country. If they have among themselves a person of your age and race, they would think you were different anyway even if you were a genuine female. But they would be intrigued also."

She had a last sip of her coffee and looked at her watch, "I better go now, I have an appointment at the office."

She looked at me and then quite unexpectedly she came and gave me a warm hug.

"It is very brave what you are doing honey, I admire you a lot for that. Welcome to the world of female domestic workers, you have to learn a lot about this world. You only just started to go down the steps of the social ladder and I am curious how you are going to cope."

Before I had the chance to answer she was out of the door.

CHAPTER 16

Monday morning, two weeks later...

I was sitting in a back seat of a public transport bus on my way to attend Miss De Laurentis housekeeping seminar. I very much tried to keep to myself, avoiding any eye contact, holding firmly my hand bag on my skirted lap. I was modestly dressed in a blouse and skirt outfit, light green shiny cotton blouse, and dark green corduroy skirt. Black jacket, tights and shoes completed my neat appearance. Mrs. Manley reassured me that I would look like any other working woman on her way to work. She added that people are too preoccupied to look closely at other people so I shouldn't worry very much.

So many things have happened in the past two weeks, so many that my mind had a difficulty to absorb. As I was sitting in the bus I couldn't help but remembering the major steps of my transformation to what I look today.

The makeover more than ten days ago was quite an event. I spent several hours in the hands of Jennifer, a very capable and sweet beautician. First was my hair; she cut and styled it in a simple feminine bob. Jennifer reassured me that I had the right face for that. She also said that as someone doing housework and other menial tasks I needed an easy to maintain hairstyle. Then she worked on my face. Eyebrows were thoroughly plucked, ears were pierced and little gold studs were inserted. Then she informed me that she was going to use semi permanent eye make up and lipstick. I was panicked and confused when I heard that, I felt like I was going to be tattooed.

But I still remember her exact words, "You shouldn't worry Nikki, this is something that wears out gradually and in about two months you need a renewal. In the other hand think the convenience of it. You get up in the morning, rinse your face and you are ready. All you have to do is put your uniform on and start preparing breakfast for your Mistress. Think how much extra sleep you can get if you avoid the daily make up routine. As a maid you should think of those important matters."

She was right of course so I let her finish with my face. The result was quite stunning. My face looked quite feminine now. Then she brought up the issue of my beard. My beard was rather thin and mostly grey-white by now, but it was a nuisance. I had to think about it every morning and put some beard concealer before my light foundation. She suggested laser beard removal. She explained to me how simple it is those days, in my case about four visits to the specialist. I was intrigued but obviously I had to discuss it with my Mistress, because it was also a cost to be considered and I was a poor maid now. She laughed at that and said that at least I shouldn't worry about today's cost it was already taken care by my employer.

At a later stage I discussed the laser beard removal with Mrs. Manley. She strongly advised me to proceed as quickly as possible, expenses covered of course. I already booked an appointment for next week, after the completion of my housekeeping seminar.

The dinner party on Friday before last was another major step towards the enhancement of my new persona. All four ladies were very polite and full of compliments for my cooking and serving but they simply treated me as the maid. I was certain they had some discussions before how to act with me. Of course being different characters they acted differently as well. Melissa was the most formal of all, she really treated me like a servant, she was the bossiest of all and she enjoyed reminding me my new social position. Tania was Tania! Sweet and full of compliments for my work and appearance. She came to the kitchen when I was washing up and said emphatically, "Honey, you might be the maid now but we are still friends, so I am still Tania for you privately, keep the formalities only in front of the others. As for Eva, she was the most spiritual. Being a staunch follower of Hinduism she translated everything as 'karma'. She said to me, 'It was written in your karma Nikki dear, if you were born in India you would probably be one of the 'castrati' there, they call them 'hijras' in Hindi and they play quite a role in Indian culture.' I was quite intrigued by her remark about hijras, I never heard of them, I was going to Google them during my free time.

The other major issue the past two weeks was the Work Contract I had to sign as 'domestic worker' Nikki Carson with my employer Mrs. Pamela Manley. I read it carefully; it was very cleverly done by a smart lawyer. All the rules already mentioned in my Employer's e-mail were there plus the option that my employer could offer my services to other private individuals or companies without extra pay, provided that it would be within my working hours. The wages were better than expected but still very low; the difference was that I was going to be paid overtime for any working hours above the legally accepted 48 hours per week. I was also provided with a social security card, in which the name was Nikki Carson and the sex 'F'. I was a bit suspicious how legal that card was, but it gave me an extra feeling of security outside the house. I was carrying it now in my purse together with some cash. I had an identity now.

I heard the bus driver announcing the next stop; that was my stop. I looked at my wrist watch, it was 8.45, and I was going to be there on time for my 9.00 o'clock appointment.

CHAPTER 17

The girl in the reception area asked me to wait for a few minutes; Miss Annie was busy in her office with the new girls, she would see me shortly. I sat at the edge of a chair feeling on edge! The girls were already there.

The office door opened and four Asian girls came out heading for the side door and the uniform shop. Those were going to be my 'colleagues' for the next five days. They ignored my presence or probably they were too preoccupied themselves for any frivolities or smiles.

The secretary signed at me that I could go in now. I knocked at the door timidly and went in. Annie looked at me with a broad smile, "Good morning Nikki, you look great this morning, Jessica did a great job with your hair and face. I love your makeup it is subtle but also very effective."

"Good morning Miss Annie," I answered back as best as I could, trying to keep my voice down, following the instructions of the cassette she sent me, "I do hope I'll be able to follow that seminar, I am still quite nervous you know."

"I know you are; this is why I want to have a word with you privately. I just had a discussion with my new girls and I informed them that a local mature lady, that is you, is going to join them in their seminar. I told them also that you are a post op transsexual. That makes things much easier for you and you will be more comfortable with them."

I looked at her in disbelief, "But Miss Annie, I am not a transsexual, I am only a cross dresser, you make me feel very uncomfortable indeed."

She looked at me annoyed now, "Listen to me girl, we both know that you are not fully convincing as a female yet, in particular with your voice. It will be much easier to tell them that you have a past as a male and you just started adapting in your new role as a female. I will add a few more things during the seminar to explain your current situation, why for instance a person of your age and race has to become a maid. Wait and see, they will be quite taken by what I'll tell them and they will love you at the end."

I looked sceptically at her. She had a point though, I would be more myself like this, and I wouldn't have to pretend all the time that I am a genuine woman, my so called post op TS condition would be an excuse for lots of possible wrong movements on my part. I was wondering what she would tell them about me, I was intrigued now. "I can see your point Miss, very clever indeed, I will probably be a bit embarrassed in front of the girls, but not worried."

"I knew you would understand Nikki, now run along next door to pick your uniform from Estelle, you will be all five of you dressed identically and Estelle will give you a name tag as well. I'll meet you all in 15 minutes in our seminar room upstairs."

We were all sitting in a room resembling a classroom; all identically dressed in pink striped dresses and white round half aprons. We had to wear a small white cap as well. I was feeling sillier than usually, but then again we all looked similar, that was a relief for me, the group mentality feeling. We all had our name tags pinned on the top left corner of the dress. I smiled at the four Asian girls and approached them to introduce myself.

"Hi", I said, "I am Nikki, pleased to meet you all." I read the names and I addressed each one separately, "Hi Nora, Nilda, Mina, Arka."

They smiled awkwardly and said in unison, "Hi Nikki."

I looked at them again, the three of them, Nora, Nilda and Mina were definitely Filipinas, but the fourth was different, she looked Indian to me. I had to ask her, "Arka are you from India by any chance?"

She looked at me somehow boldly I thought and said, "Yes Nikki, I am from the north of India, from New Delhi, how did you now?" She said that with the delightful singing accent of Indians when they speak English.

"I met Indian people before and of course your lovely accent is a dead giveaway."

At this moment Miss Annie came in, "Please girls, take your seats, time to start."

We all sat in our assigned chairs; I noticed how the girls arranged carefully their skirts before they sat down and I tried to imitate them. I felt that my lessons in deportment already have started.

Miss Annie was impeccably dressed as usually, nothing extravagant, it was mid morning after all, but all her clothes were expensive and carefully picked.

"I want to welcome all five of you here today. Before we start our lessons I would like to say a few more words about your new colleague Nikki here." She stopped and looked at me reassuringly as I started to blush. I was all nervous again and I started playing with the edge of my apron.

"You already know that Nikki is post op ts, which means that she is a woman now and she tries to rebuild her life from scratch."

They all looked at me now and I felt even more uneasy.

Annie continued, "Nikki was very brave in taking such a radical decision doing sexual reassignment surgery or SRS as is called in brief. But her immediate family and work environment were totally against it. The result is that Nikki is now totally cut from her previous life and also for reasons far too complicated to explain here, she also lost all her assets,

that is money, property etc... She is a poor person now and somehow unemployable, because she can't go back to her old work, where she was a high ranking executive officer."

The impact of her last words impressed all my fellow maids; they were looking at me now with a mixture of sorrow and astonishment. It was like a fairy tale to them, it was like a Cinderella in reverse story. I was all blushing and uncomfortable but Annie continued telling 'my story' in a very cool manner.

"Well girls, Nikki was somehow lucky in her unluckiness; she found a good person, a nice rich lady who decided to employ her as a maid. So Nikki has a job now and she wants to do this job properly, this is why she is here with us today, she wants to become a good housemaid and be proud of her work. So please girls you have to accept Nikki as one of you and treat her like a fellow worker. She has to learn to behave correctly in her new position in life and I can assure you she is willing to try hard for that."

Annie stopped and looked at all of us. I could see her plot now, she wanted to convince the girls that for the reasons she mentioned before, though I was an older and educated person, I should be accepted in their circle as an equal. I think she succeeded to that because Arka that she was going to be the most articulate of the girls and the one who spoke better English raised her hand asking for permission to speak.

"Yes Arka, go ahead" Annie said encouragingly.

"I can understand Nikki's predicament Miss Annie, I know similar cases in my country, they are TS people, they are called 'hijras' and they often have a bad karma, usually being kicked out of their families; they become prostitutes or servants to survive. I think Nikki is like a hijra in this country!"

I nearly dropped from my chair from shock. Within ten days I could hear the same story again about the Indian hijras, first from Eva, now from Arka. I started to believe in karma myself.

Arka continued, "So I think we should all embrace Nikki and help her to become a good and efficient servant, this is her only chance in life now!"

The finality of her last sentence surprised even Annie. I was shocked myself. She said it as a final verdict. This was my karma and there was no way of escape. The Filipinas seemed to agree with Arka. They looked at me as if they were saying, 'finally you are not any different from us, in fact we are even better than you, we are young and one day we will find a nice boy to get married, but you, you have to be a maid for life!'

Annie looked at me with an expression of amusement and skepticism as if she believed Arka as well. She turned to all of us and said, "Well girls, everything is settled then, we can start our lessons now."

CHAPTER 18

"You know Nikki; you would look good in a saree!"

I turned quite startled. I was totally absorbed with my ironing task that I haven't noticed Arka's presence behind me. It was our last day and all of us were quite absorbed in

our ironing boards. But Arka was quite cheeky; she often came around to talk to me regardless the fact we had strict instructions to stick to our tasks until the official break.

I must admit that I was quite often sexually aroused by Arka. She was a very sensual girl and she obviously was fascinated by me 'her western hijra' as she was calling me.

She was always sitting next to me during our breaks or in the so called 'class room' and she was trying to engage me in conversation with various topics. She was a very articulate and clever girl and I was surprised that she came all the way from India to become a maid. And the few times I asked her about her past she was quite vague. Later I found out that it was a matter of cast. Arka was belonging to the wrong cast, she was an 'untouchable' and her future in India was quite bleak. She clearly said to me that she wasn't planning to be a maid for the rest of her life, she had an agenda and she was quite determined to follow it up.

I smiled awkwardly at her, "How on earth you got that idea now" I asked, "I never wore a saree before, it is such a delicate garment and ever so feminine. I would feel quite clumsy in it."

"You would be surprised Nikki dear," Arka answered back, "There are sarees for all ages and all body types. I can see you in a dark green silk saree with a light green blouse underneath. That will bring out your green eyes."

She was flirting with me and I was blushing all over like a school girl. All I managed to say was, "I am intrigued Arka by what you say, I'd love to try one, and sooner or later we will have the chance." I stopped and looked at my watch, "I better get on with my ironing, Miss Annie will be coming shortly to inspect our work."

"I hope it will be sooner rather than later Nikki; I am looking forward meeting with you during our days off."

At that moment Miss Annie came in and Arka run back to her ironing board.

Nilda, Mina and Nora, the three Filipinas were quite friendly with me but somehow more distant; they were not certain how to cope with a person like me. They wanted though to maintain contact after the end of this seminar and get together during our days off as well.

Finally I started establishing a new circle of friends more befitting to my new social status in life. And somehow the idea of going out during my day off with a bunch of girls was quite intriguing and stimulating.

Did I learn anything during those five days? What was the benefit of following this housekeeping seminar? That was a question that my employer could probably ask, but it is also a question I posed to myself.

In fact I did learn something quite important and this had nothing to do with housework practical issues. Yes, I learned quite a few new things about the day to day work of a housemaid, but the real knowledge was that I learned the 'correct attitude' as Miss Annie called it.

And the 'correct attitude' was the attitude of a professional domestic worker, of someone who had to do this job for a living. In today's more egalitarian world probably the Victorian approach to servants was not valid anymore but the affluent and in some cases

'nouveau riche' employers were expecting certain behavior standards especially from female servants. It became easier for me now to address people as 'Sir' or 'Madam' or 'Ma'am' or 'Miss' or if referring to them to say 'Mr. so and so' or 'Mrs. so and so'. When I started addressing my wife as Ma'am or Mrs. Manley I had to smile cheekily, somehow it wasn't natural for me and my wife was also a bit amused by it, it all appeared like a joke. Now, I could say it in a more natural way, I didn't smile anymore and I had to slightly curtsy as well; nothing theatrical or fancy, just a simple bob.

I learned to accept an order without arguing even if I had objections, I learned to wear my uniform graciously and be certain that my apron was properly tight and the bow in the back was symmetrical. I learned to remain quiet unless first spoken; finally I learned to be proud about my work and my best moment was when I was praised by my employer. The phrase, 'bravo, well done Nikki!' was a huge reward for me.

Miss Annie was about to give us a farewell speech the last day of the seminar. It was Friday afternoon and I was a bit sad that it was over. For five days I was mixing with people joking with them, learning useful things, learning to be a maid, learning to be a girl among girls.

We all changed back to our street clothes and we were even offered coffee and cakes as we were waiting for Miss Annie to come in. My four 'colleagues', as I was thinking of them now, were all in casual tops and trousers, I was the only one in a skirt. The three Filipinas were warmer towards me today, they all chatted happily in their broken English asking me all sorts of questions, how big is the house I work, what type of person is my employer, if I have to be in uniform at all times, if I serve at dinner parties etc...

Arka was there listening carefully as well, some of the things I was telling the Filipinas were news to her also. Everything I mentioned was true, I omitted only one thing, that my employer was and still legally is my wife.

We all stood as Miss Annie came in, wearing a very smart business suit; she was as usually very elegant and 'dressed to kill'. She started addressing us immediately. "Well girls, I hope you enjoyed our seminar and I trust you learned useful things and you are prepared now to face your future employers. You all start work next week, I'll introduce personally each one of you to your respective employer except for Nikki of course, who has an employer already."

She stopped and turned to me addressing me personally, "And Nikki I would like to know please your employer's opinion about our work in this seminar, any feedback by e-mail or telephone call would be appreciated. I always try to get the employer's view about the girls I train."

I stood up and after a slight bob, as I was trained to do when addressing any person above the age of 14, I said, "Of course Miss Annie I am going to inform my employer about your request, thank you Ma'am."

She motioned to me to sit down and addressing all of us again she said, "You see girls, Nikki acted correctly in this instance, like a proper servant, she stood up, bobbed graciously and answered in a polite manner to a question asked. Well done Nikki."

I blushed furiously as the other girls applauded warmly. I felt totally embarrassed but proud as well. I just received a merit.

“Now girls”, Miss Annie continued, “You can keep the uniform dress and apron you were wearing during your training here, it is an offer of my agency. You can keep the maid’s cap as well though I am aware that some employers find it old fashioned somehow. I trust all of you will keep in touch and become friends as well. You can get together during your day off and Nikki you can be the guide to the other girls. You are a native in this town and you can show them around.”

She stopped again, looked at all of us and then did an unexpected movement; she approached us and gave us all a hug wishing us ‘good luck’. Then she left as quickly as she came in.

We all felt awkward all of a sudden. We were free to go now. I knew that the four girls were living in a hostel down the road, but I had to take the bus back home. I had to catch up with my chores and start dinner soon; I had to have the house ready by seven pm, my Mistress’ usual arrival time.

I said goodbye to all the girls and I hugged and kissed them all. Arka hugged me in a stronger manner, she hold me longer than expected and she whispered in my ear, “I expect to see you soon Nikki, I have your phone number, I’ll call you next week.”

I turned and left with mixed feelings. I felt guilty because I was sexually attracted to Arka. That feeling was pleasant and disturbing at the same time. I wasn’t prepared to cheat on my wife and I wasn’t prepared to reveal to Arka that I was simply a cross dresser and not a transsexual ‘hijra’!..

CHAPTER 19

Thursday morning, six months later...

I heard the hand bell ringing from the dining room. My Mistress was calling me. I hastily wiped my hands in a tea towel, adjusted my apron and rushed to the front of the house.

She was reading her morning paper and finishing her second cup of coffee as I entered. I bobbed automatically and said in a soft voice, “Yes Mrs. Manley!”

She didn’t answer immediately, something in the newspaper held her attention for a couple of minutes. Finally she raised her eyes and looked at me. “Nikki, I have to go in a few minutes and I want to be certain that you understood all the instructions I gave you last night. Could you please summarize for me?”

Her tone of voice was polite but indifferent; she was simply addressing her maid.

I bobbed again and said, “Certainly Madam!” After all those months I still felt a bit uneasy standing in front of my employer, hands kept neatly in front of my apron as I started to speak. “I have to clean very thoroughly and prepare the house for Saturday’s dinner party. Then I have to run out for a major shopping, I have the list on the kitchen table. In the afternoon I have to start food preparations for the dinner party based on the menu list and I’ll print name tags for you and your seven guests Madam.”

I stopped to catch my breath, my employer wanted me to speak quickly and to the point, she didn't want to waste any valuable time on unnecessary blathering. I started again, "And tomorrow I'll..."

This time she interrupted me, "I don't care about tomorrow at the moment Nikki, we will review that in the morning. I want something light to eat tonight, probably smoked salmon and a nice green salad. And prepare your pedicure kit, after dinner I want the full treatment for my toenails."

She started to get up and I understood I was dismissed, I slightly bobbed again as I turned to go. She stopped me with her hand. "You did organize for this colleague of yours, I believe her name is Arka, to come and help you on Saturday? She will be quite exotic serving around the table. And you said to me that she has an identical black and white uniform to wear. I want this dinner to be quite formal. It means a lot to me, the top people from our Firm will be attending."

"Of course Madam, Arka is coming at three on Saturday afternoon, she has permission from her employer and she is bringing her black and white uniform. We both got them from Miss Annie's shop, they are identical."

"That's settled them, you can clear here now and I am off to work. Bye for now."

"Enjoy your day Madam." I said and bobbed again.

It became a habit by that stage; as soon as my Mistress was out of the house I would settle in the kitchen table with a fresh cup of coffee and my favorite magazine for about half an hour. That was my relaxing morning break before starting my chores.

But this morning my mind was elsewhere; the Saturday's dinner party became quite a concern for me. Seven guests plus Mrs. Manley that is four couples, invited to a very formal three course dinner. And I was expected to do all the cooking to the last detail including the dessert. I was quite confident by that stage for my cooking abilities, but the formal serving was a big worry for me. Then I had this brilliant idea to ask Arka if she was willing to help with the serving, provided of course that our respective employers would agree to that. Fortunately that was arranged very quickly and now Arka was going to be assisting me. What a relief.

Gosh, so many things have changed in my life the past six months. I barely could remember now that only six months ago I was a successful high ranking manager in a top firm. My early retirement and my persistence to become a housekeeper/maid changed everything dramatically for me and for my wife then, employer now.

The changes were in all levels; my looks to start with. I was quite relaxed with my appearance now. I was visiting Jennifer's beauty shop once a month to maintain or in some cases enhance my feminine looks. My beard has been removed by laser treatment months ago; my hair and semi permanent makeup were done at least once a month and my breast forms were now permanently glued to my chest. Finally I learned to speak with a soft husky voice, the voice of a woman who used to be a serious smoker in the past as some people commented. I even heard people saying that my voice was sexy!

I was permanently dressed as a female now. Even in my unisex track suit I looked very womanly. My greatest thrill was when I was going shopping wearing my maid's dress,

just the dress not the apron, and depending on the weather a light cardigan or a coat. I was clearly the domestic and I had no intention of hiding it.

I forgot to mention the most important thing. We were not in the same house anymore. My employer put the house in the market soon after I started living permanently as a female. We both agreed that our old neighborhood was too risky, people knew us there as a couple and I had to move cautiously in and out of the house. At the end I was certain that most of our neighbors 'knew'.

A new house was found in another part of town, definitely in a more up market area, my employer was after all a high ranking executive and she needed the 'status' of a 'correct' neighborhood. We both had to sign for the selling of the old and the purchase of the new property. It was a rather traumatic experience, because I appeared dressed as a female and signed with my old name for legal reasons. My wife explained to the solicitors that I was testing my 'other side'. They didn't seem to mind; after all they were getting quite lucrative fees for those transactions. In the other hand I was reassured that I was by 50% the owner of the new property as well. Mrs. Manley was unscrupulously fair; she said that she wouldn't jeopardize my future even if I was a humble domestic at this particular moment.

The new house had a small servant's quarter attached to the kitchen and scullery area. It consisted of a small sitting area, an even smaller bedroom and a WC-shower facility. I felt quite happy there, I had my privacy, spacious closets and most importantly I could stay out of sight if needed. I was going in and out from the back door, the 'traders' entrance' as it was called in Victorian times. The rest of the house was for me the space to clean and to look after, but this tiny apartment was my niche.

An electric bell board above the door with indicative lights was specially installed to summon the maid. There were four lights, for the central living area and dining room downstairs, the master bedroom and guest room upstairs. It was old fashioned but necessary. Once my apartment door was closed I couldn't hear a thing.

The intense ringing of the telephone startled me. I answered in my polite maid's voice, "good morning, Mrs. Manley's residence, how can I help you?"

"Good morning Nikki!" I heard Arka's singing voice. "Are you still in the middle of your coffee, you lazy maid?" My heart jumped from excitement. Arka was my closest friend at the moment. We enjoyed a lot each other's company and we often had long chats on the phone.

"I am about to finish it, as a matter of fact I'm running a bit late; I have to clean the whole house today and then go for a major shopping. You know how worried I am about Saturday's event."

"But I'll be there to help you; I'll be doing the serving and you can stay behind the scenes. I thought we discussed that already," she said in a slightly annoyed voice. "Don't be such a coward Nikki, you can do it," she concluded in a confident voice.

I knew she was right, but for the first time I would be exposed as a maid in front of my wife's, I mean Mrs. Manley's, colleagues. I met a few of them before in social occasions as my former self, but I was reassured by Pam that as I looked today nobody would be able to link me with her husband who was on a trip abroad for the past few months.

I heard Arka's voice again in the other side of the line, "How about meeting for coffee at four pm at the mall you would be shopping. I have to do some shopping myself."

I liked the idea, I liked meeting with Arka, she made me feel good, "That's a great idea Arka, I'll meet you at four in 'Rialto', you know the nice Italian Café; I have to run now. And I'll be out of uniform for a change; I want to feel a bit more elegant today, so wear something nice as well. Bye for now."

CHAPTER 20

I put the phone down but my mind stayed with Arka. We became quite close the past few months. At one point I told her partly the truth about myself, that I was simply a cross dresser and not a TS. She accepted it but she asked more questions, she pushed me for answers. Finally I admitted the whole truth; that my employer was really my wife and everything happened with my full consent and agreement.

She accepted my explanations very graciously with no further comment. We became closer friends and gradually an erotic feeling started to emerge. I could sense it in her as well.

But, I was tormented by my feelings towards my wife/employer. I was very loyal to her. I couldn't make any move unless I had some sort of consent.

And the consent came the moment I was less expecting it. Mrs. Manley in her usual to the point manner said to me one evening after dinner, a couple of weeks after we moved in to the new house, "Nikki after you finish in the kitchen make some coffee for both of us and join me in the living room I would like to have a chat with you."

I rushed to the kitchen to finish my chores slightly puzzled. It wasn't her style to invite me back to the living room ever since we moved to the new house. On the contrary she encouraged me to tidy up the kitchen and then retire in my tiny apartment. I must admit I felt a bit lonely there but I had to remind myself that the life of a live in domestic wasn't exactly an exciting one. And I chose to be a domestic so I shouldn't complain.

Soon in a highly unusual manner and feeling slightly uncomfortable I was sitting in the living room opposite Mrs. Manley sipping my coffee, still wearing my dove grey evening uniform dress. She asked me to remove my apron, simply saying that I was off duty at this particular moment. I was genuinely puzzled and slightly worried when she started talking to me.

She looked at me though in an amused manner without any trace of confrontation, "My God Nikki, you seem like a fish out of water, I can see now how much you adapted to your servant's role; you genuinely look worried as I am about to punish you for something. Don't worry I have not such an intention at the moment; I simply want to revalue our domestic situation and where we stand at this point six months later."

She noticed how my expression changed to pure wonder and all of a sudden she approached and hugged me! I had to stand up as she was hugging me not knowing how to react. At this moment I felt how much I lost my ability the past few months to interact sexually with my wife! I felt the sexual excitement of our encounter but I was not able to initiate anything.

She felt my embarrassment and went back to her seat. I sat down again at the edge of the chair as modestly as I could, keeping my knees together and resting my hands on my skirted lap. I realized that I was missing my apron. I got so used the past few months to wear one at all times inside the house.

"Now that I look at you more closely I realize how much you changed the past few months Nikki", Pam started talking again. "You do look less and less like a man in drag and more and more like a slightly masculine woman. That beautician Jennifer is quite good, she knows how to enhance your feminine aspects and disguise the unwanted masculine ones."

I blushed all over as she was talking to me, I knew she was up to something but I couldn't figure what.

She continued, "What I am about to say might be a bit hurtful to you but you know me, I like to be straightforward and speak my mind. I want to emphasize once more that whatever happened so far happened with you full consent; I keep mentioning that but I want both of us and all the others who know our present condition, to be aware that nothing of the sort would have happened if you were not fully cooperative and willing. In fact you were the one who initiated all this."

I realized I had to say something at this point. "I do agree with you Ma'am, I am the one who started everything and I must say Ma'am, six months later I never regretted it. In particular after I managed to explain successfully my new phase to our daughter. I feel much more relaxed now; I have nothing to hide anymore from the people that really and truly matter to me." It became so natural for me to address her as 'Ma'am' at all times now. She accepted it equally naturally.

She gave me a satisfied look, "I am glad to hear that Nikki; you reconfirm to me your commitment to your current condition in life. In fact you make it easier for me to say what I have in mind."

I was very curious now and slightly nervous. Pam had this unique ability to surprise me. She smiled warmly again, obviously she wanted to make me feel more relaxed, and started talking, "I'll start with the obvious Nikki, you changed the past six months, you changed a lot, not only visually but in character. I see now more and more a female servant and less and less my cross dressing husband. I often catch myself thinking of you as 'the help' or 'the maid', I even started thinking of you as a 'she'. The other day Tania noticed that. We had lunch at Mario's and we were talking about you and I was telling her 'she did this or that'. It was quite a revelation for me."

She stopped and looked gently at me. Her look was totally benign; she didn't want to frighten me; that was obvious.

I was peculiarly relaxed now, as if the pieces of the puzzle were about to be placed in their correct position. I also had the feeling that we were about to change chapter again in our relationship.

Pam continued, "I accept the new Nikki. It is very much you and I don't want to change it, but even if I tried you would have resisted me. So I accepted all those recent developments, even encouraged them at one point. But...."

She stopped and looked at me again reassuringly, "There is obviously a 'but' to what I've said so far. I am afraid I can't see you as my husband or even partner anymore. I feel more and more that our worlds are miles apart. We share the same house and we have common legal interests in property etc and I respect that, but you are not part of my professional or social life anymore; you moved yourself to another class you are a maidservant now."

I felt more and more nervous; what she is trying to tell me? Why she is so persistent in the 'class' thing? Is she getting ready to announce some sort of separation or even divorce? I valued my wife/employer very much; I couldn't face life without her. Panic started building up, I had to say something, "I am worried Pam, the way you are talking you make me think that a separation is imminent, I don't feel ready for..."

She stopped me with a big good hearted laugh, "Don't be silly Nikki, I never mentioned such a thing and please don't forget your place, you just called me Pam, you take liberties girl, this is an official warning."

"I am sorry Ma'am" I rushed my answer, "I didn't mean to be impertinent but.."

"Please let me finish Nikki and then you can express your opinion."

I remained silent as she continued talking, "I was just saying that we are socially apart now; you might be still the same intelligent person but to my eyes you are Nikki my maid. You have more friends now in your new world like Arka that Indian woman who calls you very frequently, those Filipinas you met in Miss Annie's seminars, you usually go out with them on your day off and probably other people I don't even know. On the other hand I am more involved with my colleagues at work now, they invite me to parties and excursions, I have been already in



a private boat cruise with them, and I meet new people through them. They all face me now like a single lady. They know my marital status, but to them my husband is abroad for several months now and his return day is not known."

She stopped and looked at me unthreateningly, "Do you see where I am getting?"

I looked at her in an uncertain way and managed to say, "Yes and no Ma'am, I understand you want to pass a message but I am not sure what this message is."

"It is a very simple message really; all I try to say is that we both should feel free to make relations outside our commitment to each other. Probably nothing serious but we can be more open flirting with other people and stop giving the impression that we 'are taken'. Do you know what I mean?"

I blushed all over as I understood what she was trying to tell me. I was confused, I wasn't certain I wanted that but I had a strong feeling that her decision was made. All I had to do is to go along with it. I managed to say in a quiet but steady voice, "Yes, Madam, I understand now, we can develop a certain freedom of movements without the guilt complex. I'll try to accept that if you really see it that way."

She looked at me a bit more aggressively now, "You just called me Madam, Nikki, I like that, you can continue addressing me that way from now on; please don't call me 'Ma'am' anymore, it sounds a bit vulgar to me now."

She stopped, waiting for my acknowledgment and when I said a simple, 'Of course Madam, it sounds better to me as well,' she continued, "I am glad to hear that Nikki; I can add that much for you to know though, I'll never embarrass you in front of other people and be certain you don't embarrass me, do you understand girl."

For some reason her attitude was changing as she was speaking, a bit more aggressively now.

"Can I ask you Madam what exactly you mean by embarrassment in front of others?" I asked using my neutral polite voice.

"What I mean Nikki is that I'll never bring a boy friend in this house, I'll never make you uncomfortable that way, I still respect our past together to do that, so I expect a similar attitude from you. We both can have our freer moments outside this house. Of course you can bring your friends in your servants' quarters and I can bring guests in the house but not intimate situations. Do you agree with that?"

I felt an overwhelming sense of relief as she finished her last sentence. All I managed to say was, "Of course I agree Madam, thank you for being so understanding."

She looked at me in a serious way, "It is not a matter of understanding Nikki, it is a matter of survival for us both. I think we have to protect our private lives respectively without hurting each other."

I thought the conversation was about to finish but then she added something that got me off guard completely, "And Nikki darling, of course you will continue to be my sex toy, I can still use you that way; for instance I feel a strong erotic feeling when you do my toenails sitting in your little stool, then I want to eat you alive."

She saw my surprised and excited look and smiled mischievously at me, "I thought you would like that idea Nikki; now you can go back to your quarters, I think our chat is over, goodnight darling, come and give a kiss to your Mistress."

We both stood up at the same time. She came and kissed me passionately in the mouth, playing with my tongue, and then she pushed me gently away with a 'Good night maid!'

CHAPTER 21

The ringing of the phone brought me back to reality. It was Arka in the other line.

"You said to me before to wear something nice to meet you at the Mall. I know what I want you to wear darling; I want you to wear your green saree and come out as my beautiful Indian hijra!"

Arka's voice startled me, I didn't expect her call. I was even more surprised with her request. I never appeared in public dressed as an Indian transgender woman, a hijra as they were called. I had a beautiful silk green saree that Arka gave me as a present when we became closer friends together with a black hair wig and she taught me how to wear it and use the right make up etc but that always in private.

I started protesting but she cut me short, "Listen Nikki, this is not a request, it is an order, and I want you to come out dressed in your saree, proper make up and your black wig with the braid, the one I gave you. You are going to be my Indian companion this afternoon. Of course I'll be wearing normal street clothes so I'll be there to protect you in case someone tries to harass you. You do that for me otherwise I'll think again if I am going to help you on Saturday serving in the dinner party."

She was blackmailing me in her own way! But her authoritarian attitude brought out my submissive streak so I meekly answered to her, "All right Arka don't get angry with me; I simply don't want to stand out in public and in that outfit everybody will be looking at me."

"Don't worry about that Nikki, I'll be there for you; and I'll be calling you with your Indian name, do you still remember it?"

"Of course I remember it Arka, it is 'Harita' which means green and matches my saree and my eyes." I checked the kitchen clock, it was nearly ten o'clock and I had the house to clean; I had to rush now, I would need more time to prepare myself for the afternoon outing. Then I thought of my supermarket shopping, I couldn't do that dressed in a saree!

I continued talking to Arka, "But Arka we both forgot my major supermarket shopping, I can't go around dressed in a saree in the bright lighted supermarket, every body will be laughing at me."

"You shouldn't worry about that, in fact I can join you for the shopping so we can meet in the supermarket at 3.00 o'clock, do all the shopping, put everything in the car and then we can enjoy ourselves for an hour or so. Now run along girl you have your housework to perform. See you later Harita!" And she hung up on me before I had the chance to answer.

I put the receiver down having my usual mixed feelings of excitement and anxiety. I realized that since I started changing my status and looks six months ago this has been the

prevailing feeling, this mixture of sentiments. Probably it was good for me. It certainly accelerated my metabolism because I managed to lose a lot of weight in the past few months. I was certainly more careful with my food but it wasn't the only reason. My metabolism changed as well.

I rushed to the utility room where I kept all my cleaning material, I put my full working apron on and I started carrying the vacuum cleaner upstairs, I had work to do and a maid's work is never done!...

CHAPTER 22

"Harita, try to speak with the special singing Indian accent. You are good at that I heard you before."

Arka was behind me pushing the shopping trolley as I was picking various items from the supermarket shelves, shopping list in hand.

"Of course Arka, I know how to talk like an Indian lady," I answered back with a pronounced singing accent. I started enjoying my outing in a saree, realizing that I had a dormant talent in mimicking voices. I was aware of people looking at me but I never felt any hostility, just normal curiosity for someone more exotic in a typically western shopping mall.

It took us less than an hour to finish the basic shopping and soon we were sitting at 'Rialto Café' enjoying a very creamy cappuccino accompanied by dark chocolate brownies. What a treat!

Arka was very excited with my Indian appearance, "I love the way you look and talk Harita, you are a natural; you probably were an Indian female in your previous life. You know how much us Indians believe in metempsychosis."

She had a sip of her coffee and continued, "I think I'll start teaching you some basics of Indian culture and Hindu religion; I'll also teach you some Hindi words, it is my native language spoken in New Delhi where I come from."

I looked at her skeptically, she was taking my 'Indian metamorphosis' quite seriously, and I started wondering why. On the other hand I started liking the whole thing; it was like a game to me, a change within a change.

Another sip and Arka continued, "And of course as a servant you have to belong to the lower caste of 'untouchables' or 'harijans' as they are called today. I told you already, I am part of that caste and this is the reason I left India."

É was truly intrigued now, Arka was trying to change me not only socially but culturally as well, a step further from my existing status. For some reason I felt positive about it but I kept my cautious attitude.

Arka continued in a more excited manner, "I love the idea of training you in order to become a true Indian hirja. Think of it, Harita, my harijan hijra! What an intriguing thought, you can become my triple H person."

I looked at her quite puzzled; I could see her mind was racing. I answered cautiously, "Don't you think that this is a rather ambitious project Arka? It is not that easy for me to

become a harijan hijra as you call me, we live in a Western country and it is impossible to act like an Indian female on a daily basis, I am a maid, I have to spend most of my day in a uniform not in a saree!"

She looked at me annoyed but full of determination, "Of course you can Harita, it is going to be a slow process but it can happen, I'll bring you on Saturday some books on Hindu religion and customs, some Indian girly magazines, they are all in English of course, after all English is practically an official language in India of the many dialects."

She stopped but didn't give me a chance to answer, she continued in an excited voice, "And of course some Bollywood films, they all have English subtitles. I even have a documentary on Indian hijras; I am certain you will enjoy all that very much. Plenty of entertainment for you during your lonely hours in your servant's quarters."

Finally she stopped. Her beautiful black eyes looked at me in a very intense manner. And then she did something that was totally unexpected and definitely took me by surprise. She asked me to hold both my arms in an upright position resting them on the table; she removed then two bangles from her arms and pushed them through my wrists upwards; they were two beautiful ornamental bracelets that were now positioned halfway up both my forearms. I instinctively moved my arms and the bangles made a small jingling sound, loud enough for the people sitting to the next table to turn and look.

She paid no attention to their looks and said to me, "Harita, this is the ultimate act of bonding between Indian females. The moment I give two of my bangles to you and you accept them, you instantly become my sister and confidante. Do you accept my offer?"

I was very touched. My eyes were nearly moist. I managed to say in a quiet but emotional voice, "I am honored Arka; of course I accept and I want to bond with you. Probably you know more about me now than my Mistress."

"Probably I will be your Mistress one day, you never know, life is a mystery," she said in a casual manner and smiled mischievously at me.

My familiar submissive streak stirred vigorously inside me. I found that idea singularly exciting. But I kept that thought to myself. I smiled back and simply said looking at my watch, "What a lovely afternoon Arka, I feel closer to you now and I am ever so grateful to you for this lovely gift but I have to rush back home, I have to change back to my uniform and prepare a light dinner for my Mistress, then I have to give her a pedicure."

She smiled back and said half jokingly, "I am jealous, I want a pedicure also, and I'd loved to be spoiled by you."

Then she added in a more serious tone, "Unlike you Harita, I don't particularly like being a maid and I already told you that I don't intend to be one for long. I want to move on to another phase in my life. I simply wait for the right chance and I am certain that this chance will appear sooner or later, and then you can probably be my maid and look after me."

Another jolting shock! Though I knew it was only a dream at this stage, Arka was implying that she wanted to be my new employer. A bizarre, but ever so fascinating prospect.

"That would be an interesting development", I managed to say as flatly as possible.

But Arka knew that she touched a secret chord because she smiled and said quite casually this time, "Anyway, this is not a current issue, it is something you can dream about dear Harita. Your current issue is to drive back to your Mistress' house and start your chores; she will scold you if you are not ready for her when she comes back."

CHAPTER 23

I was in a rather dreamy mood when I entered the basement house garage in my small WV polo, a mood that changed abruptly to panic when I saw Mrs. Manley's Volvo parked already in its position.

Pam was already back? I looked at my watch, it was just before five o'clock and she never is back before 7.00pm. What happened? And most importantly what am I going to tell her, dressed as I was?

I started unloading the car from my shopping, which I had to carry to the kitchen via the elevator. Then I had this idea to try and sneak in my apartment and quickly change back to my uniform, then carry the shopping up. Probably Pam is in her bedroom showering or resting, probably I could go unnoticed.

I went up the one flight of stairs as quietly as possible, high heel shoes in hand opened the door to the hallway and instantly I heard the TV sound from the living room. Pam was there. I started walking slowly towards the kitchen and the servants' quarters; I was nearly there when I heard my Mistress's booming voice from behind, "Nikki, is that you? What you are up to?"

I was caught! I turned slowly to face Pam. She was standing by the entrance of the living room a glass of wine in hand, looking at me in astonishment.

"What on earth are you wearing Nikki? Are you coming back from a dressing up party or something? And what are those bracelets on both your arms? Probably you are turning native and I know nothing about it!"

I decided to tell her the truth; after all I haven't done anything wrong. I explained in detail how Arka convinced me to wear my saree, then how she is interested in initiating me in Indian culture and way of life, omitting of course Arka's little remark about becoming her maid. Then I mentioned that my given Indian name was Harita which meant green etc...

We were still standing in the hallway as I was explaining everything. She had a sip of her wine looking pensive and then said to me, "Harita; I quite like that name, it's close to Harriet after all. In fact I might start calling you that myself, I have been thinking for some time now, Nikki is very close to your old male name, practically the same, except for the spelling. This one is beautiful and feminine and exotic."

She had another sip of her wine and continued, "And of course you should be Harita my Indian maid for my guests on Saturday's dinner party, assisted by a relative of yours called Arka. Then your former identity would be totally hidden, even for the people that met you as Nick in the past. That probably will make you feel more comfortable for the Saturday event. Do you like that idea Harita?"

I was the astonished one this time. She was changing again my identity; she obviously found appealing the Indian element in me, more so because domestic staff of exotic origin is somehow more 'socially correct' for the upper classes where my employer wanted more and more to belong.

"I quite like the name Harita Madam and yes I will certainly feel more comfortable on Saturday with all those guests, though I was planning to stay mostly behind the scenes. Arka is the young and beautiful one who can do the serving."

"And who do you think you are maid to tell me who is going to do the serving and who is staying behind the scenes?" Pam answered rather angrily. Her employer's genes reacted strongly. "I am the one to decide who is doing the serving and who is staying behind. And you must be presentable and prepared to appear in public at all times; you might be both needed at one point, one serving food, the other filling up water and wine glasses for instance."

"I am sorry Madam, I didn't mean to be impertinent" I answered rather humbly hoping to close the conversation at this point. I still had lots to do.

But Pam wanted to add something more, "And you have to darken your complexion more, get some darker foundation, I want your skin a couple of shades darker than now. Probably you can talk to the beautician, what's her name... ah yes, Jennifer tomorrow, she might have some suggestions.

Now you can go and change back to your uniform, you have my dinner to prepare yet and I need a pedicure later."

I was dismissed; I rushed back to my maid's quarters, starting undoing my saree on the way.

CHAPTER 24

I was feeling deliciously humble, sitting in my special low stool massaging carefully Mrs. Manley's feet. I was wearing a full plastic apron to protect my uniform dress. It was a time consuming job, I needed over an hour to complete everything including pedicure and nail polish

I was quite efficient by that stage, after months of practice plus intense reading of books given to me by my employer.

It definitely was a treatment for Pam; she was immensely enjoying the whole procedure. An erotic feeling was prevailing during the whole session and several times in the past we ended up in some sort of sexual encounter.

Tonight though her mind was elsewhere, she was thinking and I learned as a maid not to start a conversation; my Mistress had to initiate it.

Finally she started speaking to me as I was about to finish the massage with special creams in order to start the final stage.

"You know Nikki, sorry I mean Harita, I must get used to your new name, I like it more and more." She stopped momentarily as I carefully put one foot down and picked the other one and then continued, "You know Harita, I have been thinking a lot since I saw

you dressed in a saree this afternoon. Probably you are ready to move on in another stage of your transformation. Probably you can change more drastically not only in looks but in your cultural level as well."

She had a dreamy look in her face as she pushed her free foot under my skirt and apron and started caressing the inner part of my thigh. That excited me a lot and she knew it. I dutifully continued to massage her other foot with my creamy hand

"Now then, what I was telling you; ah yes, about a possible cultural change within your capacity as a domestic of course. I could reemploy you as a migrant housekeeping worker imported from India. I could probably do it via Miss Annie's domestic agency."

She stopped talking but she continued caressing my private parts now. I was terribly excited but I had to control myself. Mrs. Manley hated messy knickers.

"What is your friend Arka's surname?" She asked casually.

"Her full name is Arka Narita Latim. Her middle name is her mother's name. Girls in India carry their mother's name as a middle one Madam," I answered with a voice barely controlled. Her foot was caressing me harder now.

"Then we can rename you Harita Latim and you will be related to Arka, you can be her aunt, her mothers' sister. Arka will find you a middle name. And Miss Annie can draw a new working contract similar to the ones she uses for the girls she imports. Would you like that idea maid?"

I was reaching the no return point as she stopped talking and accelerated her caressing. I was trying to concentrate in order to answer her question when she simply said to me, "You can come now maid, I know you can't hold any longer."

"Thank you Madam," I barely managed to whisper as I was having already a huge convulsion followed by little cries of joy.

CHAPTER 25

"Inspection time girls, hurry up!" Mrs. Manley was calling us to the living room.

We rushed with Arka to the living room for inspection, both dressed in our black and white uniforms, nice broderie anglaise half aprons and a small dainty cap. Our medium heel patent black shoes made us walk in shorter steps.

Mrs. Manley was still in her 'homey clothes', she had to go upstairs and get ready herself very shortly. The guests were due to arrive any time after 7.00pm.

We stood in front of her, hands neatly resting in front of our aprons. Arka had a slightly haughty look, after all Mrs. Manley wasn't her employer, but my face was beaming with a smile.

"Now girls," Mrs. Manley started, "your uniforms are very good. Do you carry your white cotton gloves?"

"Yes Madam," we answered in unison in our singing Indian accent, "We carry them in our dress pocket."

"And when you are going to use them Harita?"

"During serving time Madam," I answered politely slightly curtsying.

"Correct" she said in a firm manner. She looked at me more critically now, "I must admit Jennifer is an excellent beautician, she did a great job with you yesterday Harita, your complexion is considerably darker and your hair has the right color as well. No one will be able to connect you with Nikki in male or female mode; you certainly look now like a domestic worker imported from India. Do you agree Arka?"

Arka turned to look at me again and said, "Yes Mrs. Manley, Jennifer is very good, Harita looks very convincing, all she needs now is practice her new persona and I will be able to help her in that issue; she has to change inside also, starting thinking like a true harijan, an Indian untouchable, I think I can guide her in that direction Madam."

"So I understand Arka; you belong to that caste yourself if I am not mistaken. I have a good friend Eva, probably Harita told you about her, who is an expert in Indian culture, and she explained everything to me the other day; I am quite aware of the untouchables and the fact that they are all manual labourers and servants. So it is only natural that Harita has to belong to that caste being a lowly servant herself."

I realized all of a sudden that Arka and my employer were talking about me as if I wasn't present; I also realized that Arka, though dressed as a maid, was acting like a person of a certain authority discussing freely with my employer.

"Thank you Arka for helping my maid becoming a better servant by introducing to her elements of your culture. I think she will be better off as Harita than Nikki."

She stopped and turned to me, "You are a lucky person Harita having Arka as your instructor, she is certainly able to guide you to new paths of true servility, something that you obviously enjoy immensely."

She said this last sentence with an amount of contempt in her voice. I felt quite uneasy about that. Had Pam gradually started to look down on me? And of course I couldn't blame her for that, I was the one who accepted, if not pushed that 'going down the social ladder' attitude.

But immediately resuming her usually friendly tone she said, "Right girls, enough chatting, you still have work to do and I have to go upstairs and make myself pretty for my guests; make sure that the table is properly set and the name tags are in their proper position. "

'Yes Madam' we both said slightly curtsying and turned to go. Her voice stopped us, "And I remind you that I'll tell everybody that you are related and I got you through Miss Annie's agency. Harita is my regular maid and Arka is only helping tonight."

She started going but stopped again to add something, "as for your duties tonight, Arka you open the door and let the guests in and offer them drinks; Harita you will keep yourself busy in the kitchen with the food preparations and appear later when they will sit down to dine and the formal serving starts."

She turned and started going upstairs with no further comment. I felt quite relieved when I heard that Arka was going to do all the initial welcoming of guests. I was happy to stay behind the scenes in the beginning.

CHAPTER 26

"Harita could you please bring some more wine, I can see some half empty glasses, you seem to forget your duties girl." Mrs. Manley had a pleasant look, but her voice was quite firm.

"Yes Madam, I am sorry Madam," I said in a my soft polite singing voice, as I picked two wine bottles, neatly covered by a white napkin and I started moving quietly around the table, filling glasses.

The guests were all quite jolly eating their dessert by now, just served masterfully by Arka and chatting happily to each other. The wine was flowing freely; I could see several empty bottles standing on the serving table by the dining room wall.

My Mistress looked quite radiant tonight, dressed very elegantly and full of positive energy. She was chatting mostly with a guy I never met before, his name was Peter Burns, I could see the name tag in front of him. Was he her current flirt?

I felt quite uncomfortable about it, first time exposed as a maid among my employer's friends and work colleagues, first time witnessing my employer flirting with a handsome man. I have met in the past three of the people sitting around the table tonight, two men and a young lady, all from Mrs. Manley's company. I had met the two men socially in the past but no one was a close friend. But I knew better Miss Debbie Simmons. She was the Personnel Manager responsible for all the lower ranking staff, like office clerks, secretaries and cleaning staff. She was someone with whom I had long chats in the past trying to push better working conditions for them to the point of annoying her. She said to me once that I was talking like their union representative. She was the only one who gave me a more intense look when I appeared and started serving the wine. My sixth sense, over developed the past few months, was telling me that she knew who I was; she was a nice person though, not someone who would expose me publicly, or so I hoped!

As I was moving slowly around the table, ignored by everyone of course, a servant is usually invincible; I could pick parts of the conversation, something that clearly fascinated me.

For instance I learned that my Mistress was invited to another boat weekend by Peter Burns, clearly a very well off guy. Miss Debbie was talking with another lady guest about us the maids, praising our neat looks and diligence. I heard her saying though something that alarmed me, 'I know somehow that older maid, Harita is her name isn't it? I've seen her face before, I am not certain where, but it will come to me, I never forget faces'.

Then Mrs. Manley addressed her guests, "If we are all finish with our dessert we could probably move to the living room and enjoy our coffee there and probably some liqueur."

They all started getting up and my employer approached Arka and me for further instructions, "Well done girls, food was excellent and serving quite smooth. All my guests are impressed."

We answered in unison slightly curtsying, "Thank you Madam, we did our best Madam!"

She gave us an amused look, obviously our response was very formal in an old fashioned way; I felt the side looks from some of the guests, they were amused as well.

But she instantly resumed her business like manner and added, "Now then, Harita you can clean the table and start fixing the kitchen and doing the washing up, I am certain it looks like a bombed site by now. And you Arka you can make some coffee and serve us in the living room, then you can ask my guests if they want some liqueur like Grand Marnier or Amaretto, there is quite a collection in the liquor cabinet, Harita knows where it is."

She abandoned us abruptly to join her guests. I started clearing the table putting everything to a big serving tray and Arka rushed to the kitchen to start coffee. I suddenly realized that for several hours now we both were so busy that we barely had the chance to talk to each other.

CHAPTER 27

"You certainly love doing the dishes Harita, not many people sing happily when they perform such an arduous job!"

The deep contralto voice behind me startled me as I was doing the dishes humming one of my favorite songs.

I turned panicking and splashing water all over my black and white spotty vinyl apron which was protecting my uniform, trying to wipe my rubber gloved hands in it at the same time.

Miss Debbie Simmons was standing in front of me, a slight smile in her lips, her penetrating look forcing me to lower my eyes.

"I think we can stop playing with each other, I know exactly who you are, and regardless your very clever disguise and dark make up you can't fool me. You are Nick, aren't you? Looking of course very domesticated and efficient. What on earth happened to you? I know through Pam you had an early retirement and have been traveling abroad, but I find you in this house employed as a domestic under extremely realistic conditions. I must admit it is very brave of you to do it, though I can't imagine why you do it."

"So my dear Debbie, you found out my maid's secret!"

We both turned towards the kitchen entrance where Pam was standing, a broad smile in her face.

"There you are Pam." Miss Debbie answered quite undisturbed, "Of course I realized fairly quickly who your charming Indian maid Harita is, you know my affinity with faces, I never forget one even as cleverly disguised as your Nick's here."

"I might as well tell you in a few words what really happened here." Pam answered, "Nick decided fully on his own will to become..."

In the next few minutes Pam explained everything as I was standing awkwardly in front of them feeling silly in my vinyl apron and rubber gloves.

In the meantime Arka was coming in and out looking questioning at me. I simply moved my head telling her everything was all right.

"Fascinating, simply fascinating," Miss Debbie said when Pam finished explaining my current condition and added mischievously looking at me, "In fact Pam I have an idea, if

of course you agree with it and Harita is willing to expand her working experiences in her new domestic role."

She stopped and looked at both of us waiting for Pam's reaction. Pam simply said, "Please go ahead Debbie I am all ears and so is Harita."

"It is very simple really," Debbie said and continued, "I have a vacancy for a part time domestic cleaner in our company three afternoons per week between 3.00 and 8.00pm; I think it will be very good for Harita. She can come back to the corporate world in another capacity."

She stopped briefly and then addressed me, "Remember Harita how you used to take sides defending the domestic staff in our long conversations? Now you can find out for yourself how it feels to belong to that group of employees."

I felt the familiar stomach tickling again, as my submissive chords were dancing inside me. But before I had the chance to answer, Pam interfered very enthusiastically.

"What an excellent idea Debbie, Harita back in the corporate world, but from the servants' entrance this time!"

She turned and looked at me then back at Debbie as she continued talking, "But I have to do some paper work for Harita before you employ her; you must have noticed she is going through her Indian phase with the assistance of the junior maid Arka; she is willing to explore further that side of her personality and I am going to help her by making things as real as possible. I am in contact with a domestic agency which imports maids from SE Asia, Harita can become a real migrant worker, just give us some time."

She heard loud laughing voices from the living room and turning to Debbie again said, "Oh my God, I abandoned the guests, I better go back."

Debbie smiled mischievously at me and turning to Pam said, "I am coming with you Pam, we better leave Harita to her dishes, she has a lot of work in the kitchen."

She turned to me and said as she was going, "Good bye Harita, I guess next time I'll see you will be in our company when you come to start work. I'll be very happy to take you down to the cleaners' quarters where you will have to be fitted to the company's female cleaners' uniform. I bet you remember it quite well; that will be quite a thrill for you, don't you think?"

I was about to answer to her but they both turned and left quite abruptly leaving me standing in the middle of the room quite dumbfounded. I felt that I was in the middle of a spider's web unable to escape.

I stayed motionless for a while thinking again. The spider's web was thickening around me but I couldn't stop it because I simply didn't want to stop it. An inner force stronger than my common sense was blocking any sensible reaction from my part. I looked at my reflection in the kitchen mirror, a scullery maid or rather a skivvy was looking back at me. Huge vinyl apron, rubber gloves and a dark face adorned by jet black hair and a maid's dainty cap, the picture of domesticity.

CHAPTER 28

"Are you day dreaming Harita? Move on girl you have to finish doing the dishes, I'll help you with the drying up."

Arka's voice brought me back to reality; she was nearly ordering me, she was getting bossier by the minute. I nearly answered with a 'yes Miss' but I managed to say simply, "you are right Arka I have to get on with the washing up."

She started talking to me as I was plunging my gloved hands in soapy water, "I heard that Miss Debbie offered you a job as a cleaner in your Mistress' company; that must be quite exciting for you, isn't it?"

"I don't know Arka, I am a bit scared, I feel that everything is changing around me in an immense speed; I feel that I am losing control of my life, I am certain...."

She interrupted me the way Pam was doing it, "But you like losing control girl, you like letting other people deciding for you, you chose to be in the position you are today." She was using Pam's arguments; I started wondering if she had a private chat with her. She picked a washed pot in order to dry it and continued, "In fact I will propose something to your employer but I want your opinion before I mention it to Mrs. Manley."

I turned and looked at her intrigued, "What is it in your mind Arka, do you have another cleaning position to propose to my employer? I must admit I am getting more and more popular as a cleaner." I said this last sentence in a sarcastic tone.

Arka picked the sarcasm in my voice and said, "You don't have to be sarcastic with me Harita, you shouldn't forget our bonding, we are spiritual sisters now and I want to guide you further to the Indian way of life and from what I heard before, your Mistress seems to agree with me, since she wants to change your identity to an Indian migrant one."

She was quite informed, "Have you been talking to Pam Arka?" I asked in an annoyed way."

"I thought it is Mrs. Manley for you maid!" Arka answered back in a firm manner and continued, "Yes, she asked me if I could help educating you as an Indian Harijan and I said yes." She stopped to pick another pot to dry and continued.

"Now listen carefully Harita, I already suggested to your Mistress a trip to India for both of us for a period of two months. You will leave this country as Nick and you will come back as Harita Nalini Latim an Indian subject officially invited by Miss Annie's domestic agency to be employed as a domestic worker in this country. All the paper work at this end will be totally legitimate. At the other end I'll take care of everything, I have connections to provide you with a passport and other documents. All we need is some money and Mrs. Manley is going to be very generous in financing the whole trip."

Wow! This was news to me, very serious news. That's it then; this is the final step the one that if I agree to take will probably change my life for ever. Pam and Arka were plotting behind my back. I stopped the washing up and turned to face Arka. I was a bit angry now; I wasn't certain how to approach the whole issue.

I responded rather angrily, "This is a huge step or probably I should call it a jump to the unknown Arka, I don't know if I can face such a huge cultural and social change."

She nodded her agreement, "Of course it is a huge cultural and social change; I was under the impression though that you wanted to face such a challenge, to see life with the eyes of your new female persona, under seriously realistic conditions."

The voice of Mrs. Manley startled both of us, "What you are up to you girls, I thought you had work to do, instead you are chatting in a very animated manner."

Arka smiled apologetically, "I am sorry Mrs. Manley I was just telling Harita the possibility of going to India together and she..."

She interrupted her, "Not now Arka, the guests are about to go, please come and help them with their coats and bags, we will talk about that later after they have all gone."

She turned to me, "I want this kitchen in a spick and span form before you can join us later for a chat Harita, is that clear?"

I lost all my bravado with her appearance. "Yes Madam," I answered meekly feeling once more the spider's web surrounding me.

CHAPTER 29

I joined Mrs. Manley and Arka in the living room carrying a tray with hot herbal tea for the three of us. After such a long and arduous day we all needed a hot soothing drink.

Arka was already dressed in her elegant street clothes and my Mistress went upstairs and changed to her homey clothes. I was still dressed in my formal maid's uniform feeling again the last in the pecking order.

Pam was in good spirits and slightly tipsy when she started talking. "I must thank you both for your excellent performance tonight and of course I have to congratulate you Harita for the excellent cooking." She looked at me and added, "You can remove your apron now Harita, you are out of duty at the moment."

I untied my apron and kept it in my lap as Pam continued talking, "I know we are all exhausted, but I think we should talk about what is going to happen next now that you are both present."

I shifted uncomfortably in my chair; I was once more the center of attention.

Pam had a generous sip of her tea and looked at me again. Her gaze was a mixture of skepticism and disdain; I felt worried with that gaze.

"You know Nikki or Harita or whatever your name is I still have a big question, I still am not certain if you are living your absolute fantasy or you are searching for a new identity. Can you enlighten me please?"

Now that question made me truly uncomfortable; I was cornered, I couldn't answer that question because I wasn't certain myself. Living a fantasy or searching for an identity?

Arka very cleverly took over and asked, "May I say something Mrs. Manley?"

"Of course you may Arka, after all you are a third party in this discussion and you probably are able to see things with a clearer eye."

"I know Harita for about six months now and I am truly convinced that she feels very happy and fulfilled in her role as a female servant. It is not a fantasy any more it is reality to its fullness. I think that by that stage Harita is not a cross dresser playing a role, it is more than that; it is a new life attitude. She is really and truly happier in that world than in her previous world of high executives. She can be also very natural dressed in her Indian clothes." She stopped for a sip of her tea looking at both of us.

I was still very uncomfortable playing with my loose apron but grateful to Arka who was trying to explain my feelings to my obviously very skeptical Mistress.

"Go on Arka," Pam said, "You are a clever and perceptive girl; you seem to understand Harita quite well."

Arka encouraged by Pam continued more eagerly now, "This is why I suggested that Indian trip for Harita Mrs. Manley; it will be a unique chance for a new identity, so different and far apart from her previous one, a stay of two months in New Delhi among my friends and relatives will be very beneficial, Harita will learn true humility, she will feel it to her bones what it means to be a member of a lower caste, it will be like an incarnation to another life for her."

Pam looked impressed, "You make it sound exotically appealing as you describe this trip Arka. But I really and truly need Harita's input in this; after all it is her life we are talking about." She turned to me waiting for an answer.

I had to say something now, in fact I was ready for an answer now, Arka's description of the trip somehow inspired me.

"I will try to be very frank with you Pam," I said earnestly. I haven't used my wife's first name in months but I felt in this particular case it was more natural to do so.

Pam felt the same because she simply said, "Go on Nikki, I am all ears."

I continued in a more determined way, "I always based our relationship in honesty and straightforwardness and I know you feel the same. I think Arka is right, I certainly see life in a different perspective now, it is not a cross dresser's fantasy anymore, it is rather a search for an identity. This whole Indian venture fascinates me and of course the presence of Arka makes me feel more at ease because I completely trust her."

Arka smiled at me whispering a 'thank you', as I kept talking, "I must admit though that I am quite frightened as well; this whole story of getting a new passport and come back to this country as a migrant worries me a lot, I will be completely at the mercy of the authorities or my employer who I hope will be still you Pam, though I can see that other jobs will come up like the part time cleaning job in your company and God knows what else. All in all it will be a frightening but challenging new phase in my life."

I stopped and looked at both of them, Pam spoke first, "Well that clears the ground considerably Harita," I noticed she started calling me Harita again, "You obviously are ready to move on and I can only say to you at this instant, quite formally and in the presence of your friend Arka that whatever happens in the future and for whatever difficulties you face as a migrant worker will have my full backing, including the legal services of our company."

I was about to thank her, I certainly needed that reassurance but she continued talking, "Of course your case Harita is quite tricky with all sorts of legal implications; for instance what happens to Nick, is he going to be residing abroad maintaining all his rights as my lawful husband or is he going to be declared 'legally missing'. I still have to think about that and get some serious legal advice discreetly of course."

A surge of panic went through me like a strong electric shock. Was I prepared to abandon for ever my male identity with all its benefits and rights for an obscure future at the mercy and/or good will of Pam, Arka or who ever else was going to be my future employer?

Pam once again managed to calm my fears. "I think you can start your trip to India Harita traveling with your legal passport as Nick and live your new life there under Arka's surveillance and instructions. In the mean time I'll sort all legal aspects of your case at this end. If I have the slightest worry about any serious future implications I'll certainly ask you to come back to this country as Nick and not as Harita. I hope you can trust me on that issue."

"Of course I trust you Madam," I was back addressing her formally again, "In fact I totally rely on you in that matter, I'll do whatever you consider proper for me."

We all were exhausted at that stage; it was nearly three in the morning.

"Right girls," Pam said standing up and ready to go, "I am off to bed. Arka you are welcomed to stay tonight in the guest room, it is far too late to go home; we all meet again in the morning to discuss more practical matters during breakfast, for instance I need a replacement in this house during Harita's absence and so is your employer Arka; I hope Annie de Laurentis will be able to help. Good night girls!"

I was automatically on my feet as Pam departed, saying 'good night Madam' with a little bob, Arka on the other hand remained seated saying a simple 'good night Mrs. Manley' in a rather friendly and confident manner, she wasn't acting as a maid anymore.

I went to bed feeling emotionally and physically exhausted.

Dreams... busy dreams... scary dreams... exciting dreams... My subconscious mind was in turmoil. Indian bazaars, Muslim harems, women in diaphanous sarees, other women in heavy Muslim robes and veils, bearded ferocious men, eunuchs, and among them was circulating a creature of undetermined sex, an androgyne. Could that be me?

I was about to scream in my sleep when the alarm clock went off. I looked at it, 7.00am. I better get up, put my uniform on and start breakfast. Today the final details of my future are going to be determined. The trip to India is now imminent...

EPILOGUE

There are several ways this story can continue. Each reader can imagine his/her preferred version.

My proposed scenario:

Harita and Arka travel to India. Harita is more rigorously feminized in an 'Indian manner' following the strict Hijra codes under the guidance of Arka and other members of her

family. She starts taking various natural remedies which enhance feminine characteristics including a moderate breasts growth. Those remedies are increasing the flow of estrogen in her body without the side effects of the chemically produced female hormones.

All the paper work is done at both ends and Harita obtains an Indian passport under the name of Harita Nalini Latim. Annie de Laurentis makes all the arrangements through her domestic agency to import Harita as a domestic worker to be employed by Mrs. Pamela Manley under a three years contract.

Pam is starting the legal procedure to declare Nick 'legally missing'. All his assets are frozen until matters are finalized.

Harita is firmly 'locked' in her new identity. Pam is sending her to work part time as a cleaner in her company under the surveillance of Miss Debbie Simmons.

Arka is coming back and is employed by Miss Annie de Laurentis as her assistant in her domestic agency. Soon she will become a junior partner in the agency. She starts using Harita to clean her apartment every second Sunday with Pam's blessings.

From then on, anything can happen. Life plays often tricky games!

The End