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Swipe Right For Foot Wipe (Patreon)

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Content

F/f - When Poppy sees her Indian neighbour's Tinder, she's curious why Arpita says she enjoys rubbing her feet in peoples' faces. 24k words.

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Swipe Right for Foot Wipe

Boredom can get us into some real sticky situations. Procrastination had been the death of my

university life. When I should have been spending hours revising or writing papers; I'd waste away the time playing around on the internet or watching some trash on TV. My whole experience at the institution was a crying shame. I had potential as a student, and I had squandered it all away. Unfortunately, I was one of the laziest persons in existence and I seemed to coast my way through life without putting in any effort.

Thankfully, I had my looks to fall back on and I met Stephen straight after flunking out of school. Whereas I was a dropout, Stephen had already graduated and had been given a junior position with an investment bank. This was a great opportunity for him and I was coming along for the ride. As a result, I spent most of my days lazing around, doing fun things like shopping with Stephen's money or painting. Art was my true passion and I found that it calmed me down. I was decent at it, but I'd never had anyone offer to buy one of my pieces. Truth be told, I wasn't sure what my path in the world was, and I was thankful that I had Stephen to support me. If marriage and staying at home was my future then I was all for it.

The mundane routine of my life stumbled down a different path one day owing to a fairly innocuous incident. I was chilling on the couch, scrolling through my social media when Stephen came into the room.

"Do you have any idea where my phone is, Poppy?" he asked.

"Hold on, I'll try phoning it," I said. He was always losing it somewhere around the apartment. I dialled his number and waited for the inevitable chime of his ringtone. However, none came, but there was a vibrating sound coming from the bedroom. I crouched beneath the bed and saw the phone rattling away on the polished wooden floor. "Found it," I shouted, but then I paused as I lifted the phone.

It was someone from his work trying to call, but that wasn't the interesting part. On the top of the screen was a notification from Tinder. Tinder, was he kidding me? What the hell was the sleaze doing on there when he was dating me? I opened the notification and there was an announcement that there were new singles in his area. That darned dirtbag.

"Oi, what's this all about?" I yelled as I went running into the kitchen, flailing his phone around in my hand. "Why are you on Tinder?"

Stephen was in the middle of sipping his coffee. His eyes peeked over the cup all sheepish. "Ummm, it doesn't matter."

I slapped the phone into his chest. "The hell it doesn't matter! Have you been cheating on me?"

"Of course not." He rolled his eyes. "Honestly, when would I have a chance to do that? I'm at work all day then I come home straight to you."

This was true. Stephen never stayed late on at work and he didn't socialise much since I'd moved into his apartment. I was all he needed after all. "So, why do you have it?"

"To check you're not on there."

My mouth hung open. "Uh...what?"

"Well, you're the one sitting around doing nothing all day. I was getting a bit worried is all. Plus, you're always on your phone."

"Playing games!"

"Well, how do I know that? I was just checking. You're always giggling away into your phone screen while it buzzes."

"So, what are you saying? You don't trust me?"

"Of course, I do."

I shook my head. "This doesn't make sense. If you trust me as you say, why would you be worried? Be honest, have you been talking to other women?"

Stephen let out a violent laugh. "Now who is the one who can't trust? Come on, babe. You know it's not like that. I was just a bit insecure is all. Open it, take a look, I haven't even matched or messaged anyone on there. I'm not even totally sure how to use it. One of the guys in work is on there non-stop and he's matching with girls all day long. It got me worried is all."

I narrowed my eyes and pointed an accusing finger in his direction. "Fine, but if I discover you've been lying to me then you're going to regret it." I turned on my heel and headed back to the bedroom with Stephen's phone. I sank into the pillows and curled my legs beneath my butt. "He better not have been a little slime ball," I said, as I swiped open the app.

I hadn't ever used Tinder before. I mean, I'd never had a reason to. Dating was something that came easily to me. Guys would simply approach me wherever I was. I'd got with Stephen straight out of dropping out of college, so why would I ever need some pathetic app like Tinder? I was content living in his apartment and mooching off him without complaint. Why the hell would I give

up a lifestyle like this? It was actually insulting that Stephen thought I would even download the app, never mind use it. Of course, I was aware of what the app was primarily for: easy hook-ups. Some of my friends used it and had met guys on there, but it simply wasn't for me.

So, when it came to using the app, I was a bit clueless. As soon as I'd opened it, a girl's picture popped up on the screen. Her name was Summer and she was a blonde hairstylist that was located about five kilometres away. On the bottom was matches and messages. I opened them and saw that both were a big fat zero. It appeared he had barely been using the app. I noticed he hadn't even uploaded a photo of himself. Perhaps he was telling the truth after all. Though I was still mildly offended that he'd thought it necessary to check if I was using Tinder.

I clicked no on Summer's profile and another girl appeared. This time it was a brunette named Rita and she was a receptionist. As with Summer, I clicked no on Rita and onwards I went. I'd completely lost interest in the reasons Stephen had the app, instead I was overcome with curiosity. I was basically just cycling through the profiles and looking for someone I recognised. I can't really explain why, I suppose I was just being nosey and wanted to see the kind of stuff my friends would write and share on there. I mean, what do you write on something like this? 'Hey! I'm desperate for a date, please like me!'

I must have rejected about fifty profiles before I came across a girl that I recognised: Arpita. She was an Indian nurse that lived down the hallway from us. I only knew her in passing, saying the occasional hello. Hell, I hadn't even known her name until I saw her profile. From her accent, it sounded like she had actually come over from India rather than being born and raised here to Indian parents. Her profile picture was a close-up of her face and hair, which must have been taken at work as the collar of her scrubs was peeking into the bottom of the picture. Despite being taken in the workplace, she looked pretty and her smile lit the screen up. Her skin was a beautiful brown and there was a contrasting golden stud gleaming in her nose. Her black hair hung well below her shoulders. Overall, it was the perfect photo for a potential suitor and it was fairly accurate considering I'd seen her in person a few times. I imagine her profile garnered a lot of interest, though, thankfully none from my boyfriend.

Beneath the photo was a short biography, which I read through with a smile, satisfied there had been a pay-off to my snooping.

Hello, my name is Arpita, I'm 26 years old and I work as a nurse. I've just moved from Bombay to this lovely city and it was the best decision I ever made. I'm hoping to meet someone that I can enjoy time with. I like singing, dancing and cinema. Maybe if we match we can arrange something and get to know each other better!! :)

The words, along with the photograph, were so cute that I just had to show Stephen. "Baby, come

and have a look at this," I shouted out towards the kitchen. "You know that Indian girl in the other apartment, well, she...wait, what the fuck?" My thought was interrupted as I read the final paragraph of her bio, right at the bottom of her profile.

p.s. I also like to rub my sweaty feet in people's faces!!! Hahaha. If this sounds good to you then swipe right for foot wipe!

"What the fuck is that?" I said. I dropped the phone on the bed and sat up straight in shock, wallowing my head on the wall behind me with such intensity that a lamp jiggled on the bedside table. My mouth was hung open and my forehead felt like it was wrinkled up, probably ageing my appearance about thirty years.

"What is it?" asked Stephen as he wandered into the bedroom.

My mouth was still hanging open as I looked over at him. I had to shake off my confusion before I could utter a single word. "Ummm?"

"You called me?"

"Ugh," I said, still blown away by what I'd read. "It's nothing. Don't worry."

Stephen rolled his eyes, shook his head and left the bedroom without pressing any further.

I picked up the phone once more and re-read the biography, convinced I'd imagined those strange words. There they were though, right on the screen in front of my disbelieving eyes: Arpita liked rubbing her sweaty feet in people's faces. "What the fuck?" I asked out loud once again. Why the hell would she write something like that on a publicly viewable profile? It made literally no sense. Anyone could see it! Didn't she realise that? Hell, I was sat in the next apartment and reading it. I thought she was a regular, normal girl from our minimal interactions and she'd gone and put something as weird as that out in the world.

I scrolled back up the profile and flicked through Arpita's photos, seeing if I could find a clue to why she would share such a weird detail. Immediately after the profile picture, there was a photo of her dressed in traditional Indian clothing. It appeared she was at a wedding or similar occasion. The next photo was the same outfit, though this time she was joined by another Indian girl, also dressed in the colourful traditional clothing. The second girl looked a couple of years younger than Arpita, though equally pretty. The photos were completely normal. The kind of thing you'd see on every profile.

It was the third photograph that caught my attention the most. It looked like it was taken back in

India, as there were people that looked of Indian ethnicity in the background. It was clearly on a beach, with the sand and the ocean in the background. Stretching out into the sand were two brown feet. Arpita must have taken the photo while she was relaxing in the sunshine back home.

I held the phone up close to my face and took a good look at her feet. I was curious why she thought she had the right to rub them in people's faces. What was so special about Arpita's feet? I mean, they weren't ugly or anything. Her toes were well-shaped, her nails looked taken care of and she had a cute toe ring on each foot. In the photo she was wearing orange nail polish and it contrasted quite well with her brown skin tone. I supposed that if I were to have a pair of feet rubbed in my face, I could do a lot worse than Arpita's. Wait, what the hell was I thinking? Why was I even considering such a thing happening?

I shook my head and tossed the phone back on the bed. "Stephen," I called out.

"What is it now?" he asked as he slumped up to the bedroom again. "Won't you give me a break?"

"I'm hungry. Let's get a take-away," I said with a smirk. "You fancy Indian?"

That night, while laying in bed as Stephen softly snored next to me, I struggled to drift off. There was something making the cogs turn in my head. I couldn't shake those words that I'd read. I simply could not fathom why Arpita would share something so seedy on her Tinder. I mean, even if she was into that, why would she announce it to the world? There were certain things I liked to do in the bedroom which others may find odd. Still, you wouldn't catch me writing about them all over my social media, so why was Arpita so upfront about it? It's like she had no shame. Which was bizarre, because on the few occasions we'd crossed paths she always seemed so shy and reserved.

I kept replaying the sentence over and over in my head. I could see it right there on her page, below the picture of her smiling face, the entire image burnt into my memory. Arpita liked to rub her sweaty feet in the faces of other people. How absurd an image. Why would anyone admit to liking that? But wait...how did she even know she liked to do it? Did that mean she'd actually done it before? There were people in the world that had let Arpita rub her sweaty feet in their face? What the hell kind of person would allow that to happen, and why? Did they actually enjoy it?

I was just lying there staring at the ceiling as the thoughts continued to spiral around above me. Why did she even enjoy doing it in the first place? Was there some sadistic pleasure she gained from subjecting someone to that?

I tried to imagine what it would be like; laying on the floor while Arpita sat above me and rubbed her sweaty feet in my face. I closed my eyes and pictured the skin on my face becoming sore from

the clammy ministrations of her soles. Would she cup her toes over my nose and force me to smell the stink from her day at work? Would her toe rings feel cool in contrast to her warm, moist skin? The thought disgusted me and made me tremble in frightened anticipation. My eyes shot open and I felt weirded out by my own thoughts. Why was I even laying awake at night and thinking about this stupid shit? I was in bed next to my boyfriend, yet there I was, fantasising about my neighbour's sweaty feet being rubbed all over my face. It was a goddamn mystery.

The next morning, I was running late. I'd planned to meet one of my girlfriends for coffee and a gossip, but having struggled to get to sleep the night before, I'd awoken groggy and lacking energy. After brushing my teeth, I was caressing some moisturising cream into my face. I stared intently into the mirror and was mesmerised by the way in which my fingers shaped and manipulated my cheeks. It was almost hypnotic, the ease of which my flesh rippled under the slightest pressure. I wondered if Arpita's orange toes could massage and distort my features in the same way. Would she squeeze my cheeks together until my mouth squashed into a beak? What a sight I would look; laying there and allowing Arpita's feet to have their way with my face. I blinked in the mirror and suddenly my face screwed up in disgust. Why the hell was I thinking such weird thoughts still? I shook them off and finished up getting ready.

When I finally left the apartment, I was in such a rush, jangling the keys in the lock, that I accidentally dropped them on the floor. As I crouched in the hallway, I heard the sound of footsteps approaching from behind.

"Hey, neighbour," said a cheery voice, in a distinctively Indian accent.

My heart was thumping in my chest as I pivoted in my crouched position. Arpita was stood before me, dressed in her nurse scrubs and looking down with her hands on her hips. She looked so tall from my position, as if she towered over me, when in reality we were around the same height. Her hair was tied back and her brown skin glistened with sweat. It was clear she was just returning from her night shift at the hospital and was most likely exhausted.

"Ummm, hi," I said. I couldn't help it and looked down at her feet. I was just too curious after the thoughts that had been floating through my head.

There they were, the feet that she enjoyed rubbing in peoples' faces. She was wearing a pair of ballet flats with white socks, just poking out from beneath her scrubs. I noted that the socks looked damp, likely soaked through with sweat from her hours of exertion. There was slight movement in the front of her flats as if her toes were anxiously wiggling beneath. I was curious if she was wearing those toe rings from the photo right then. Did she wear them all the way through her shift? They must have been disgusting.

"You okay down there?" she asked. There was a playful tone to her question.

I slowly raised my eyes up to her face and was horrified to see she was smirking. This shy and reserved girl was actually smirking down at me. I'd made such a hesitant fool of myself that I'd actually empowered her. The doubts swirled in my mind. Did she know what I had been looking at? Had I been staring at her shoes for too long? Was she now imagining rubbing her sweaty feet into my face right as she stared at me? Did my pale cheeks look more enticing to her feet the more they reddened?

This was the first time I had seen Arpita since reading her weird Tinder profile. Was my face giving away that I knew her secret? I could feel the temperature rising in my cheeks and the first instances of sweat collecting on my brow. All that effort applying my makeup in the mirror minutes earlier was about to be wasted, simply because of my Indian neighbour greeting me. I felt tiny, crouched at her feet, and shrinking with every further second under her judgemental gaze. She had to know that I knew. She probably knew what I was thinking about right then; those sweaty feet springing free from her flats and having their way with my face. Ugh, I felt a tremble run down the length of my spine. I had to get out of there before I slipped up and said something stupid. I was experiencing feelings that I couldn't comprehend.

"Ummm, I'm late, I've got to go." I leapt to my feet and clumsily brushed past Arpita in the hallway. I just caught a glimpse of a bemused look on her face as I clattered through the front door. I couldn't blame her reaction. Every previous time we'd met I'd been composed and aloof. Yet, this time, I'd turned into some kind of nervous wreck, like a teenage girl cowering under the glare of her crush. I prayed she hadn't realised the reason why.

I can't even recall what my friend was talking about as I sipped my coffee. My eyes were glazed over as I stared at the table behind her, where an Indian woman was tapping away on her laptop. Beneath her chair, her feet had broken free from her sandals and she was arching and flexing her soles without abandon. It's a sight I would never normally have even noticed, but for some reason, that day I was riveted. What were the chances? I leave my apartment block where the feet of one Indian woman were tormenting me and run straight into another pair. I simply couldn't drag my eyes away from the hypnotic contortions of her restless feet. I looked at those soles and I imagined Arpita's. As they danced and played with the sandals beneath, I pictured myself in their place. Maybe that's how Arpita liked to do it? She'd type away on her laptop, paying no attention to the face serving as her footrest.

"Earth to Poppy," said my friend, Helen, as she waved a hand in front of my face. "I think I lost you there for a minute."

I shook my head and finally broke from the sight entrancing me so much. "Ugh, what?"

"Were you listening to a word I said?"

"Sorry, I've just had a lot on my mind lately." In some ways it was a lie, though in others the truth. There was something playing on my mind for sure, but I wasn't about to share that with Helen. Oh, I had an urge to spill everything out there. I wanted her to agree with me that Arpita's Tinder profile was completely ludicrous. To open it up on my phone right there and point at the insanity of sharing such an absurd thing. But what would Helen think of me? She'd no doubt think I was a weirdo for obsessing over such a thing. Hell, even I thought I was turning into a weirdo.

"Anything you want to share?"

"No, it's just me and Stephen," I lied.

"Not having problems, are you?"

"Nothing worth stressing over."

Helen took a sip of her coffee. "So, any other gossip worth sharing?"

Yes, hell yes! Oh lord, Helen! You just have to see what this girl in my apartment block wrote on her Tinder profile. It's the most absurd, ridiculously weird thing you'll have ever read. That's what I wanted to say, but in reality, I chickened out and just said, "No, nothing."

"Well, that's a bit boring, Poppy. I was hoping we were going to have a lot to chat about. You seem preoccupied. Shall we reschedule?"

I felt bad for blowing Helen off, but I was actually relieved to make it back home. I'd come up with a plan on the train back. I was going to make a fake Tinder profile on my own phone and get to the bottom of all of this. I just had to know what was going on with Arpita. The curiosity was driving me insane. She'd become a sort of secret mission to me and I was enjoying the spy games.

As soon as I was through the front door, I'd downloaded Tinder and set up the profile. I found some random photo on the internet of a good-looking guy, not modelish, but believably attractive. It may have been a racist-assumption on my part, but I found a guy of Indian ethnicity. For all I knew, he was the complete opposite of Arpita's tastes as she hadn't offered an insight into the kind of guy she liked physically. I just needed her to match with him and give me the opportunity to ask that question that was tormenting me so much: why do you like rubbing your feet in peoples' faces? I

figured a good-looking Indian guy gave me the best option. He was probably a famous actor for all I knew, but he's what I was going with.

Once the profile and photo were set up, I added in all the details that would give him a lot in common with her. He too liked to go to the cinema, was a foodie and medical professional. I was hoping he'd pop up on her screen and she'd instantly hit like as she drooled over her dream guy.

I began swiping through the profiles as they popped up one at a time. All types of girls were being thrown at my creation, Raj, the ultimate Indian bachelor. I was swiping left on all of them, giving them a firm no, waiting in anticipation for Arpita's profile to pop up. "Come on, Raj," I said to my phone with a smile. "We can do this!"

What began as excited enthusiasm, gradually became prolonged boredom as I swiped left to the point of my thumb cramping. I didn't even realise there were this many desperate girls signed up to the app. All sorts were popping up. Baristas, makeup artists, students, journalists and I swear one girl was even wearing a prison jumpsuit in her photo. I guess they even used Tinder in jail; who would have thought it? I must have been swiping for a good half hour before Arpita's face appeared on my screen and my body began to shake in excitement. I almost accidentally swiped left on her out of habit, but thankfully I paused just as my thumb hit the screen.

I scrolled down her profile to check that the message was still there. There it was, right at the bottom, still shamelessly displayed for all the world to see. I was about to swipe right when I paused; I read the instruction again.

Swipe right for foot wipe.

Even though I was using a fake profile, I was about to follow the instruction and swipe right. I was swiping right to be Arpita's foot wipe. That's basically what it all came down to, right? Regardless of whether she knew it was me behind the profile; I knew it was me. I could close the app right there and forget all about it. But I needed to know what was behind those words. It was eating me up inside and I couldn't resist any longer. It had become the most exciting activity in my life. I swiped right and closed the phone. It was done, and there was no going back now.

Suddenly, I was overcome with a sense of relaxation. It was out of my hands now and over to Arpita. Hopefully, she would swipe right on Raj too, and then I'd have the opportunity to ask that question and have my answer. I reasoned once I knew the meaning behind that absurd message I could move on and forget about it. I mean, I didn't actually want Arpita to rub her feet in my face or anything, did I? I didn't actually want to be this Indian girl's sweaty foot wipe. That was just ridiculous. This was all about having a snoop and satisfying my curiosity. So, my phishing was entirely justified and with merit. Yet, I couldn't help looking at the phone, constantly, waiting for

Arpita to respond.

I spent the afternoon opening and closing the phone repeatedly. I wasted hours, just sat there, staring at the phone and refreshing constantly, waiting for that notification to pop up saying I'd matched with Arpita. She had to swipe right on Raj, she just had to. I was convinced she wouldn't be able to resist such a guy. But, nothing came. I knew she was in her apartment too, as through the walls I could hear her moving about. So, it wasn't as if she was busy at work or anything. She was quite likely sat around doing nothing, just like me. So, why the hell wasn't she on Tinder?

I wondered how she looked right at that moment. Was she sat on the couch, relaxing with her feet up? Was she playing on her phone, just as I was, her feet in the background crossed at the ankles on the arm of the couch? Were her toes still painted orange, like in the photo, or was there a different colour? Or maybe she was wearing socks and shoes? Perhaps she liked to keep her feet always covered up, sweating, ready, just in case someone swiped right on her Tinder and offered up their face as her foot wipe. Raj's face was ready and waiting, why the hell hadn't she swiped right too? I was expecting her to be eager to wipe her sweaty feet all over his face.

The sound of keys unlocking the door startled me from my mental wandering. I smiled from the couch as Stephen came into the apartment, tired from a long day at work.

"Hey, babe," I said, all merrily. I knew I should get up and give him a kiss, but my fingers fidgeted, itching to unlock my phone and refresh one more time. Just in case Arpita had matched with my fake profile.

"You been up to much today?" he asked, whilst hanging his coat on the hook.

"Nothing much. I met up with Helen for a coffee and gossip," I said. I also spent hours longing for our next-door neighbour, Arpita, to put me out of my misery, but I wasn't about to tell the man I loved that embarrassing truth.

"Sounds like an easy day."

If only he knew it was anything but easy. "Yep, nice and relaxing."

"Well, I'm shattered, so I'm going to take a shower then grab a nap before supper, that sound okay?"

"Sounds like you've earned it," I said. I felt terrible that I was actually pleased he was going to leave me alone a bit longer. I took the opportunity to crack open a bottle of wine, to settle my nerves as I waited for Arpita to take my bait.

One glass turned into a few. Eventually my phone buzzed, and I felt a hot wave flush over me. I closed my eyes and took a deep breath before unlocking the phone; this had to be it. "Please, Arpita," I whispered to myself. "Please have matched with me." Wait, was it me I wanted her to match with, or Raj? I meant Raj, of course, not myself.

I opened my eyes, and there it was on the screen:

Congratulations! You've matched with Arpita Jain!

"Oh my God, yes," I almost screamed out loud, before cringing and worrying that I may have woken Stephen with my euphoria. I couldn't help it though, I was too excited that Arpita had taken the bait and I was one step closer to solving this foot-wiping mystery.

I opened the app and began typing out a message. I thought about starting with a polite greeting, getting to know her and then dropping the bombshell of a question. But then I thought, why the hell bother? She didn't know it was me. She thought it was this random guy, Raj, so I may as well be blunt and get straight to it.

Raj: Hi, so, I was just wondering, what's with that message on ur profile?

The question had been asked, and soon I was to get my answer, or so I thought. However, I waited, and I waited, and I waited, and nothing came. Arpita hadn't even read the message. What in the hell was she even doing in her apartment? She'd just matched with this incredible guy, like basically the perfect guy for her, why wasn't she jumping at the chance to message him? She was killing me with the suspense! I needed to know why she'd write that weird message on her profile, god damnit. Why the hell did she like rubbing her sweaty feet in peoples' faces? Just tell me. I needed to know! This had become the most exciting thing in my dull, routine life and I needed a blasted resolution.

I cracked open another bottle of wine and poured myself a glass of red. I gulped down half while I clutched the phone tightly, my eyes wide focused on the screen and willing for some kind of response. Refresh. Refresh. Come on, Arpita. Yes, finally, a little tick, she'd read the message! Here we go. I was so close to finding out what that weird message was all about.

I'd already finished the first glass of wine, so I poured myself another. I took a sip while I waited for

Arpita to reply, then another, then another. This woman was a total nightmare for my anxiety. Just freaking reply to the message, for God's sake! I knew she'd read it, she must have known that I knew that too, but she hadn't replied.

I thought about sending another message, but I didn't know what to write. Was that the problem? Had I blown it? Was there some kind of etiquette I was supposed to follow? Maybe Arpita was really picky about the kind of faces she rubbed her feet on and I'd opened with the wrong message. She'd obviously rubbed her feet in lots of faces, since she was so open about liking it. Maybe being Arpita's foot wipe was something that had to be earned? Why the hell wasn't I good enough to be Arpita's foot wipe? I mean, Raj! Why wasn't Raj good enough?

I went to pour another glass of wine and noticed that I'd drank the whole bottle already. I took a glimpse into the bedroom and saw that Stephen was completely passed out, oblivious to my stewing in the other room. I cracked open another bottle and settled into the couch, slurping on a fresh glass.

Fuck it, I thought. I was feeling emboldened by the alcohol tingling my body all over and I decided to confront Arpita. I'd go and knock her door and just ask her what her profile was all about and did she realise that everyone in the entire city could see it? I could even phrase it in a way that I came across as concerned for her well-being. That I was worried her reputation was going to suffer from sharing such a peculiar interest. I didn't even have to lie about how I discovered her profile, I had found it on Stephen's Tinder after all.

Before I could change my mind, I'd left the apartment and knocked on Arpita's door. It was only when I was stood there, waiting for her to answer, that doubts began to enter my head. What the hell was I doing? Approaching the neighbour to ask why she liked rubbing her feet in peoples' faces? How proud my parents would be if they knew this was the kind of stuff keeping me busy at night. I was about to sneak back to my apartment when Arpita opened the door.

"Hey, neighbour," she said with a smile. She was wearing a silk bathrobe, with each of her smooth, brown legs leading down to a fluffy slipper. Her black hair rested delicately on her shoulders and her dark eyes appeared soft and welcoming. "What's up?"

"Ummm, I have something I need to ask you."

Arpita adjusted her standing position and leant against the doorframe. "Sure, what is it?"

I thought about trying to explain everything that had happened. I stared at Arpita intently as I ran the words through my head. It was a simple process, after all, there was nothing complicated about it. I had accidentally come across her profile and was curious why she would share

something so openly. The buzz of wine was flowing through my veins too, so with my drunken confidence, I just flat out asked the question, "Please would you rub your feet in my face?"

Wait, what the hell, that wasn't the question I was supposed to ask. I wanted to ask her why she liked rubbing her feet in peoples' faces? That's why I'd come over and knocked her door, wasn't it? But those weren't the words that had left my mouth. I attempted to recover and ask the correct question, but instead I let out an anguished slur, "Ugh."

Arpita cocked her head to the side and furrowed her brow. Her eyes looked off to the hallway as if she was contemplating something. Seconds later, she looked straight at me and raised an eyebrow. "Huh?"

My mind was still panicking and desperately searching for some kind of explanation. Why the hell had I asked that? Was that what I really wanted? Ever since I'd read her Tinder profile, I'd been obsessing about Arpita rubbing her feet in peoples' faces and why she would do such a thing. The question was tormenting me and even keeping me awake at night.

It was only at that moment I realised the magnitude of what I was actually asking for. I'd just pleaded with the Indian nurse next door to rub her sweaty feet in my face. What the hell had I become? Was this what I was wanting all along? Maybe I hadn't been curious about why she did it; I'd been curious about how it would feel, on my face. I knew I'd had a couple of bottles of wine by that point, but still, I was better than that. I was in a relationship with a great guy, about to get married, and there I was, stood at the neighbour's front door and asking her to rub her feet in my face. Did I really want to know what it felt like, to be laying beneath Arpita's sweaty feet as she rubbed them in my face?

I felt butterflies in my tummy as I accepted that I wanted to join that club of Arpita's foot wipes, from the very moment I'd first read it on her profile and been shocked by the absurdity of the act. It had been a staggered descent which had led me right to her doorstep. The thought had sent a lightning bolt through my body, I'd thought because the idea sickened me, but perhaps it had been exhilaration. It all made sense now. That comment on her profile was bait, put there to lure in her next catch, and I was hooked on the end of her line. My path to her door had been inevitable ever since. I was going to be Arpita's next foot wipe, and there was no stopping it.

Still, hearing the words out loud in my own voice mortified me. I couldn't look her in the eye as I'd requested something so ridiculous, and instead glanced down at her fluffy slippers. The material flexed as those brown toes wiggled beneath. I peered to see if I could make out what colour polish she was wearing, of if her toe rings would sparkle as her nose stud did. Unfortunately, her feet were completely hidden from my lingering eyes beneath the old, tattered slippers. I sniffed at the air and wondered if they'd built up a stink as they looked well-used.

"Could you say that again?" She folded her arms across her chest, took a step forward and dipped her ear towards me. "I think I misheard you."

Oh God, she must have been enjoying this so much. She was actually going to make me ask again. I gulped, closed my eyes, and said the words once more. "Please would you rub your feet in my face?" I mean, in my drunken logic I'd already said them once, so why not again? It didn't even enter my head that maybe she was being honest and actually hadn't heard me correctly, in which case I'd have been off the hook. No, I had to go and repeat myself, even louder than the first time. But the drunken thoughts swirled around my head, and I wondered if this was some sort of test. Perhaps I'd just said the wrong thing. I hadn't passed the secret code to earn the chance to be under her feet and become her foot wipe. I tried again, "Can I be your sweaty foot wipe?"

Arpita cocked her head once more and looked at me curiously. Her eyes were wide with confusion. "You want to me to do, to be, I'm not sure I understand, what?" She glanced down at her slippers and lifted her one foot up onto its toes, allowing a glimpse of her heel to peek out. "Something about my feet?"

Her sole was pale in comparison to her brown skin tone and the contrast mesmerised me. "Yes, your feet, would you, ummm, rub them in my face?" I was starting to feel vulnerable and exposed. This wasn't how it was supposed to go, was it? I hadn't come here with the intention of asking to be her foot wipe, but that's what had happened, almost as if I was powerless to stop it. But surely Arpita was used to this? She must have done it so many times before. I mean, from her profile, she was very experienced in this. She enjoyed it after all, she must be used to people swiping right on her profile for the opportunity to be her foot wipe. I couldn't understand why she was acting so confused. I had come to her and bravely offered my face up, and she was leaving me to squirm.

"You want me to rub my feet in your face?" She asked in that delectable Indian accent. Her voice was without emotion, and she pronounced each word with precision and intention, leaving the absurdity to hang in the air. Her eyes remained wide, locked open with bemusement.

Hearing Arpita say the words out loud was enough to make me shrink in shame. I stuttered, trying to conjure some kind of coherent response, something to explain away my foolishness. I figured

she was used to people asking through the app, but never in person and straight to her face. Perhaps I had caught her off guard.

Suddenly, Arpita took a step out into the hallway. She raised up on her tip-toes to look over my shoulder. "Is this a joke or something? Where is your man?"

"He's asleep." I had to lean a hand against the wall to avoid tumbling over in my drunken stupor. "But, no, it's not a joke. Would you do it?"

"But why?" She looked me straight in the eyes. Her nose stud gleamed in the light of the hallway. "Why would you want me to do that?" She looked at the watch on her wrist. "It's so late, and you knock my door for this? This is very odd. We barely know each other and now you're asking me to..." Her voice trailed off as she shook her head in disbelief.

I figured out what she was doing. This was all part of the arrangement. She wanted to enjoy me saying how much I wanted it to happen. That's why she didn't finish the sentence and let it hang in the air. Hell, she would probably enjoy me down on my knees begging for it even more. This was some kind of power play. That must have been the kick she got out of the whole thing. "I saw your Tinder profile. I swiped right, like you said." The confidence in my voice seemed to dissipate with every further look of confusion from her. The next words left my mouth in a squeak, "I swiped right to be your foot wipe, ma'am." I don't even know why I called her ma'am. It just seemed somewhat appropriate considering what I was asking.

"Tinder?" Her eyes narrowed, before widening in recognition. "Oh yes, my sister set it up for me before I moved here. She said it would be good to meet people, but I don't really know how to use it. The notifications are so annoying. I'm still not understanding this though. What's Tinder got to do with my feet?"

The blood drained from my face. I must have looked like a pale vampire compared to the cool, brown goddess before me. Oh my God. It was a joke. It was a freakin' joke that her sister had written on her profile when she set it up. I'd been fantasising and obsessing over something that wasn't even real. I became abundantly aware of the situation I'd put myself in and I immediately sobered up. "I should be going," I said. "This was a mistake. I'm sorry I bothered you." I could feel my cheeks pulsating with embarrassment. My head became lightheaded, on the verge of passing out from an overdose of anxiety. I turned and stumbled back to my apartment.

"Wait," I heard Arpita call out as I was closing the door, "I didn't say no."

The next morning, I awoke with a hangover. I'd crashed in bed next to Stephen the previous night and immediately drifted off. There was a note on the bedside table saying he loved me and he'd

already left for work. His absence was a relief as I couldn't face seeing anyone in my condition.

I tried making some breakfast, but once it was cooked I couldn't stomach a single bite. The night before came back at me in waves; that awkward exchange on Arpita's doorstep. The embarrassment left me feeling nauseous and I had to visit the bathroom on a few occasions, each time ending up hugging the toilet bowl.

What the hell must she have thought of me? She probably assumed I was a drunken lesbian, turning up on her doorstep late at night and making kinky, seedy requests. I didn't know much about Indian culture, other than what I'd seen on TV. I pictured her coming from an extremely conservative family that would find my behaviour appalling. What a welcome to the country I'd given her. Hopefully she wouldn't mention anything to Stephen, as if she did, I wouldn't have a clue how to explain it away.

I hid in the apartment for the rest of the day. I thought about sneaking out for some fresh air, as I was still feeling slightly woozy from the hangover. However, it was too much of a risk. I couldn't bear crossing paths with Arpita and having her confront me over the embarrassing night before. My skin always glowed red during any confrontation and I'd likely collapse into a bumbling wreck. So, I hid on the couch and buried myself beneath a blanket and waited for Stephen to finish work and return home. Maybe I could convince him to sell the apartment and move us somewhere else, safely away from Arpita and my eternal shame.

It was mid-afternoon when there was a knock on the door. I wasn't expecting anyone, unless Stephen had ordered a parcel or something without telling me.

"Hello," Arpita called out from the other side of the door. It was clearly her, no denying it was her. Arpita's accent was deliciously unique. I slumped over, still wrapped in the blanket, and spied through the peephole. There was her brown face on the other side, all alone out in the hallway. Immediately I panicked and backed against the wall. Another knock followed.

I took a deep breath. I supposed there was two ways of handling it. I could either hide away for the rest of my life and hope I never saw Arpita again. Clearly, that was impossible, as eventually we'd cross paths and by that point it would probably have built up so much that the confrontation would be mortifying. The slim hope of her forgetting everything didn't seem to be an option as she was at my door for the first time in her life. Of course, there could be some other reason, but it was conveniently coincidental that she had chosen to knock my door for the first time the very day after my foolish behaviour.

The alternative option was that I opened the door right there and then and just faced whatever consequences were coming my way. In some ways, there was a temptation compelling me to just

get it all over and done with. After all, there was a draining anxiety hanging over me that was making me want to just fade away and disappear. I took another final deep breath, and opened the door.

"Hey neighbour," Arpita said, once again all cheerily. "I was wondering if maybe I had missed you."

I noticed that Arpita looked tired with her hair dishevelled. There was a glistening layer of sweat across her forehead and patches of damp stains in her armpits. She was wearing a tight pair of cycling shorts and a loose-fitting t-shirt. On her feet were a pair of running sneakers with the slightest glimpse of white ankle socks poking out.

"No, sorry, I was just a little busy."

"Oh, well, sorry to bother you if you're too busy."

She was about to turn away when I felt some strange need to speak up. "No, please stay, how can I help?"

"I wanted to talk about last night." There it was. I knew it was coming. Still, the words cut through me like the sharpest of knives.

I could feel my whole face screwing up in fear. "Do we have to? I was very drunk, and I'd prefer to forget it." I could hear the pleading in my own voice.

Arpita looked me up and down, then a mischievous smile took over her face. "Well," she said, as she took a step towards me. "I've just been for a long run. A very long and tiring run. My feet are terribly sweaty, and I could really do with a" —she leant up and whispered in my ear —"face to wipe them on."

I was blown away by the sheer emboldened cheek of her. I'd always pictured Arpita as a shy, reserved girl. That's the impression she'd given off on the number of occasions that we had crossed paths in the hallway and she'd politely smiled or offered a simple greeting. Even when I'd surprised her with my odd behaviour the night before, Arpita had been quiet and reflective. She hadn't been annoyed or sought to humiliate me in any way. Yet, here she was on my doorstep, sweaty after her run and suggesting she'd like to rub her feet in my face. I had to pinch myself to check I wasn't dreaming. Was it not a joke from her sister after all? Did Arpita actually like rubbing her feet in peoples' faces and had she set her sights on little old me as her next foot wipe? Things were suddenly, and unexplainably, becoming exciting.

"Umm, what?" I asked. I looked about the hallway to check there wasn't anyone else around. For

some reason, I had a suspicion that it was all a trick and Arpita was just trying to get me to repeat my request so she could catch me on camera and report me to whoever. However, we appeared to be alone. Plus, Arpita didn't seem the sort, the more I thought about it. There was an honesty to her. As I stared into her brown eyes, I realised that there was no intention to hurt me. She looked like an excited child that had a new toy to play with.

"That's what you wanted last night, right?" I followed her eyes down to her sneakers. I could see her toes wiggling inside the material. "You said you wanted to be my foot wipe?"

I cringed and could feel the temperature of my skin lifting off. My eyes frantically darted around the hallway, convinced someone else could hear what Arpita had just said. It didn't make a lot of sense logically, she was merely repeating my own words from the day before. However, I was drunk then, and right at that moment I was stone-cold sober and abundantly aware of how ludicrous the suggestion was.

She shuffled on her feet and became quite animated with her hands. "I thought about it a lot, last night, after you came by my door. I had to actually Google what a foot wipe was. It took quite a while to actually find something that made sense. I had a very interesting read last night after you'd left. I was expecting all kinds of cultural differences when I moved to this country, but I never imagined something like this."

"Ummm."

"I'm kind of impressed."

"Why?"

"You were clearly nervous. It must have taken a lot of courage to come and ask me. But wow, you American girls are really up front, aren't you? I'll admit, it weirded me out a little. But, if that's what you like, who am I to judge? I'm extremely open-minded and willing to try new things."

"It was a misunderstanding. I only asked because I read-"

"Shh." She closed her eyes and bit her lower lip. "You were brave last night, don't ruin it by being a coward now. Ask me again."

"Ask you what?" I muttered.

Arpita rolled her eyes. "You know exactly what."

She couldn't be serious, could she? She held eye contact with me for a moment, her brown eyes gazing at me with intensity, almost challenging me to look away, which eventually I did. I couldn't help but wane under the scrutiny of her dark eyes, and looked back down to her sneakers. They appeared old and battered. I worked my eyes up the length of her body, noting the sweat glistening on her legs and arms. Eventually I returned to Arpita's face, an expectant smirk upon her mouth. My own mouth croaked out what she wanted to hear: "Would you...ummm."

Arpita nodded her head encouragingly and smiled in expectation. "Would I...?"

"Would you like to...ummm."

She leant closer and dipped her ear so she could listen, an amused smile taking over. She cupped one hand over her ear, and with the other beckoned me to continue with a flutter of her fingers.

"Would I like to what? Come on, let me hear you."

"Would you like to rub your feet in my face?" I gulped as the words left my lips. I'd said it almost robotically, as if I was a puppet that was letting Arpita speak for me. I could already feel my cheeks burning up with the shame of what I'd just vocalised. I loathed blushing. As my skin was such a pale white, the first instance of embarrassment would become immediately obvious to all those around me. My face would glow like a shiny tomato. Right at that moment I probably looked like a volcano erupting.

"Awww, don't be shy," said Arpita, as she noticed my ridiculously beetroot face. "Is your man home?"

"He's at work."

I was paralysed into silence as Arpita brushed passed me and into the apartment. Worrying thoughts immediately cycled through my head. What if Stephen came home early? What would he say when he saw that Arpita was in the apartment, a girl we barely knew? I could try and play it off, but I was a terrible liar, and my face would light up as soon as I was put under any scrutiny. Plus, Arpita appeared to be way more confident and outgoing than I'd been led to believe. At this rate, she'd probably flat-out tell him why she was there.

I closed the door and followed Arpita. She sat down on my couch without asking and relaxed back into the cushions. "Finally, my legs hurt so much," she said. "It's good to sit down."

I stood on the spot and fidgeted awkwardly. I was still wearing the blanket over my shoulders as a makeshift cape and beneath I wore nothing more than my usual nightie. It was my apartment, well,

Stephen's apartment, but I lived there. Yet, it was Arpita that seemed relaxed and at home while I was stood like I didn't belong.

"You have a nice apartment," she said. "I like what you've done with the colours."

"Thanks," I said. I hadn't done jack shit, it had all been Stephen.

Arpita crossed her legs up onto the coffee table. I winced at her dirty sneakers making contact with the glass. Not because I cared, just because Stephen would probably blame me. "So, how are we going to do this?"

"Ummm."

"You really need to relax. What's your name?"

"It's Poppy."

"You really need to relax, Poppy."

I took a seat on the chair opposite the couch. "I'm trying. This is all just very weird."

"Let me tell you something, Poppy. When I moved here from India a few months ago, I made myself a promise. My parents were very strict back home, so I promised myself that I would enjoy my freedom. I'd try lots of new things and jump at every opportunity I get."

"I see." I had to agree that her words did make me feel slightly more comfortable with the way things were heading.

"So, when you came to my door last night and made that odd request, well, I'll admit, at first I was a bit taken aback." Arpita let out a little chuckle and had to cover her mouth to suppress a bigger one. "I mean, it's not every day an American girl. A pretty, well-to-do one at that, turns up on your doorstep and begs you to rub your feet in her face. I'm used to girls like you showing me disrespect at work."

"I wasn't begging-"

I was shocked into silence as Arpita raised her hand. "I'm saying I'm willing to try it. When am I going to get another chance to do something like this? I don't want to be looking back when I'm an old auntie, wondering whether you were being serious and regretting having not done it. So, if you really want me to rub my feet in your face, then come on, let's do it. From my research last night, it

seems pretty tame and harmless.”

“But I don’t want to...I only asked because-”

I wanted to speak up and defend myself, yet every time I attempted to assert my authority, Arpita would simply quiet me down with a dismissive wave of her hand and roll of her eyes. I wondered if Arpita actually realised what was written on her Tinder profile. She had said she didn’t really know how to use it, and maybe that was the truth. Maybe her sister had written it, as I suspected, but Arpita hadn’t read it herself. Did she think this was all an invention in my head? I had honestly let myself get carried away the night before. When I thought that it was something that regularly happened, I was curious about why. Now that I knew it was all a joke, suddenly the idea wasn’t so appealing. Yet, Arpita seemed to have taken my drunken request as gospel and she wasn’t allowing me to escape from the implications. It felt way, way weirder to me when there was no one else involved. There was no longer a precedent. It wasn’t something that Arpita did often, it was something she was willing to indulge for me. She wasn’t the weirdo any longer. I was the weirdo!

“I just don’t know why I asked that last night,” I said, finally being able to conjure a complete, coherent sentence. “I couldn’t stop thinking about it.”

Arpita kicked her sneakered foot up and down, while it balanced atop the ankle of the leg beneath. “Thinking about me rubbing my sweaty feet right in your face?”

I looked up at the sound of those humiliating words, straight into the sight of the smuggest grin upon Arpita’s face, her pearly white teeth gleaming out from purple lips. She looked so confident, but also cheeky and playful. I realised that I had been imprinting stereotypical biases on her for months. I put her down as being quiet, reserved and from a conservative background. I assumed that just because she was an Indian immigrant that she would be offended and lack confidence. That was part of the whole reason why I’d found her Tinder profile so curious in the first place. The bio was the exact opposite of how I expected her personality to be. Of course, it had been revealed as a joke, but surely the fact her sister had felt comfortable making that joke in the first place meant that Arpita was a fairly laid-back and adventurous girl.

Suddenly, I felt extremely comfortable in her company. Like I could be myself, whatever that meant right at that moment. “Actually, kinda, yes.”

“So, what are you waiting for?” She climbed to her feet and took my hand. I didn’t know how to react as Arpita took complete control of the situation and led me to the front of the couch. “That’s it,” she said, as she held my hand delicately and aided me as I lay down on my back. “That’s it, down on the floor.”

"Ummm," I said as I reached a flat position on my own floor. It almost felt like the narrative was being forcibly seized from me and I'd become a mindless drone just doing as Arpita willed.

Arpita took a seat on the couch, just above my head. She bit her lip and sized me up. "How much have you been thinking about this?"

"A lot, you wouldn't believe."

"Well, lucky for you, your fantasy is about to come true."

God, was this really my fantasy, to be used by my Indian neighbour as somewhere to rub her sweaty feet? All of my friends fantasised about marrying Prince Charming or endless, hot sex with a stud, and here I was, pining over sweaty feet. Hell, I was about to marry my own Prince Charming, for Christ sake. Yet, I was laying on the floor in his apartment, about to have my face used as a foot wipe by a girl I barely knew. Not only that, but I had been the one that had originally asked for it to happen.

"Are you ready to be my foot wipe?"

"I...I think so." The truth was I didn't have a clue. Days ago, I had been a regular girl, and now I'd descended to...well, whatever the hell I was about to be. A foot wipe, a goddamned foot wipe. Another failure to put on the resume straight after college dropout.

Arpita shuffled on the couch above, until she was sat over me, with a sneakered foot planted either side of my head. I lay there, awaiting my fate, and stared up into her fascinated face. Already my nose wrinkled at a strong odour escaping from her sneakers. As she smiled down at me, I had the urge to just roll away and never look back. It hadn't actually happened yet, I hadn't been used as a foot wipe. So, what was stopping me from just getting up and putting an end to it? Arpita wasn't a big or strong girl, if anything, she was slender and dainty, so I could easily overpower her and remove her from the apartment. There was still a chance for me to protect what little remained of my dignity. I could be a normal girl and married to the man of the dreams.

I could have got up, but I couldn't. It was as if I was glued to the floor or something. My legs and arms felt heavy, and I was unable to pull myself from beneath Arpita. It was almost as if she could sense it too. I looked up into her big brown eyes, and she seemed to look back through my own and into the battle that was taking place within my mind. She leaned her elbows onto her knees, exuding comfort and relaxation, as she stared intently, waiting for me to respond or resist in some way, but none came. I simply didn't have it in me. I was exhausted from fighting my inevitable descent. From the moment I'd first opened Arpita's Tinder, my fate had been decided. It had been

a tormenting road, but I knew I couldn't resist becoming Arpita's foot wipe.

"You still want to do this?" she asked from up above. There was genuine concern in her voice, though, I could tell by the slight curvature of her lips and the glint in her eye, that she was hoping I did.

I was too embarrassed to speak, so I simply closed my eyes and nodded in the affirmative. I could try to deny it to myself as much as I wanted, but I knew deep down inside that I wanted to be Arpita's foot wipe more than anything. Just thinking of her rubbing her sweaty feet straight into my face made my tummy flip.

"I want to hear you say it, Poppy. I need to know this is what you want before I do it."

I inwardly sighed that Arpita was going to make me say it aloud. She phrased the request as if she was looking out for my own wellbeing. That me outwardly vocalising my desire was a way to assure her that it was what I truly wanted. However, I could detect by her tone that there was also an ulterior motive. Arpita simply wanted to enjoy hearing me make such a ludicrous request. If that's what it would take for it to actually happen, then I knew I had no choice but to give her exactly what she wanted.

"Please would you rub your feet in my face, Arpita?"

"Sweaty feet," she said. I could hear her toes fidgeting in each sneaker next to my ears. "I've just been for a long run. They're very sweaty. Ask me again, but say it properly this time."

"Please would you rub your sweaty feet in my face, Arpita?"

Her face beamed with a bright smile. "And why would you want me to do that?"

I stared up at her smug face blankly. I honestly didn't have an answer. From the time this whole thing had begun I hadn't truly understood what was happening. Reading that Arpita liked to rub her feet in peoples' faces had ignited something within me, a longing urge that I hadn't realised existed. There was something so fundamentally wrong with allowing someone to do that to me, to rub their sweaty feet all over my face, that I had an odd urge to allow it to happen. Now, even though I knew it was all a fallacy, that she didn't actually enjoy rubbing her feet in peoples' faces, the seed had been planted and I couldn't shake it. It was a lie. A joke that had been orchestrated by her sister, but even though, it wasn't going to be a lie for much longer. Arpita hadn't actually rubbed her feet in a face, but she was about to, and I was offering up my face for the job.

I felt being honest was the best course of response. "I don't know," I said. I could feel my eyebrows

wrinkling up as I tried to come up with some sort of reasoning, some explanation of why I wanted such a ridiculous thing. But there was none. I didn't know why I wanted it. The only logical truth I knew was that I shouldn't want it to happen, but even so, I still did. "But please do it, Arpita, please rub your sweaty feet in my face."

Arpita began to laugh. It wasn't mean or intended to humiliate in any way, it was just joyous, genuine laughter. Even with our cultural differences, we both knew what was about to happen was ridiculous. She was probably laughing because when she moved to the states, she came with many ambitions and dreams. She likely hoped to succeed in her career as a nurse and eventually meet someone. She'd settle down and have children, likely buy a house and build a life together. Of all the hopes that filled her dreams every night, I doubted very much that one of them was to rub her feet in a local girl's face.

Once she had finished chuckling, Arpita rolled her eyes and sighed, as if I was causing her an inconvenience. "Fine," she teased. "I suppose I can do it if you want it that much."

For some reason, her playfully reluctant attitude made me want it even more. I was extremely thankful that she wasn't making the weird experience any worse for me. Her attitude was almost making it seem fun. Like a laugh between two old friends. It would have been mortifying if Arpita had used the occasion to attack or demean me. There was still a small part of me convinced that she was going to leap to her feet and walk off laughing, mocking me for wanting such a thing. I could barely understand what the hell was going on with me, yet, Arpita seemed to understand fully and she knew exactly how to ease me into it. She was making my transition to her foot wipe appear as a normal every day occurrence.

She leant down and began unlacing her sneakers. "I suppose I should take these off." Once undone, she put her weight down onto her toes and popped her heels out of each sneaker, revealing a white, soaked-through ankle sock, contrasting against her brown skin.

Immediately, my nose wrinkled at the pungent odour that escaped from her shoes. I could feel the warmth of the scent snaking its way into my nostrils and leaving my head fuzzy from the intensity. My own feet didn't smell at all. It was a fact for which I was extremely proud. I could run for miles, not that I ever did, but if I chose to do so, it was a guarantee that my feet wouldn't stink. Arpita, however, seemed to have very smelly feet. Not in a bad way, I didn't have the urge to puke or anything. It was just a strong fragrance that seemed to engulf all of the surrounding air. I turned my head from side to side, trying to escape from the dominant scent. However, with a foot either side of my head, there was nowhere to go.

"What's wrong?" Arpita teased, noting the discomfort on my face as I flailed around. "Bit stinky for you?" She removed each foot completely from the sneakers and kicked them aside. With that, the

pungent odour increased and I struggled to stop myself from choking out a cough. She placed her toes on the floor, then lifted them slightly and we both looked at the sweaty footprint left on the wooden panels. Immediately, we looked into each other's eyes and Arpita raised her eyebrows. There was so much sweat waiting to be wiped.

While I tried to cope with the intense smell, Arpita lifted both of her legs with her arms beneath her knees, and hovered her socked feet above my head. I could just make out her face peeking around the side of her legs and watching with amusement as I gazed up at my impending fate. The soles of her socks were dirtied and I could make out the sweaty imprints of her toes. "You want me to leave my socks on or take them off? Which do you prefer?"

I was about to answer the question and say that I didn't know, but a sudden realisation hit me. What the hell did Arpita mean when she asked which did I prefer? Why would she think I had a preference? She must have thought that I'd actually done it before? That's what came into her mind when I had approach her. She had figured I was the expert when it came to this, whereas I thought she was. Her sister had really screwed us up with a simple joke on her profile. I felt even more mortified than previously, if that was possible. Arpita thought I had let other girls do this to me before, and on that basis, that I must like it. In her eyes, I was a foot-addicted weirdo that couldn't wait to have a pair of feet rubbed in my face. She must have thought she was doing me a favour by indulging my seedy fetish.

"With or without socks?" she asked again.

"I don't know."

"Shall we try it with socks this time?"

This time? Really? We hadn't even done it yet, and already Arpita was making clear that this was going to be a regular occurrence. Who the hell did she think she was? I was just lying on the floor of my own apartment, with my Indian neighbour sat above me, because I was curious. That's all. There was nothing else to it. I simply needed to know what it felt like to be used as a foot wipe. Once my curiosity had been satisfied, I could return to my normal life, get on with marrying Stephen and living the life of leisure that I enjoyed. The thoughts were revolving around my head as Arpita's socked soles inched closer and closer to my face. As they neared, the intensity of the smell increased until eventually every breath was filled with Arpita's scent.

"Last chance to back out," she said in a sing-song melody as her feet were about to contact my face. "Five, four, three, two, one..."

I took a deep breath as Arpita's feet completely blocked out all of the light. I then let out an

involuntary groan as her soles came to rest on my face for the first time. The damp texture of her socks settled softly against my skin. I took a deep intake of breath and for the first time, inhaled their unopposed pungent aroma that set both my nose and lungs ablaze. I became lightheaded and could feel myself teetering towards unconsciousness from the sensory overload. Every facet of my being was suddenly dominated and existed to be used by Arpita's feet. The entire experience was overwhelming. I'd dabbled in drugs during my early college days and I felt like I was back in one of those clubs, running on adrenaline as my heart thumped in my chest. I'd never felt more alive than at that moment.

"...and, you're officially my foot wipe!" Arpita said as she began to grind her soles back and forth across my face, roughly stretching and disforming my skin with the coarse texture of her well-worn socks. I gasped for breath and fumbled for a reprieve from the intensity of her exertions as the material forced its way into my nose and between my lips. For the first time, my tongue tasted the saltiness of her foot sweat and my face screwed up beneath her socks.

Regardless of how oddly good it felt, I became abundantly aware of exactly where I was and what I was doing. The intoxicating potency of her foot sweat had momentarily overwhelmed the humiliating reality. As I caught a glimpse of Arpita's grinning face between the arches of her feet as they moved around, I had a moment of clarity. What the hell was I doing? I was Poppy Fitzgerald, a pampered socialite and soon-to-be trophy wife of an up and coming investment banker. Here I was, allowing my Indian neighbour to rub her sweaty feet right into my face. I needed to get away and end this while I still had a chance.

I tried to wriggle out from beneath her foot-soles, but Arpita only responded by leaning slightly more of her weight down onto my features so I was unable to escape. The hardwood floor hurt against the back of my head, which was an odd contrast to the softness of her socked soles as they flexed upon my cheeks. The more she pushed, the more it hurt the back of my head, but I realised, to her, it probably felt soft. Was that all that mattered, how comfortable Arpita was as she used my face?

"Ah, ah, ah," she teased. I could feel her shifting around when suddenly her fingers grasped each of my wrists and lifted my arms. She pulled slightly, and the pressure on my face increased as I was forced into the bottoms of her feet. "No trying to escape. You stay down there and be a good foot wipe for me, okay?" With me trapped, Arpita began to rub her feet into my face with greater intensity.

The smell continued to torment me, coming at me in waves. Whenever I felt like my body was adjusting and growing used to the scent, Arpita would move her foot slightly and I'd be attacked with a whole new level of foot stink. She pulled on my one arm a little harder and stuffed my nose into the warm, sweaty nook beneath her toes. I could feel her socked toes grasping at my nose

and I let out another involuntary groan as the odour engulfed me.

"That's it," she said, "Take a big sniff. Don't fight it. What's it smell like?" She pulled her toes away and looked down at me, but I just hung there from my arms unable to fathom any kind of answer.

"Well, it's kind of nice for me," she mused as she disappeared from my view once more as her foot returned to my face. She ground the arch of her sole into my nose. "It's like a massage on the bottom of my foot. Just what I need after pounding the tarmac for miles."

For some reason, just hearing Arpita say how useful my face was to her made my tummy squirm in an excited way. Her comment was demeaning, I mean, if my parents had known this is what I'd grown up to be, they'd have been horrified. My mother had actually encouraged me to enter beauty pageants when I was younger, and I'd even dipped my toe in modelling thinking it would be an easy ride through life. It was harder than I'd thought however, and with my lazy attitude, I hadn't stuck at it. Yet, here I was, the same face that had made me a bit of money was being used as my neighbour's foot massager. I should have been as horrified as my mother would be, but I felt the opposite, the thought that this was all my face was good for actually made me excited. People had wanted to photograph my face, Stephen wanted to marry it, but Arpita saw it as nothing more than her foot wipe. That thought almost tipped me over the edge and I felt a fire growing between my legs.

Arpita suddenly forced a foot behind my neck, and encouraged me up into a sitting position as she relaxed back into the couch. She released my hands, and casually rubbed the sole of one foot into my face while the other foot kept me in place. "You like that?" she asked, as she dragged the socked foot up and down my face.

I couldn't respond and simply let her continue to wipe the sweat into my face for as long as she liked. Eventually, she switched feet and continued the onslaught, all the while she looked on, occasionally laughing and poking fun at me for letting her do such a thing to me.

Eventually, Arpita tired and removed her feet from my face. "So, how was that for you?"

"Ugh," I groaned out. It was such an overloading sensory experience that I couldn't clobber together a coherent sentence. "I, ugh, yes, so, ugh."

Arpita let out a delightful little giggle. "That good, huh?" She slipped her feet back into her sneakers and headed towards the door. "Well, I better go shower. I'll leave you to think about how that was for you"

Once Arpita had left the apartment, I lay back down on the floor, an exhausted, wreck. My face

was dripping with sweat from the onslaught and my hair was damp and matted, plastered to my reddened forehead. The experience had been completely exhilarating, beyond anything I could have possibly imagined. Even as I'd spent weeks fantasising to satisfy my curiosity, I'd never fully comprehended just how much of a sensory overload it would be as Arpita's foot wipe. I was disgusted with myself for allowing such a thing to happen. I was even more disgusted in myself knowing that I would want it to happen again.

I realised that Stephan would be back soon, so clumsily scrambled to my feet and headed for the shower. I could still smell Arpita's feet following me around, and I needed to wash myself clean before Stephen figured out what the hell had happened. It was probably a paranoid thought, but for some reason I just had a worry that he would know. That somehow, he would look at my face and no longer see the pretty girl he loved, but instead the neighbour's foot wipe. I scrubbed my skin with soap until my skin turned sore.

For the rest of the week, I answered Stephen's questions as if in a daze. I couldn't shake what had happened. Even as we did normal couple things, I had this lingering realisation brewing in the back of my head; I didn't deserve to be enjoying his company or time, because I was a filthy foot wipe. We went out for food, hung out around the apartment and even went to a bar one night. All the time, as I stared into his eyes, I was thinking about Arpita's feet and how it felt when I was beneath them. I'd never cheated on anyone in my life, but that's exactly what I felt like: a rotten, dirty cheat.

I'd hoped that having been used as her foot wipe once, that would be the end of it. However, the longing wouldn't go away, it was as if my desire to be Arpita's foot wipe was insatiable. There was something provoking me. Strangely, I felt cheated, as if I hadn't experienced what it was really like to be used as Arpita's foot wipe. Why? Because she'd been wearing socks. Yes, they were dripping with sweat and incredibly stinky, but still, they were fabric, a material, and not actually her feet. I regretted not asking her to remove them when she had offered. I wanted to know what it felt like to be her foot wipe, not her sock wipe. I reasoned it was because of this that I couldn't stop thinking about it. With this mindset, I justified my continuing desires as being reasonable.

It was for this reason that I found myself stood outside Arpita's door once again the following Friday evening. I couldn't even explain it. After the extremely humiliating experience of a week earlier, where Arpita had literally laughed down in my face while she rubbed the sweat from her socks into my skin: I was back. I was stood outside her door and I knew deep within me that I needed more. There was just something about the way it felt beneath her feet. Catching glimpses of her amused face as she rubbed the sweat deep into my skin. But it had been from her socks, and I needed more. I needed to know what it felt like to have Arpita's sweaty bare feet rubbed in my face. I wanted that skin-on-skin contact to truly experience what it was like to be her foot wipe. I knew it would be extremely humiliating, but for that reason, I wanted it to happen.

Arpita opened the door with a smirk. "You're back," she said, painfully stating the obvious for the both of us.

"Uh huh."

The smirk became a wide grin. "So, what can I do for you?"

"May I come in?" I asked with a trembling, tentative voice.

Arpita closed her eyes and shook her head in disbelief. She bit her bottom lip to suppress a laugh then stepped away from the doorway and outstretched an arm towards her lounge in a welcoming gesture. I dropped my head in disgrace and looked at the floor as I walked into her apartment, noting the slightest chuckle from her as I passed. We both knew what was about to happen. It was an inevitable conclusion that neither of us needed to skirt around.

On the wall were some paintings of various landmarks from around India and a few pictures of Hindu gods that I wasn't able to name. One had the head of an elephant which I found particularly eye-catching. The entire apartment was filled with the fragrance of lavender incense as it smoked on the lounge table. On her television there was movie that had been paused.

"I'm sorry, were you busy?" I asked, while nodding towards the television.

"It's no bother," she said. "Just some Bollywood movie. I've seen it before."

"I like your clothes," I said, which must have seemed pretty random to her, since I'd been staring at her for the past few minutes.

"Thanks, Poppy. It's called a kurti," she said, while gesturing down the length of her body. She was wearing a colourful top, a mix of oranges and whites, that was kind of like a much longer blouse that came down to below her knees. The sleeves ended mid-forearm with the cuffs lined with patterned stitching. The same pattern ran along the hem below her knees and the chest area covering her breasts. Poking out from beneath the garment were a pair of loose-fitting legging-like pants that ended at her ankles.

"Are you going somewhere? You're all dressed up."

Arpita smiled, but shook her head. "This is just loungewear for around the house. Like I said, I was watching a movie, nothing more exciting than that."

"Really?" I said, genuinely surprised as the outfit was extremely classy and seemed of high-quality material. I could imagine her dancing around in one of those big, Indian weddings I'd seen on TV. "You look so pretty."

Arpita winked and poked out her tongue. "You should see me in a saree or lehenga."

"Is that what you were wearing on your Tinder profile?" I asked without thinking. I was spluttering for conversation to avoid the inevitable. We both knew why I was there, but it was awkward to admit as much, and I was attempting to act as if everything was just friendly.

Arpita paused for a moment, and the awkwardness hung in the air between us. Finally, she crossed her arms and leant against the wall. A tiny smirk crept onto her face. "You tell me. Sounds like you've been looking at it more than I have."

I blushed and looked around the apartment, desperately trying to find something that I could use to change the subject. The truth was I had looked at the profile multiple times since the previous week's happenings, gazing longingly at that photo of her orange-painted toes and imagining how they'd feel on my face. In my panic, my eyes fell to her shoes. "Those are cute," I said, while nodding down to her colourful flats. They narrowed towards her toes and were covered in tiny mirror-like discs. I'd attempted to start-up a girly conversation, but cringed as I realised I had changed the topic of conversation to an even more dangerous subject.

"They're juttis, and they're extremely comfortable." She looked at me with mischief in her eyes, then popped a bare heel out of one of the flat-like shoes. "But they make my feet, so, so sweaty."

My mouth hung open as I took in the moist sheen catching the light on the sole of Arpita's foot. I had to pull my tongue back in before drool trickled down my chin. I looked up in panic and saw that Arpita was staring at me intently, almost sizing me up. Out of the corner of my eye I could see that she was lifting her foot and dangling the shoe from her big toe. I could feel my body trembling as I maintained eye-contact with her, all the while, I could just make out her foot was bobbing up and down while the shoe bounced around. I wanted more than anything to take a peek and find out what colour her toes were painted and if she was wearing her toe rings. I felt like a passenger in my own body as I fumbled for words, "Ugh, really?"

She nodded and bit her lip. "You wouldn't believe." She gave a pronounced blink of her eyes, and nodded her head once more. "So, so, sweaty."

I felt paralysed to the spot. "Ummm," I said, as I frantically looked towards her front door. It wasn't too late. I could probably escape before things escalated any further. It had been a rash decision

coming over.

Arpita slipped her foot back into her jutti and pushed away from the wall. She walked towards me while her hips shook from side to side in her orange kurti, as if a Bengal tiger stalking her prey. "You know what I need when my feet get all sweaty?" I gulped and looked towards the floor as she approached and I could feel her hot breath against my neck. She placed a fingertip beneath my chin and lifted my eyes to look in her own. "My foot wipe," she said.

I felt my knees buckle and I almost collapsed right there onto her floor. They were the words I wanted to hear, but also the ones that truly terrified me.

"That's why you're here, isn't it, Poppy?" She dipped her head slightly and peered right into my eyes. "You want me to use your face as my foot wipe again?"

I closed my eyes under her judgemental gaze and whimpered. "Yes, I do."

"Wasn't last week enough?" she teased. "I thought my feet worked your face over really well."

I took a deep breath, and said what had been on my mind ever since she'd left my apartment that day, "I need to know what it feels like without socks."

Arpita released my chin and almost broke down laughing. "This just gets better and better," she said, as she wiped a tear from the corner of her eye. "You American girls really are something, you know that? Do you all grow up longing for an Indian girl to make you her foot wipe? Am I a dream come true for you?"

I suddenly felt vulnerable and could feel my cheeks roasting to an inferno. "I should leave," I said, and turned to do so.

Before I could escape, Arpita reached out and grabbed my wrist. "Ah, ah, ah," she said in that now familiar melodic taunt. "My feet are all sweaty and you're not going anywhere until we do something about that, are you?"

My will was broken as soon as she said those words and I allowed Arpita to lead me to her couch. She had to push aside the coffee table so that I could squeeze down on the floor. Arpita, meanwhile, excitedly hopped onto the couch and dangled her feet either side of my head, still wearing those juttis. I could actually smell the sweaty fragrance escaping as she flexed her toes and a gap formed near her arch.

"Excited?" she asked, as she stared down at me through wide eyes. Before I could respond, Arpita

stretched her legs out and eased each of her shoes off, letting them drop onto the floor with a slap. "Oh, look," she said, as she moved her feet towards my face. "You're back down where you belong." A little giggle followed.

As I looked up at the nearing feet, I could see the sweat glistening on her brown soles. She wasn't lying at all when she stated that the juttis made her feet incredibly sweaty. They looked even worse than when she'd been for a run in her sneakers, and I was about to feel that slimy texture sliding back and forth all over my face. I gulped as her skin made contact for the first time.

"That's it," she said as she ground her sole into my cheek. "Get all that sweat off my feet."

I groaned loudly as her feet sloshed their way over every feature of my face. Immediately I knew it had been the right decision to come back and experience Arpita's bare feet. It was a far more intense experience as I could literally feel the salty sweat stinging my skin as it was transferred from her feet to my face. I realised that the previous occasion, with her socks, had only been playing at being Arpita's foot wipe. As I could feel her sweat dampening my eyebrows, I accepted that this was what it truly was to be a foot wipe. Arpita was using my face to remove the sweat from them without abandon; was there anything else on Earth more humiliating than that?

"I like the way my skin looks on your pretty pale face," she mused as she peered down in an almost scientific way and drummed her toes against my forehead. "Especially with the white polish." I could feel a sweaty imprint being left in their place. I tried to strain my neck to see her white nails, as I'd yet caught a glimpse from under her soles. "I've always been jealous of light skin. You know, back home, the lighter your skin, the more beautiful you're considered. I used to wish my skin was lighter when I was younger. I thought pale skin was way pretty. But, it looks prettier beneath my feet."

I was surprised by her revelation as I honestly thought Arpita's skin was beautiful. It seemed so smooth and blemish-free, and the tone was a gorgeous shade of brown.

As Arpita peered down at me, and carelessly dragged her feet all around my face, I felt completely humiliated. I could feel her sweat sinking into my skin. Her foot sweat was actually becoming one with my face, and the acceptance of that fact was mortifying. No one should have to experience such a disgusting insult. However, I felt completely overwhelmed by the humiliating feelings that arose within me the more her feet dominated and used my face to remove their sweat. I realised that I didn't want it to end, because I liked it. I actually liked the feelings ignited from being her foot wipe. I loved that my face was useful to her in the most pathetic way.

All my life, I had hated being embarrassed and having my cheeks light up as they transitioned from white to red. But, I recalled, that whenever it happened, my whole body throbbed as the blood

pumped through me. It was a buzzing, tingling feeling that lit up every nerve ending in my skin. It had always happened to me publicly though, and I associated that feeling with public shame. However, beneath Arpita's feet, I felt safe to just lay there and revel in the experience. It actually felt *good* for my body to warm up in this way, as if it was a reminder that I was alive. As it was a private experience between me and her, I felt safe.

Arpita being my foot tormentor added to the experience too. The fact she was from India and had come over here to my country and was now using my face as her foot wipe increased the intensity of my humiliation. Especially with the traditional way she was dressed as she did so. It was an exhilarating experience to be an Indian girl's foot wipe. I would have been devastated if any of my friends knew, but still, I rejoiced in being of use to her feet.

Finally, Arpita must have been satisfied that her feet were clean enough to return to her shoes. She lifted her soles from my face and slid them both into their respective juttis, no doubt to get completely sweaty all over again. She leant down and looked me straight in the face with her big brown eyes, those purple little lips curled into a smug grin. "Wow, your face is all red."

I knew she was telling the truth. I could feel how warm and flustered my face was. I only wondered whether that was because I was so embarrassed or my skin had been rubbed red raw from Arpita's exertions. I lifted a hand and ran a finger along my cheek, and let out a gasp as I noted the perspiration on my fingertip. Was that my own sweat from being trapped under Arpita's feet or was that her foot sweat, right there on my face.

"Okay," Arpita said as she stood up and made her way to the kitchen. "My feet are done with you."

Just like that, I was dismissed, apparently being unworthy of any further conversation or interaction. I suppose, in Arpita's eyes, all I really was good for was being her foot wipe. I was entirely to blame for that of course. Other than passing words in the corridor, our entire relationship had been focused around her rubbing her feet into my face. Maybe that's all I really was good for? My tummy trembled at the thought and I headed to the door, only pausing to suck the sweat from my finger and shuddering at the salty flavour. I knew exactly how awful it was going to taste, but still, I couldn't resist slurping it up. I only hoped Arpita hadn't noticed.

I returned home in a daze and Stephen was relaxing on the couch while flicking through the cable channels. "Hey babe," he said. "Did you have fun with your friend?"

"Lots of fun," I lied. Well, I was lying about the friend part. I had actually had fun beneath Arpita's feet but I wasn't about to tell him that, was I? I'd told him I was going to meet Helen for coffee again, when I'd actually walked a couple of feet down the corridor.

"Great." He clicked off the TV and sat up on the couch. "Well, there's something we need to talk about."

"Oh," I said, while walking towards the kitchen and clicking on the kettle to distract myself from the tremble tingling down my spine. Did he know what I'd been up to? "What is it?"

He put me at ease with a reassuring smile. "My supervisor has put me forward for an award at work. Best newcomer or something. It's all a bit of cringey back-patting if I'm being honest, but it comes with a bonus and chance of promotion, so fingers crossed."

"Oh my God, that's amazing." I began dancing on the spot, thinking about how fancy our wedding was going to be if he got a promotion. Of course, I was being a bit selfish, I always was, but I was genuinely happy for him too. "You so deserve it, baby," I said. "You're such a hard worker." He really was too, the complete opposite of me basically.

"It's Friday night. There's an award dinner we have to attend where they pick the winner. All-inclusive food and booze. It's a big deal so we can't miss it. I have to wear a dinner suit and everything. Do you still have that red dress from your birthday? It would be perfect and I'd love you to wear it."

"Of course," I said. I excitedly rushed over to give him a big hug and a kiss, but Stephen recoiled as soon I neared.

"Jesus Christ, Poppy," he said in disgust, while pushing me away. "What the hell do you smell like?"

"Ummm," I said.

"You smell like you've spent the afternoon in a shoe, for God's sake. Go have a shower will you." He held his nose in a mocking way and playfully slapped my bum, so it was obvious he was just messing around. Still, I was mortified to realise I was walking around smelling like Arpita's feet. It was hardly surprising though with the length of time she'd spent rubbing them into my face. I guess it was a third-person confirmation that my face was literally nothing more than her foot wipe after all.

The next morning, Stephen and I had gone out for a lovely breakfast to celebrate his good news. Lots of bacon, eggs and French toast. All washed down with delicious fresh-squeezed orange juice.

We returned to the apartment block and were greeted with Arpita relaxing out front in the communal garden. She'd laid out a blanket on the grass and was sat with her legs crossed while reading a book. She was wearing another one of those kurti outfits that she liked so much, but this time it was a mix of pinks and greens and there were no leggings beneath, I guess owing to the hot weather. To further support that theory, she'd rolled up the sleeves until they were above her elbows. Her black hair appeared to be tied back, but it was difficult to see as she was wearing a white sunhat. Most of her face was hidden behind a large pair of black sunglasses, though I could still make out the nose stud in her little button nose.

"Hey neighbours," she said, waving cheerily at us both as she let the book fall open in her lap. I noticed there was another pair of juttis neatly arranged in the corner of the blanket, and my eyes crept over to her bare feet, crossed at the ankles with her soles on full display. While we approached the entrance, she twisted and flexed her wrinkled soles in the sunlight, occasionally wiggling her cute little toes.

"Morning," Stephen said. "Nice day for it, huh?"

"For sure," she smiled. "I just love the way the breeze feels between my toes." She wiggled them again, this time more vigorously. She had to be taunting me with those feet out in public like that, she just had to be. She was rubbing it in my face clear as day! She was rubbing it in my face that she could...rub her feet in my face whenever she wanted! She was brazenly flaunting our filthy secret right in front of my boyfriend.

"Just like the sand on a beach," Stephen said, like the buffoon he was. Couldn't he see what Arpita was doing?

Arpita bit her lip and nodded her head with approval. She uncrossed her ankles and moved her feet onto the grass, clutching a few strands between her toes and gently tugging at them. "My feet are so sensitive," she said. "I just love how it feels on them."

"Probably why you women like foot massages so much, eh?" Stephen nudged me with his arm in jest, but I was struggling to pay attention and wasn't in the mood for his banter.

The contrast of the luscious, green protruding between Arpita's brown toes was enough to leave me mesmerised. I feared where this was heading and I needed to get away. "Hi neighbour," I said politely. "I hope you have a lovely day." I clutched Stephen's arm and hurried him towards the entrance.

"Ugh, nice to meet you properly," he shouted back, as I ushered him through the front door.

"You alright?" he asked. "What's the big rush?"

"I just don't want to burn," I lied. "You know how badly my pale skin catches the sun."

Stephen just shrugged in response to my bullshit.

Minutes later, we were watching TV together on the couch, but I just couldn't pay attention to what was going on with whatever show it was. All I could think about was Arpita's soles out there on that blanket, flexing and wrinkling without a care in the world. It must have been so comforting for her to know that she had a face to rub them on whenever she felt like it. I stared at the television screen without blinking, but I was hypnotised with thoughts of being elsewhere. Eventually, I could resist the urge no longer, and I had to say something.

"Do you want anything from the store?"

Stephen looked away from the TV with confusion. "Ummm, I don't think so, why?"

"I feel like going for a walk."

"I thought you didn't want to be in the sun."

Drat. He was right, of course. "I'll wear a hat. I'd just like some more fresh air while the weather is nice."

"If that's what you want. Do you mind if I just chill here though? I'm kinda beat."

"Of course, honey," I said. "I won't be long."

I left the apartment and headed downstairs. Despite nerves rattling my skinny frame, I knew I had to confront Arpita and stop all of this before it grew completely out of hand. Yes, it had been fun, but our shenanigans were beginning to interfere with my relationship and I couldn't allow that to happen. I simply couldn't think straight when I was with him, and my mind kept wandering back to Arpita's feet. Eventually he was going to notice something was up. Stephen was my meal-ticket, my free-ride through life and I couldn't risk losing that. I had zero qualifications or skills of any worth, so what the hell was I going to do without him? Yeah, I'd probably find another guy, I was good looking after all, but that was resetting the past few years and starting from scratch. There was no way in hell I was going to do that.

Arpita was still sat on the blanket when I entered the communal garden area. She was facing

towards the sun so didn't see me approaching from behind. As a result, I made her jump in surprise as I crept up.

"Oh, gosh, Poppy, you scared me," she said, with a palm placed upon her chest.

"I'm sorry," I said. "Do you mind if I join you? I'd like to talk."

"Sure, take a seat." She gestured towards the end of the blanket, nearest her feet. I was reluctant to sit there, knowing the proximity would make me uneasy, but there was literally no where else to sit unless I parked my rear in the dirt.

Once I'd sat cross-legged, Arpita stretched out her legs towards me and spread her toes. The pinkie came to rest against my thigh and I immediately felt my strength waning. Her toes just looked so pretty in the sunlight, especially the way the white polish lit up. Still, I was there to put a stop to things. "So, Arpita, I think we should stop with what we've been doing."

"Oh." She put a bookmark between the pages of her novel and removed her sunglasses. "What have we been doing?" There was the mischievous smirk on her face once again. She seemed to delight in putting me on the spot and making me outwardly vocalise our seedy encounters.

"You know," I said shyly, already feeling my cheeks come alive as I looked about the garden to check if anyone else was within earshot. "Your feet."

Arpita smiled, then shook her head. "What about my feet?" I felt her toes wiggling against my thigh. The next thing, her heel dropped onto my leg as she crossed her feet and used me as a make-shift footrest. I looked up, and Arpita was staring intently, as if challenging me to say something in defiance.

I looked down at her feet in my lap and melted. Her soles looked so smooth as they flexed and twisted with each wiggle of her toes. I couldn't help but reach out a fingertip and trace from her heel right up to her big toe.

"Mmmm, that feels nice," she said, while returning her sunglasses to her face. "Why don't you rub them a bit while I read?" With that, her entire attention returned to her book, as if she just assumed I would comply.

She was right to do so, as mere seconds later I was cradling her feet while I applied pressure to her arch with my thumb.

"So, what did you want to talk about?" she asked, without turning away from her book.

"Nothing," I said, while keeping my attention on her feet as I rubbed and kneaded them as best I knew how. I was hardly an expert when it came to foot massages. I was usually on the receiving end, whether it be at the salon or with Stephen at home. However, Arpita seemed to respond well to my attempts, gifting me the occasional moan or wiggle of her toes.

"That's what I thought," she said, as she turned a page. Suddenly, she looked up from the book and flashed me a pleased grin. "It's good to know all I have to do is wiggle my little toes and you'll come running. Just had to get rid of your boyfriend first though, huh?"

"It wasn't like that," I whined, although, I couldn't blame her for thinking that with how it looked. "It really wasn't." I had to wonder who I was trying to convince more, myself or Arpita. I shook my head at my own idiocy as I concentrated on caressing my fingers between her toes.

Arpita smiled with amusement at my pleas, then continued reading her book, paying me no mind though occasionally sighing in approval at my ministrations. We stayed like that until she'd finished her chapter.

The Friday of Stephen's award dinner came sooner than I was expecting. It's incredible how time seems to pass by quicker the older we get. I'd been standing in front of the mirror for about an hour, making sure every inch of my make up looked perfect. I'd gone all out, applying eyeliner wings and the reddest lipstick I could find, which matched perfectly with the dress Stephen had selected. It was a tight-fitting cocktail dress that hugged me in all the right places and pushed my boobs right out. I almost looked like Jessica Rabbit, though without the red hair.

I was running a few minutes late, but it was considered fashionable for a girl like me to show up after everyone else anyway. At least all eyes in the room would turn to look at me as I walked in. Hopefully that would make Stephen swell with pride and maybe it would even influence the result.

I locked up the apartment and was just about to click my heels down the hallway when I noticed something outside Arpita's door. There was an arrangement of pretty little flowers and a couple of lit candles. I thought it was cute, but also, didn't fully understand what it was all about. My first thoughts went to it being some kind of tribute to a deceased relative or the like.

Suddenly, I was distracted by the sound of a little bell ringing. I wondered if perhaps one of the neighbours had a new cat, until Arpita strode into the hallway and I realised the ringing was coming from her. She was wearing the most fabulously extravagant Indian outfit. It was a pink patterned dress split into two parts with her tummy area completely on show. I learned for the first

time that Arpita had a belly button piercing dangling from her svelte navel, as it sparkled and caught my eye. Each section of the outfit had intricately woven details, with the skirt-like portion displaying a series of golden peacocks right down to the floor. The top, which encompassed her breasts and upper arms, was elegantly detailed with fine embroidery. To complement the look, there was a pink and golden shawl laced around her back and draped over the tops of her outstretched arms. As a final detail, Arpita had a yellow jewel nestled between her eyes.

"Wow," I said out loud as if my mouth had taken on a life of its own.

Arpita giggled and rolled her eyes. "Hello, Poppy."

"You look, wow, stunning." I shook my head realising I was gawping.

"Thank you," she said. "That's very kind."

"Is everything okay?" I asked, while nodding towards her apartment door.

"Oh yes, it's the beginning of a festival to celebrate the arrival of Ganesh. It's just a little welcoming tribute I put together."

I stared at her blankly, not understanding what she was talking about or how to react.

"I've been just been out with some friends to celebrate," she added.

"So, that's why you're dressed up so beautifully. Is that your saree?" I asked.

"Close," she smiled. "Lehenga. You like it?" She gave a little twirl allowing the material to spread out like a ballet-dancer's tutu.

"It's gorgeous. You look incredible."

"As do you, Poppy. Are you going somewhere nice?"

"It's an award dinner for Stephen. He has a real chance of winning."

"Well, tell him congratulations. That's too bad though..."

She'd left the suggestion hanging in the air, and I couldn't help but be curious. "What do you mean?"

Arpita raised her eyebrow. "Well, I've been dancing for hours during the celebration," she said, while looking down and lifting the bottom of her outfit to reveal her feet. She was wearing sandals on this occasion. Very pretty strappy sandals with a loop around her big toe. Her toenails were now painted a hot pink which matched well with her current outfit. There were a number of silver toe rings of varying designs on each foot. A new piece of foot jewellery was also on display, a pair of large, silver anklets that appeared to be made up of bells, hence Arpita jingling when she'd turned up. She wiggled her toes impatiently. "I was hoping to kick these off and use my foot wipe." A devilish smile soon appeared on her face.

I gulped and instantly felt my face flush red as I eyed up her pretty feet on full display in those jaw-dropping sandals. They hardly hid any of her feet and they had a traditional design that matched really well with her outfit. I was honestly tempted to go with her into her apartment and let her do whatever she wanted to my face. There was just something irresistibly enticing about the way she openly spoke about using my face to rub her feet on.

However, I knew Stephen was my priority and it was an extremely important night for him. "I'm sorry," I said, while managing to tear my eyes away from Arpita's feet. She dropped her dress to cover them again soon after, which helped to clear my head and make things easier. "But I really can't miss this. It's very important."

"It's no bother," she said with a smile. "You do what you have to do. I hope you have a lovely evening." With that, Arpita jingled her way towards her apartment and stepped over the flowery offering on her doorstep.

I breathed a sigh of relief that Arpita hadn't pushed the issue any further and I was basically free to go and enjoy my evening. I pushed open the front door of the apartment block and breathed in the cool night air. I was about to step out, when something stopped me and I looked back. I tried to shake it off, but there was an urge growing within me. "Come on, Poppy," I said. "Stephen is waiting."

Yet, I felt frozen right there in the doorway. I couldn't get the image of Arpita out of my head. The outfit she was wearing was so delightfully exotic; straight out of a Bollywood movie. She looked like an Indian princess deserving of worship and reverence. I closed my eyes, and I pictured a scene; me on the floor, while Arpita, in all of her striking elegance, sat above me and using my pale face to rest her brown, decorated feet.

My knees went weak at the thought of spending Stephen's special night beneath Arpita's feet. It was so wrong, and such a vicious betrayal to the man that loved me, but I just couldn't stop thinking about being beneath Arpita's soles as she wiped the sweat into my face. It almost felt

fitting, like I was playing at being a normal person who deserved to be married to an amazing man. I was a fraud. A fallacy. A failure and a college dropout. What I really deserved was to be used as a foot wipe. That was all I was good for and my face was Arpita's to use whenever she felt like it. The Indian princess had wanted to use my face as her foot wipe and who was I to deny her wishes?

As if on autopilot, I pulled out my phone and typed a message to Stephen:

Me: Sorry, babe. I'm really not feeling very well. I'm going to head to sleep. Hope it goes well. Xx

I hesitated before sending the message. I knew what I was about to do would have serious ramifications, in both my relationship with Stephen and Arpita. It came down to me making a simple choice: my boyfriend or my neighbour's feet. It sounded absurd just thinking about it. To any normal human being there was clearly no comparison. But ever since the first time I'd read her profile, I had been changing. I was no longer a normal person. I was a foot wipe; Arpita's foot wipe.

I knocked on Arpita's door and took a deep breath.

She came to the door immediately, almost as if she had been waiting in expectation. As soon as she saw it was me, she closed her eyes in disbelief and shook her head in amusement. "Oh, look who it is," she said as she rolled her eyes. "I thought you had somewhere you needed to be, Poppy?"

"I do." I had to swallow before I could utter the next truth. "But being your foot wipe is more important."

Arpita almost smiled, but then she offered me a scowl and arrogantly leant against her doorframe with a huff. "Oh, really? I don't know whether you deserve it anymore," she teased. "When I say my feet are sweaty, I expect you to offer your face straight away." She looked at her fingernails as if she wasn't at all interested in my presence. She was playing the game and playing it masterfully. The more she acted like she didn't want to use my face, the more desperate I became for her to do so.

I looked at the floor in shame. "I know, Arpita. I'm sorry I let you down."

"That's putting it lightly."

"Please could I be your foot wipe?"

Arpita rolled her eyes once more, then an audible tut escaped her lips. She crossed her arms in

defiance. "Why should I let you?"

I knew she was toying with me, but still, if I had to play along to get back under her feet, then I'd do so. Maybe she felt I deserved to be tortured a little for not immediately dancing to her tune. I had an idea, and turned to look around the corridor, just to check there was no one else about. Feeling comfortable that we were alone, I lowered myself to my knees, careful to avoid the cute offering she'd put together for the celebration. I looked up, and saw that Arpita was gazing down at me with pursed lips and a raised eyebrow. I tried again, "Please could I be your foot wipe?"

It almost looked like there was a battle going on with Arpita's expression. As if she wanted to smile or break out in laughter, but her stubbornness was fighting to keep her face looking disinterested. She stood up straight, placed her hands upon her hips and emptied her lungs into a prolonged sigh. Next, her fingers spidered their way down her thighs and grasped a bundle of her skirt in each fist. With a flick of her wrists, she hiked it up to reveal her sandaled feet.

Arpita stared at me with wide-eyes, then jolted her head downwards. "Ask them," she said. "Ask my pretty feet."

I got the impression she was testing me just to see how much she could get away with, I suppose to gain a sense of just how much I wanted to be under her feet. I aspired to humour her. I stared intently at her pink toes and gave them my full attention. "Please may I be your foot wipe?"

"You can do better than that," she said.

I wasn't entirely sure what she meant. But something overcame me, and I leant forward and placed a soft kiss on each of Arpita's big toes. For some reason, I figured it was what she wanted me to do. I sat back onto my knees and spoke once more, "Please may I be your foot wipe?"

"That's much better." Arpita dropped her skirt and stood to the side. "You better come in then," she said.

I walked into her apartment and noticed the lighting was dimmed, instead there were a lot of candles dotted around the room. There were more Indian items on display than usual, including a stone statue of the elephant God on the kitchen table. I figured this must have been the Ganesh that had been mentioned, since there were a number of flowers and treats displayed beneath the statue.

Arpita joined me and didn't hesitate, pointing at the couch and abruptly saying, "Get in position, foot wipe. My feet are extremely sweaty in these sandals, and we just can't have that, can we?" Her annoyed façade dropped and she couldn't help but poke out her tongue. However, with the

way she was dressed and decorated, she looked like a commanding Indian princess, and I was powerless to oppose her order. I was almost blown away by the comfort with which she now ordered me around.

While Arpita looked on with hands on hips, I dropped to my knees and then lay face up on the floor. I must have looked ridiculous in my classy dress and with all of my make up perfectly applied. I got all glammed up to lay on the bloody floor.

"That's much better," she said, while circling me and looking down. "Whenever my feet want to use your face, you better get down on the floor and make it available for them, you hear me, Poppy? No excuses like you have to be somewhere with your boyfriend. My feet come first. How dare you think you can leave me with sweaty feet. What do you have to say for yourself?" Her tone was light and playful, despite the words sounding cruel and demanding. It was a ridiculous reason for scolding someone, we both knew it, yet still, I allowed her get away with castigating me.

"I'm sorry, Arpita," I said.

I could see by her smug face that was she amused by how much of a pushover I was. She had me apologising for not making my face instantly available as a foot wipe. What the hell had I become? I could just imagine Helen's face if she was here and watching everything unfold. Stephen too, what the hell would he be thinking knowing I'd chosen to lay on Arpita's floor than be at his dinner? I couldn't comprehend the thought of my parents seeing any of this as it unfolded.

Arpita lifted a leg and placed a sandaled foot on my face, squashing my cheek and pinning me to the floor. I could just make out from the corner of my eye, that she was stood imperiously in her traditional outfit with her hands placed on her hips, while she twisted and ground the sole of her sandal on my face, jingling her anklet in the process. I felt completely worthless beneath her feet, as if a conquered enemy, so if that was her intention, her tactic worked. After a few moments, she removed her foot without a word and sat on the couch up above me.

Arpita reached down and was about to remove one of her sandals, when her phone chimed and distracted her. As a result, she began texting someone while she casually rested her sandaled feet on my face. I imagined that she was so engrossed in whatever she was doing, that she hadn't realised she was using my face in such a thoughtless way.

I grit my teeth and persevered as her footstool for the first few minutes, but eventually the weight of her feet began to hurt my face. "Arpita, please, this is hurting," I whined from beneath the hard soles of her sandals. My nose was completely squashed to the side, almost flat upon my face. Similarly, my lips were beginning to go numb from the weight of her sandaled foot.

"Quiet," she said, while twisting her shoe on my lips a little harder. "Foot wipes don't talk. They wait to be used by the feet that own them. So, wait."

Her comment was enough to completely silence me, especially because she'd so brazenly announced that her feet owned me. I was willing to let her rub her feet in my face, but saying I belonged to her feet seemed a bit of a leap.

Suddenly, Arpita began speaking in Hindi rather loudly, and I realised she was talking to someone on the phone. The next second, she snapped her fingers down in my direction and pointed towards her sandals. The message was clear, and I began unstrapping the sandals around her ankles and sliding them off her feet. As I held them, I could already feel how sweaty they were, and it made me shudder in expectation of her feet upon my face.

I put the sandals aside, and while still talking on the phone, Arpita unceremoniously placed her sweaty feet upon my upturned face. I was left in darkness as the skirt of her outfit draped over the top of my head, but I could feel the moist texture of her wrinkled soles as they settled into place. The scent on that occasion was a sharp vinegar which made my nose tingle.

Arpita began to roughly knead and massage her feet all over my face. There was no consideration with the pressure she was applying, probably because she was distracted with her phone. At times, she'd clutch at my nose or lips with her toes and lazily drag my head from side to side. She seemed to particularly like rubbing her arches, heels and the balls of her feet onto my nose.

While she rubbed her feet into every inch of my face, she animatedly spoke Hindi into the phone and I could feel her occasionally gesturing with her hands. "Guess what," she said, as she lifted the skirt, separated her feet onto my cheeks and looked down into my face. "Oh my God," she said, as she kicked her feet around excitedly. "Your lipstick is all over your face." She held her soles up for me to see. "Is it all over my feet too?"

I nodded in the affirmative.

"It almost looks like you've been making out with my feet." She let out a loud laugh. "Anyway," she said. "That was my little sister, Pooja. She's coming to visit in a few weeks' time to look at colleges. I've been telling her how different things are over here to back home."

I immediately felt the colour in my face changing. I was becoming settled in being used by Arpita and this was the first time in a while that I felt uneasy. "Have you ugh, told her about any of this?"

Arpita smiled and raised her eyebrows. "Yep," she said, as she tapped her big toe on my lips. "I tell

her everything, and she just can't wait to meet you, foot wipe."

I went to say something in response, and Arpita's toe slipped into my mouth as a result. I was surprised, and didn't quite know what to do, but I noticed just how soft the underside of her toe felt against my tongue. I licked without thinking, and saw a look of shocked surprise appear on Arpita's face.

"What are you doing?" she asked. "Are you sucking my toe?" Suddenly, a barrage of chuckles followed and Arpita covered her eyes with her hand in disbelief.

I pulled my lips from her toe, and mumbled, "It was an accident."

"Well, it felt good whatever it was." She lifted her feet in the air and nodded at me with a knowing look. "Back in position, foot wipe."

I laid beneath Arpita's feet for what must have been hours that night, while she wiped them all over my face until every speck of sweat had been transferred. She especially enjoyed using my nose to scrape the toe jam from between her toes and she joked that next time she may have me lick it out. She may have been joking, but the suggestion made me squirm inside and I knew I'd do it if she demanded.

Once she'd finished using my face, Arpita lifted her feet and crossed them on the coffee table. I climbed to my knees and when I saw how smooth and beautiful her soles looked, I couldn't help but lean over and give them a kiss. My inhibitions had been lifted after already having kissed her toes out in the hallway and accidentally sucking one of her toes. I'd kind of fallen into a zone where all that mattered was Arpita's feet.

Arpita smiled as my lips touched her soles for the first time, and she nodded in approval for me to continue.

"Thank you for using my face as your foot wipe," I mumbled into her wrinkled soles as I kissed. Arpita merely stroked my hair in response.

While Stephen was no doubt finding out whether he had won the award or not, I was kneeling in Arpita's lounge and placing soft kisses on her pampered soles in gratitude for them rubbing their sweat into my face. We remained that way until Arpita became sleepy and sent me home.

When I finally stumbled into the apartment, Stephen was already home and sat on the couch in complete silence. He looked up as I entered, then scowled and looked away. "How could you?"

"I'm so sorry, babe," I said, as I closed the door and turned to face the music.

"Well, I won the award," he said. "Not that you care."

"Wow, congratulations, babe. Of course, I care, don't be like that."

"You really hurt me," he said. "Tonight was extremely important to me and you bailed."

"I was sick," I lied.

"Sick, really? You look just fine and you've clearly been out somewhere."

"I got better."

"I called and text you multiple times. You didn't pick up once. Clearly you were too busy with whoever you were with."

"I'm sorry."

"Where have you been?" His face was furious and I could tell I'd made a big mistake. There were a few times in the past that I'd annoyed him with my selfishness, but I'd always been able to talk my way out of it. On this occasion, it seemed like I'd crossed a line and things weren't going to be so easy. Part of the problem was, I couldn't tell him where I really was.

"Nowhere," I said. I couldn't exactly tell him the truth, could I? Just imagine it. Oh, I was next door, laying on the floor while our Indian neighbour rubbed her sweaty feet in my face.

"Look at the state of your lipstick," he said, while pointing an accusatory finger. "Who have you been kissing?"

I strode forward to protest my innocence. "No one, I swear," I said. Seconds later I realised that was also a lie. Sure, I hadn't kissed anyone on the lips, but I'd been smacking my mouth against Arpita's feet all night long.

Stephen sealed his mouth in a pensive grimace to the point where his lips disappeared. "I've overlooked a lot of the bad parts of your personality for too long."

I was outraged that he'd say such a thing. "Bad parts of my personality? Excuse me? Who the hell do you think you're talking to?"

He shook his head. "Honestly, Poppy, I don't know who you are anymore. You're not the same person as when we met. You've become a lazy, selfish, brat. You're pretty much useless most of the time. All you do is sit around doing nothing." He was right about that, he just didn't realise how far down I'd sunk.

His face was like thunder, probably angrier than I'd ever seen, and he was clearly on the warpath. There were actually droplets of spit shooting out the side of his mouth as he spoke. "I work hard all day long, and what do you do? You just laze around the house all day doing nothing, or go for coffee with your friends. Who pays for that, I wonder? Not you, that's for sure. The one time I need you there for me, and you bail and go off kissing up to someone else."

"Let me explain," I said, while gently touching his arm, but he pulled away and headed towards the bedroom.

"Get away from me," he said. He then shook his head with confusion. "And there's that smell again, what have you been up to?"

Obviously, I remained quiet, with a sheepish look on my face.

"We need to rethink our relationship," he said over his shoulder.

"What?" I asked, as my arms began to tremble. Suddenly things had become very real. "You can't be serious?" I had all kinds of thoughts flashing through my head. Where the hell was I going to go for a start? There was no way in hell I was moving back in with my parents. They thought I was enough of a failure for dropping out of college. The last thing I needed was them judging me for blowing my relationship too. What would I do for money? I'd had an easy life mooching off Stephen, but I couldn't bear the thought of actually having to work for a living or something. I had pretty much zero skillset.

"I'm deadly serious. This isn't working out. I think you need to pack up your stuff. You can stay tonight, but I want you out tomorrow."

Just like that, I'd been demoted to sleeping on the couch that night.

I was sat in the hallway, back leant against the wall with mascara trickling down my cheeks after crying for the past hour. Next to me was a cardboard box with my most precious belongings. Stephen had been kind enough to say I could return for my clothes and the rest of my stuff the following weekend. For now, all I had was a couple of sentimental items and a poxy phone charger. I was just about to call my parents in reluctant desperation, when I heard the front door of

the apartment block slam shut. Footsteps soon made their way up the staircase.

"Poppy, is that you?" Arpita was dressed in her work scrubs having just returned from one of her shifts. Her face sank to a concerned frown as she neared. "What's wrong?"

"Stephen kicked me out."

Her mouth fell open in genuine shock. "But, why?" she asked, as she crouched down next to me. "You seemed like such a good couple."

"You want the truth?"

"Well, of course?" With her sat so close, I could smell the musk from the exertions of her tiring shift.

"Because I was supposed to go out with him last night. He won an award and it was a big deal." I looked at her expectantly, but I could see from the confusion on her face that she hadn't fully processed the implications of my confession.

"And, so what?"

"I pretended to be sick and came to your apartment instead, remember?"

I swear for a second, I saw a slight grin try to creep onto her lips, before it was swiftly replaced with a furrowed brow of concern. "Wait, so what are you saying? You broke up because you chose being my foot wipe over being with your boyfriend?"

I had to look away from her in shame. "Pretty much."

Arpita took my head in her hands. Then as I flinched in surprise, she leant forward and placed a soft, delicate kiss right in the middle of my forehead.

"Ugh, what are you doing?" I asked, as I tried to wriggle free from her grip.

"Kissing my face," she said in a deadpan tone, without a hint of laughter.

"Your face?"

"Well." She smiled and let out a cute chuckle. "Let's say my feet's face. Your face clearly belongs to my feet now, doesn't it? Just like I said. You chose them over your own boyfriend, and I know

you'll choose them every time from now on, won't you? Admit it."

I wiped my nose and didn't really know what to say in response.

Arpita flashed me the most deliciously evil of arrogant smiles while she cocked her head. There was a glint in her brown eyes, like they spied an opportunity. "The question is: what are we going to do with you now?"

"How do you mean?"

"Well, what's your plan? You clearly need one. You can't sit in the hallway for the rest of your life."

"But what am I going to do? I don't have a job or anything. Without him I literally have nothing going for me. We were going to get married. He said I was useless. He's not wrong, is he? I'm completely useless. Look at me." I thumped my head against the wall behind.

"Well," she said. "That's not entirely true, is it?"

I wiped my eyes and gave one final sniffle. "What do you mean?"

"I don't think you're useless. You've been pretty useful to me so far. I mean, I work long hours, just like your boyfriend. Well, ex-boyfriend. You could move in here for free. Still do nothing all day. Doesn't sound like it would be much different than over there."

I narrowed my eyes and pondered her words. "For real? You'd let me do that?"

"Sure, why don't you come inside and we'll talk it over?"

As we passed through her door, it was all too much. I broke down into tears as I returned to the place that had ended my relationship with Stephen. Everything had gone downhill since I'd stumbled across Arpita's Tinder, and here I was, considering moving in with the girl who freely used my face as her foot wipe. The implications were undeniable. If I accepted her offer, I was going to end up as her permanent foot wipe, no doubt about it.

"Awww, don't cry, Poppy," she said, as she took my hand and guided me towards the couch. I was about to settle down amongst the cushions, ready to pour my heart out, when she placed a hand on my shoulder and eased me down towards the floor. "Why don't you show me how useful you can be?"

I looked about the apartment in confusion as Arpita eased me down onto my back and took her

usual place above me. Before I could say anything, she'd kicked off her flats, pulled the socks off and shoved both sweaty feet straight into my face. As soon as I smelled that stinky odour, all of my problems seemed to disappear. I felt my head becoming light as I breathed in her pungent aroma and suddenly Stephen leaving me didn't seem that big of a deal. I was safe under Arpita's feet, and I had no responsibilities other than letting her rub the sweat from her feet straight into my face.

Arpita smiled down at me as she wiped her sweat all over my cheeks and forehead. "See, you have nothing to worry about. You can stay here with me. You don't have to get a job or worry about any adult things. You just stay down there and be a good foot wipe for me after work every day when I need you. That can be your job, sound good?"

"Yes, Arpita," I mumbled against her moist, wrinkled soles as they rubbed off the sock fuzz onto my skin. She was right, merely considering that this was the only responsibility I would ever have in life was a peaceful thought. I suddenly felt released of all burdens and expectations.

"But I'll expect you to do a good job. You're going to have to really take care of my feet after a long day if you want to stay here. I'm a hard-working nurse, on my feet all day, and I need a loyal foot wipe."

I decided now was the chance to really show my worth. "Please, Arpita," I said. I delicately held her foot and placed a soft, gentle kiss on the sole. "Please let me stay here with you and be your foot wipe." I closed my eyes and began affectionately nuzzling my face all over the bottom of her foot. I jammed my nose between her sweaty toes and loudly inhaled her stinging scent.

I heard a soft giggle come from her. "Wow, you really are full of surprises."

"I'm sorry," I said, concerned I'd upset her with my enthusiasm.

"Oh, no," she said, as she sat back into the couch and clicked on the TV. "Keep doing that while I think about whether to let you stay or not." I began kissing all over each of her toes, and as my lips brushed against them, Arpita clapped her hands excitedly. "How about some more of that toe-sucking you were doing, yesterday?"

At first, I was nervous, but once I slipped her big toe between my lips, everything felt right. I made out with her pink-polished toe with more passion than I'd ever shared with Stephen. Things were progressing at lightning speed and I was going with the flow. I knew what I needed to do to latch onto a free-ride, and I would do whatever it took for Arpita to take me in. If anything, I was lucky, finding another place so quickly after Stephen had kicked me out. It never even entered my head that I was surrendering to the very feet that had lead to me being kicked out in the first place.

I heard a loud sigh above. I glanced up and saw that Arpita's eyes had narrowed. She appeared content and beyond relaxed as she was snuggled back between the cushions. "I've made it," she whispered.

I released my lips from her big toe with a pop. "Huh?"

"The American dream. I took a risk coming here to be a nurse. My parents tried to talk me out of it. They had someone lined up as a husband for me. If you'd told me as I was boarding that plane, that six months later I was going to be a successful nurse, have my own place, and come home everyday to"—she slipped her toe back between my lips and closed her eyes as I sucked—"this, I'd have never believed you. It's truly the American dream. You really know how to make us foreigners feel welcome, huh?"

I removed my mouth from her toe and began kissing down the length of her sole. I wasn't even embarrassed by her words anymore. They were the truth, after all. "It's only what you deserve, Arpita."

As I kissed, she gently stroked my cheek with the other foot. "You're such a good foot wipe."

I felt my face redden, but not with shame, as for the first time it was pride.

"Come here." She beckoned me towards her and I shuffled forwards, placing my chin upon her thigh. In response, she gently stroked my hair. "Will you be like this for me always?"

I spoke from somewhere true within me, "Honestly, I don't know, Arpita. This is all very new for me, but, it feels right to be at your feet."

She grasped my chin in her pretty fingers and tilted my head so she was looking me straight in my eyes. After a second, her eyes narrowed and she bit her lip. "Better get back to them then," she said, as she crossed her legs up on to the coffee table. I moved down and began kissing her feet once more, but Arpita startled me with a snap of her fingers. "Show them some love," she said in her gorgeous, Indian accent.

I nodded and slipped my mouth back around her big toe. I caressed it with my tongue as I sucked and slurped all around as Arpita lazily looked on from the comfort of the couch.

"I'd have moved here years ago if I'd known this is what was waiting for me," she said as she closed her eyes. "Massage between my toes with your tongue, Poppy. I like how it feels."

I, of course, obeyed instantaneously. I realised that when I stopped worrying about what I was doing, I could appreciate the scents and flavours of Arpita's feet without pre-judgements. The salty taste between her toes was actually delicious, finer than any wine I'd shared with my girlfriends. With each further lick, the more I wanted.

"You like how that tastes?" She asked, her face screwed up in disbelief. "That's ten hours on the hospital ward you're eating up there."

"I actually love it," I said, before dipping my tongue in for another slurp. I had no fears anymore and there was no longer any reason to hide what felt right.

She giggled and wiggled her brown toes as my pink tongue snaked between them. "Well, I'll have more for you after every shift. This can be the highlight of your day."

"Ugh," I said, as I licked with extra vigour, digging out her toe jam with enthusiasm. "I can't wait."

"I think living together is going to work out," she said, as she stroked my hair with the other foot, and I had to agree.

As I wrapped my lips around her toe, life suddenly seemed less complicated now my only purpose was to be Arpita's foot wipe. Right then, as I bobbed up and down on my Indian princess's feet, I assured myself that this was one thing I wouldn't fail at.

Comments

Anonymous

Yes!! \$6 well spent 😄

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Anonymous

Fantastic, as always. But I must say that I noticed something missing from some of your stories, An epilogue. You always end it in such a great and clear way but I'm always left wondering what's her life like after a couple of months, and is she still happy with the decision she made. all in all, thanks for another unique story.

2021-04-03 14:29:19.014000

Anonymous

Absolutely LOVE the stories, you are the Picasso of F/F stories like this and this story lined up alongside all your other epic stories. Loved that Arpita was of Indian descent and her living the 'American Dream' was partly having her white female foot wipe. Plus also Arpita being a nurse, a perfect job to really build up some sweaty feet and toejam. It seems like especially with Arpita stating her sister was coming to visit soon and Poppy moving in, that you set it up to be continued for a future chapter, which would be amazing.

2021-04-04 15:39:28.251000

Anonymous

I wish I could be one of the toe-sucking submissives of your stories. So incredibly hot. You are a master at this.

2021-04-05 10:54:05.132000

Anonymous

My friend, you are really good! Your way to make things happen, the dynamics in your stories, they are exactly the way I like it. The internal fights, the surrender, the domination, everything is great for me, for my liking. It's a pity we will have to wait a whole month for the next one...

2021-04-05 18:33:05.141000

Anonymous

Epic absolute perfection- love the race play, and breaking down and surrender as the realization sets in Arpita's foot sweat means more to her than her fiancé. Also loved the intensity ratcheting up as Arpita gains confidence over her white slave- and begins pushing her farther down the rabbit hole- as well as cementing her ownership over her white neighbor. Hope there is

more to come - can't even imagine how arrogant and do

2021-04-14 22:02:09.206000

Anonymous

Ian's dominant her sister will be - since the whole concept was her idea to begin with -that should be intense—would love to see Arpita's mother come for a visit and demand that Poppy's mother come and assume her rightful place On Her knees at Arpita's mother's feet and ass-and have Her mother enslave Poppy's mother -and make her beg for Arpita's mother's ownership

2021-04-14 22:06:04.234000

Anonymous

Love everything about it, another amazing story ML!

2021-05-02 10:15:53.841000

alexander1089

God damn dude.... This was so fucking good. Do you think there would be a sequel coming with goddess arpita's sister and stuff ?

2021-06-03 21:41:08.878000

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