

Undercover Blonde Ch. 23

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Sep 21, 2026

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Sam buckled himself into his Porsche Macan and started the engine. The underground parking garage of his building was quiet, most of his neighbors already out for the night or settled in for the evening. He'd dressed in a navy linen suit and white shirt open at the collar. On his wrist was the Rolex Submariner he always wore when he needed to project wealth and success. It was the same style of outfit he'd worn last Saturday at Elysium, the same presentation of affluent professionalism.

He shifted into reverse and pulled out of his spot, then navigated through the garage's maze toward the exit ramp. The sound of the engine echoed off the walls, amplified by the enclosed space.

The clock on his dashboard read 9:09 PM when he emerged onto the street. Plenty of time to make it to Elysium for his 9:30 meeting with Jonas, Kiran, and Zheng, three tech executives from an enterprise software company based in Boise. They were finalizing a contract worth just north of \$600,000, a solid commission for Sam that would more than cover tonight's expenses and then some. More importantly, they were the perfect clients for his purposes tonight. Young, probably mid-thirties at most, flush with corporate money and expense accounts that could absorb whatever they spent without raising eyebrows during the next quarterly review. They were eager to celebrate a deal that wasn't even finalized yet, treating the signing as inevitable rather than pending, which meant they'd be loose with their spending and enthusiastic about whatever entertainment Sam provided.

But the clients weren't what occupied Sam's thoughts as he navigated through Miami's Friday night traffic.

The truth was that every quiet moment, every pause in conversation, every gap in his schedule, his thoughts returned to the same obsessive loop. Evie at Elysium, in the VIP section, doing whatever it was she was actually doing up there.

"One month," he muttered to himself, accelerating through a yellow light as it started to turn red. "Just one fucking month left."

The timeline created a pressure that had been building inside Sam, a tightness in his chest that felt like a countdown clock ticking toward zero. Evie had been gone for two months already. According to what she'd told Joe, she'd return after three months total. That meant Sam had roughly a month, maybe less, to confirm what she was doing while she was still there.

If he didn't get answers now, while the operation was still active, he never would. Once Evie returned to Joe, once she walked back into their condo and their marriage, she could tell whatever story she wanted about her three months away. She could describe what she'd been doing in whatever terms made her feel comfortable, and Joe would believe her because Joe always believed the best in people, especially the people he loved.

Without firsthand knowledge, without having seen it with his own eyes, Sam would have no way to verify or contradict whatever narrative she constructed. He'd have to stay silent.

Joe deserved to know what his wife had really done during those three months so he could make informed decisions about their marriage based on reality.

At least that's what Sam told himself. The justification felt solid, based on friendship and loyalty. But beneath it, if he was honest with himself in the privacy of his own thoughts, lurked something less noble.

A horn blared behind him. Sam realized he'd been sitting at a green light, completely motionless, while his mind wandered down paths he'd been walking all week. He pressed the accelerator harder than necessary, the Porsche lurching forward as the driver behind him swerved around, middle finger extended through his window.

"Fuck you too, bitch," Sam muttered, but without real heat. His attention was already being pulled backward in time to memories.

Sam couldn't remember the exact year Joe had introduced him to Evie, but he remembered the coffee shop, the one with the uncomfortable wooden chairs and overpriced lattes that Joe had inexplicably loved. Sam had arrived first, waited at a table near the window, and was scrolling through his phone when Joe walked in.

Except Joe hadn't been alone. He'd had a woman with him, and Sam's first reaction, he remembered this vividly, had been genuine confusion. For a moment, maybe two or three seconds, Sam had actually wondered if Joe was playing some kind of prank on

him, because the woman Joe was leading toward their table was gorgeous. Not pretty, not cute, but genuinely, objectively beautiful in a way that made people look twice. And Joe, as much as Sam loved his friend, had never been the type of guy who dated women who looked like that.

Joe was solid, reliable, kind. Joe was the friend you called at two in the morning when your car broke down, and he'd show up without complaint. Joe was loyal and honest and everything you'd want in a best friend, but Joe wasn't the guy who walked into coffee shops with women who could be models. Except apparently, he was now. Because there she was, walking beside him.

She'd been wearing simple clothes that day, jeans and a cream-colored sweater that looked soft and comfortable. Sam remembered that detail clearly because it had struck him as significant somehow. Her blonde hair had been pulled back in a ponytail. She'd been holding a thick book under her arm.

Joe had introduced her with obvious pride. "Sam, this is Evie. Evie, this is Sam, my best friend."

She'd smiled and extended her hand. "Joe talks about you constantly," she'd said. "I feel like I already know you."

They'd sat and talked for probably two hours that afternoon. Sam couldn't remember most of the conversation's specific content anymore, but he remembered his evolving impression of her. She was genuinely intelligent, not just smart but perceptive in ways that made her observations cut through surface bullshit to reach actual truth. She could hold her own in any conversation, whether about Joe's engineering work, Sam's sales strategies, or broader topics about politics, culture, psychology. She remembered details about people's lives that others forgot, asked follow-up questions weeks later about things mentioned in passing.

And she was beautiful, effortlessly so. She wore minimal makeup that day, maybe just some mascara, but she didn't need more.

Over the years that followed, Sam's impression had only deepened. Evie was everything she'd initially appeared to be and more. She was courageous in quiet ways that people often overlooked. After her father was murdered in the line of duty, she'd essentially raised her younger brother while their mother worked multiple nursing shifts to cover medical bills and keep the family housed. She'd deferred her own dreams, worked retail

jobs she was overqualified for, supported David despite his problems and poor decisions, all without complaint or self-pity.

In social settings with Sam and Joe's friend group, Evie had always been warm without being flirtatious. She'd always engaged with Sam directly, seemed to actually enjoy their conversations. She'd been playfully teasing about his revolving door of dating conquests, rolling her eyes when he'd show up to gatherings with yet another new girlfriend whose name he could barely remember by the next month.

"You're going to run out of women in Miami at this rate," she'd said once at a barbecue, smiling but with an edge of genuine concern beneath the joke. "What happens then? Do you start importing them from other states?"

Sam had laughed and made some dismissive comment about supply never being an issue when demand remained constant. But he'd appreciated her directness, the fact that she treated him like someone worth calling out rather than simply tolerating.

Multiple times over the years, Sam had thought to himself, often with mild envy, that Joe had hit the jackpot, found a unicorn, got impossibly lucky in ways he probably didn't even fully appreciate. Evie was the kind of woman every man claimed he wanted but few actually deserved or could handle.

And then, intelligent, kind, responsible Evie emerged from an employees only area at Elysium, wearing something designed to attract male sexual attention.

Sam's cock stiffened in his pants just remembering it.

This was what made it so compelling. It wasn't just any stripper. Miami was full of beautiful women taking their clothes off for money. Sam had been to strip clubs before, had paid for private dances, had appreciated the fantasy they sold without ever believing it was real or meaningful. Those women were performers playing roles, and everyone involved understood the transaction.

But this was Evie, good girl Evie, Joe's wife, the woman who baked cookies and asked thoughtful questions and wore modest sundresses. This Evie was potentially working as a stripper, potentially selling her body in whatever capacity strippers at VIP sections actually sold themselves.

The cognitive dissonance between who she had been and who she might be now was what drove his obsession to the point of distraction.

If Evie was selling herself, actually prostituting, would Sam want a piece of her too?

Yes. The answer came immediately, without hesitation. If Evie was available for purchase, he imagined paying whatever fee was required, getting to see and touch what he'd never even allowed himself to fantasize about before because she was Joe's wife, completely off-limits, existing in the mental category of "do not even consider."

But if she wasn't really Joe's anymore, not in any meaningful sense, if she was everyone's for the right price, then the prohibition dissolved. She'd be just another transaction, another service provider in an industry built on transactions.

He forced his thoughts in a different direction, back toward the justification framework he'd constructed and reinforced constantly over the past week.

This was about protecting Joe, about loyalty and doing the right thing

They'd been friends since elementary school, when they'd both been assigned to the same group project in Mr. Harrison's social studies class and discovered they lived two blocks apart. They'd gone through high school together, double-dated to prom, attended the same state university where they'd been roommates for two years.

That history mattered. That friendship was real and deep, built on foundation of shared experiences and mutual support that couldn't be dismissed or minimized. It demanded Sam's protection of Joe's interests, especially when Joe couldn't protect himself because he didn't know what was happening.

If Evie was lying about "serving drinks and chatting with clients," if she was actually dancing naked or prostituting herself, Joe needed that information. He needed to make informed decisions about his marriage based on truth.

And if Evie was telling the truth, if she really was just gathering intelligence for the FBI without compromising herself, then Sam would back off completely. He'd apologize to Evie for doubting her, would feel relieved that his investigation had been unnecessary, would let the whole thing drop and never mention it to anyone. He'd chalk it up to protective instincts gone too far, excessive caution born of genuine friendship concern.

The rationalization felt solid as Sam repeated it to himself for the hundredth time that week. It created a framework that justified what he was about to do, a moral architecture that positioned his investigation as service to friendship rather than voyeuristic obsession.

Traffic thickened as he approached the entertainment district, luxury vehicles surrounding him on all sides. Bentleys, Mercedes, BMWs, Maseratis, all heading toward

similar destinations for Friday night entertainment. Neon signatures of nightlife establishments competed for attention along the strip, their colors, reds and blues and greens, reflecting off Sam's windshield in shifting patterns.

Sam checked the dashboard clock again. 9:22 PM, eight minutes until his scheduled meeting with the clients. He was maybe three minutes away from Elysium now, the traffic crawling at frustrating pace as they all converged on the same concentrated area.

His phone buzzed in the cupholder. Sam glanced down and saw Jonas's name on the screen. He activated the hands-free system.

"Jonas, what's up?"

"Hey Sam, we're pulling up now. You here yet?"

"Two minutes out," Sam replied, watching the traffic inch forward. "I'll meet you guys at the entrance."

"Sounds good, man. This place looks sick from the outside."

"Wait till you see the inside," Sam said, then ended the call.

The Porsche finally broke free from the worst congestion and Sam accelerated, pulling into Elysium's parking lot a minute later. The valet station was busy, a line of gleaming vehicles waiting for service. Sam joined the queue, his fingers drumming against the steering wheel as he waited.

When his turn finally came, a young man approached his window with a professional smile.

"Good evening, sir. Welcome to Elysium."

"Thanks," Sam replied, stepping out of the vehicle and handing over his keys along with a fifty-dollar bill. "Take care of her."

The valet's smile widened at the pre-tip. "Absolutely, sir. Enjoy your evening."

Sam pocketed the claim ticket and looked toward Elysium's entrance. A line of well-dressed men waited to enter, and Sam spotted his three clients near the back, looking around with the excitement of tourists in an unfamiliar city.

Sam took a moment to orient himself, adjusting his suit jacket, making sure everything about his presentation screamed success and confidence.

He squared his shoulders and began walking toward his clients, every bit the successful software sales executive bringing valuable customers for Friday night entertainment.

The three tech executives from Boise looked precisely as he'd expected, dressed appropriately but visibly out of place. Jonas stood at the front, practically bouncing on his toes as he surveyed the entrance. Beside him, Kiran fidgeted with his glasses, while Zheng maintained a composed expression.

"Gentlemen," Sam called as he approached, extending his hand first to Jonas. "Perfect timing."

"This place looks insane," Jonas said, accepting the handshake with enthusiasm. "Boise doesn't have anything remotely like this."

Sam moved to Kiran next, gripping his hand firmly. "Nothing even comes close," Kiran agreed, glancing at the line of people ahead of them.

Sam completed the handshake round with Zheng, who simply nodded, his eyes tracking a Ferrari pulling up to the valet station.

"Elysium is the premier establishment in the city," Sam explained, positioning himself as their experienced guide.

"How often do you bring clients here?" Zheng asked.

"When the situation calls for it," Sam replied. "High-value deals deserve proper celebration."

Twenty minutes later, they reached the entrance. The bouncer examined their IDs before waving them through. The heavy door swung open, revealing Elysium in full Friday night glory.

Jonas froze two steps inside, creating a momentary traffic jam. "Holy shit," he whispered. Kiran stopped beside him, mouth slightly open as he tried to process everything at once, the atmosphere, the stages with dancers in various states of undress, the sound system, the lighting system, the sea of customers.

Even Zheng's composure cracked slightly, his eyebrows rising as a dancer in a sparkling two-piece outfit and six-inch heels glided past them.

"This is professional entertainment," Sam said, guiding them forward. "Not some college town strip club."

A hostess in a black dress approached, tablet in hand. "Welcome to Elysium. Do you have a reservation?"

“Sam Stafford, party of four,” Sam replied.

She checked her tablet. “Gotcha. Mr. Stafford. Please follow me.”

She led them through the main floor, navigating between tables of patrons. Their table wasn’t directly against any stage but offered clear sightlines to the performance areas. Jonas immediately claimed the seat with the best view.

“This works perfectly,” Sam told the hostess as she handed them menus.

While his clients settled in, pointing out features of the club to each other, Sam allowed himself a moment of satisfaction. This was the scenario he’d spent the past week constructing.

Elysium’s management likely wouldn’t grant VIP access to a solo customer, but a guy who brought high spending clients on corporate expense accounts? That was someone valuable to the club’s business.

Management would notice and if Sam played it right, they’d see him as the kind of customer they wanted in VIP, someone who generated business.

At least, that was the plan.

Sam conducted his scan of the room while his clients absorbed the atmosphere. Each cocktail waitress received scrutiny before being dismissed. None were Evie. He assessed every dancer performing on the stages. Again, no Evie.

His attention drifted to the staircase leading to the VIP section. A mountain of a man stood guard at the bottom, arms crossed over his chest, tablet tucked under one arm. He remained motionless except when someone approached, then performed brief interactions before either allowing entry or sending patrons away.

The VIP section itself remained hidden from view, elevated and secluded. Whatever happened up there remained completely separate from the main floor’s ecosystem.

“Is that guy a professional wrestler or something?” Kiran asked, noticing the direction of Sam’s gaze.

“Former MMA fighter, I think,” Sam replied, redirecting his attention to their immediate surroundings.

The table to their left hosted a group of bankers, judging by their conservative suits and the three bottles of premium vodka already sitting in ice buckets. To their right, a bachelor party had settled in, the groom wearing a ridiculous sash with “Last Night of Freedom” printed across it.

On the main stage, a brunette executed a complex maneuver around the pole that displayed remarkable strength and control, not just sliding up and down but performing something closer to aerial gymnastics than dancing.

"Is this normal quality for Miami clubs?" Kiran asked, leaning toward Sam to be heard over the music.

"This is top tier," Sam confirmed. "One of the best in the city, maybe the best."

Zheng was already counting out bills from his wallet, preparing to tip though the dancer hadn't even finished her routine yet. Jonas leaned forward in his seat, completely absorbed.

"Tip well if you want attention from the better dancers," Sam advised. "The girls notice who appreciates their performance."

A cocktail waitress approached their table. She was attractive, in her early thirties, with a professional demeanor that suggested she'd been working in the industry for years.

"What can I get for you gentlemen tonight?" she asked.

"I'll have a Macallan 18, neat," Sam said.

Jonas ordered rum, Kiran a martini, and Zheng opted for tequila. The waitress smiled and departed to fill their order.

They were halfway through their first drinks when a redhead approached their table. She wore a navy blue sequined bikini that complemented her pale skin and copper hair.

"Room for company?" she asked, directing her question toward Jonas.

"Absolutely," Jonas replied, his voice rising slightly in pitch.

She slid into the seat beside him. "I'm Red. And you are?"

"Jonas," he managed. "These are my colleagues, Kiran and Zheng. And our host, Sam."

"What brings you boys to Miami?" Red asked, leaning closer to Jonas.

"We just closed a major software deal," Jonas explained, pride evident in his voice. "Sam suggested we celebrate."

"A man who knows how to treat business partners," Red observed, casting an approving glance toward Sam before returning her attention to Jonas. "Tell me about this deal."

Jonas launched into an explanation that somehow made enterprise software sound like the most fascinating topic on earth. Red asked follow up questions, laughed at his jokes, and gradually reduced the space between.

“You know,” she said after several minutes of conversation, “once we get to know each other a little better, I could show you what a private dance at Elysium is like.”

Jonas was nodding before she finished the sentence. “I’d love that.”

An Asian dancer in her mid-twenties approached next, introducing herself as Luna. She targeted Kiran, sitting beside him and asking about his role in the company. Kiran’s initial nervousness dissolved under her attention, transforming into engagement.

Zheng remained at the table with Sam, seemingly content to observe rather than participate. They discussed contract details and expense procedures while watching the main floor’s activity.

Sam spotted Brandy from last week working another table across the room. Their eyes met briefly, and she gave a subtle smile of recognition. After finishing with her current customers, she navigated through the crowd toward them.

“Sam,” she greeted him warmly. “Good to see you back. Brought friends this time?”

“Business associates,” Sam replied. “Jonas, Kiran, and Zheng. Gentlemen, this is Brandy.”

“Pleasure,” she said, her gaze sweeping over all three before settling back on Sam.

“How’s your night going?”

“Getting better,” Sam said. He tilted his head fractionally toward Zheng, the gesture smooth enough that only Brandy caught it.

Brandy turned toward Zheng. “Your friends seem occupied. Would you like some company?”

Zheng, who’d been reserved moments earlier, straightened in his chair. “Of course.”

“The private dances here are absolutely worth experiencing,” Sam said. “Part of what makes Elysium special.”

Brandy exchanged looks with Red and Luna. Within minutes, Red was leading Jonas toward the private rooms, Luna guiding Kiran, and Brandy extending her hand to Zheng.

“I’ll wait here,” Sam told them. “Maybe get a dance later.”

Left alone at the table, Sam nursed his Macallan slowly, watching the girl dance on stage, occasionally monitoring the VIP staircase.

His clients returned twenty to thirty minutes later, each bearing the unmistakable expression of men who’d received what they’d paid for. Jonas immediately launched into

enthusiastic commentary.

“That was incredible,” he declared, dropping back into his seat. “Red is amazing.”

Kiran nodded in agreement. “Luna was very talented.”

“Interesting experience,” Zheng said, which from him constituted high praise.

They ordered another round of drinks, their wallets now open, inhibitions lowered. This was the pattern Sam needed to establish, clients spending freely, demonstrating his value to management.

Brandy reappeared beside their table. “Enjoyed yourselves, gentlemen?”

After receiving a chorus of affirmation, she turned to Sam. “What about you? Ready for your turn?”

Sam nodded, standing. “Order whatever you want,” he told his clients. “I’ll be back.”

He followed Brandy through the crowd toward the private rooms. She led him into one of the chambers, closing the door behind them. Music started playing automatically.

Before Brandy could begin her routine, Sam held up his hand. “Can we talk for a minute?”

She paused, one hand already reaching for the zipper at the back of her dress. “Sure.”

She leaned against the small platform, arms crossed. “But you better not proposition me for something not on the menu or tell me about your troubled marriage. I’ve heard enough of both this week.”

“Neither,” Sam said, managing a small smile. “I’ve been thinking about the VIP section since last week. I brought these clients tonight partly to show I’m serious about becoming a regular.”

“And you want to know how to get upstairs,” Brandy finished for him.

“Exactly. What’s the actual process?”

“Management makes all VIP decisions,” she replied. “Dancers have zero input.”

“But you could mention to the right people that I’m interested,” Sam suggested.

“I could,” she agreed. “That’s all I can do though.”

“I’d appreciate it,” Sam said. “Now, I don’t want to waste your time. You came to dance.”

Brandy smiled. “That’s what they pay me for.”

She moved to the center of the small platform and began her routine, her body responding to the music’s rhythm. Her hips swayed as she ran her hands along her

sides, the movement drawing Sam's attention despite his wandering thoughts.

Where was Evie right now? Working upstairs in VIP? Home? And where was home? Did the FBI provide her with an apartment? Was she renting? The questions circled through his mind even as he watched Brandy reach behind her back, finding the zipper of her dress and slowly pulling it down.

Brandy let the dress slide off her shoulders, catching it before it fell completely. She held it against her chest for a moment, teasing, before letting it drop to the platform.

Underneath she wore a pink lace bra and matching thong.

Sam's attention sharpened. Brandy moved closer to where he sat. She turned, presenting her back to him as she unhooked her bra, letting it fall away before facing him again, one arm positioned across her breasts.

The music shifted, the beat becoming more insistent. Brandy dropped her arm, revealing herself fully as she continued dancing. Her hands moved over her own body, tracing curves, drawing his gaze to follow their path.

She stepped down from the platform and approached his chair. "You look like you need to relax," she said, her voice lower now.

Before Sam could respond, she straddled his lap, her nearly naked body settling against him. The warmth of her skin registered immediately, her perfume stronger at this proximity. She began moving to the music, her hips rolling in a slow grind against him.

Sam's body responded despite his distracted mind, his cock beginning to harden as Brandy continued her movements. She leaned back slightly, her breasts at eye level, then forward again, her lips close to his ear.

"That's better," she murmured, clearly feeling his erection.

She increased the pressure of her grinding, her pussy pressing firmly against him through her thong. Sam moved his hands to her waist before he caught himself, remembering the rules.

"You can touch," Brandy said, noticing his hesitation. "Just keep your hands where I put them."

She guided his hands to her hips, and Sam's grip tightened slightly as she continued grinding against him. The friction was intended to maximize his arousal, and it was working. His cock was fully hard now as Brandy worked her body against his.

The song built toward its crescendo, and Brandy's movements became more intense, her breath quickening in a performance of shared arousal even as her expression remained composed. She ground down hard one final time as the music peaked, then held the position for several beats before the song faded.

She stood, stepping back with a satisfied smile. "Better?"

"Yeah," Sam admitted, heart pounding.

Brandy retrieved her bra and dress, redressing quickly. Sam pulled out his wallet, counting out bills, the room fee plus a generous tip. The extra money was partly for the quality of her performance and partly investment in maintaining their connection. If she was going to help him get upstairs, he needed her to remember him positively.

"Thanks for agreeing to help with management," he said, handing over the cash.

Brandy accepted the money with a nod, tucking it away. "Someone will probably approach you before the night ends." She pulled out her phone. "Actually, let me text my manager now while you're here. That way they know to keep an eye on your table."

She typed quickly, then slipped the phone back into the small clutch she'd left by the door. "There. Done."

They returned to the main floor, where Brandy departed to work other tables while Sam rejoined his clients, who were now fully comfortable, spending freely.

Jonas had already booked a second private dance with Red. Kiran was tipping dancers between sets, receiving smiles and waves in return. Even Zheng had relaxed, actually laughing at something Luna said when she stopped by their table briefly.

Sam encouraged their spending, knowing each dollar they dropped built his credibility with management. The night progressed, his clients growing increasingly loose with their corporate cards while Sam remained vigilant, watching for any sign of Evie though he was sure he wasn't going to see her.

Around midnight, a man in his forties approached their table. He wore a tailored charcoal suit, his salt and pepper hair styled. His bearing conveyed authority, clearly someone with decision making power.

"Gentlemen," he said, his voice carrying easily over the music. "I'm Vincent, one of the managers here at Elysium. I wanted to personally thank you for choosing us tonight."

Sam immediately took the lead, extending his hand. "Sam Stafford. These are my clients from Boise, Jonas, Kiran, and Zheng. We're celebrating closing a major software

contract.”

Vincent shook each of their hands in turn, but his attention remained primarily on Sam.

“I hope everything has been to your satisfaction,” Vincent said.

“Exceeded expectations,” Jonas answered before Sam could respond. “This place is unbelievable.”

“We pride ourselves on providing a premium experience,” Vincent replied, then turned his focus back to Sam. “Mr. Stafford, might I have a word with you privately? Just for a moment.”

Sam felt his pulse quicken. “Yes, of course.”

He stood, buttoning his suit jacket. “I’ll be right back, gentlemen.”

Vincent led him away from the table, navigating through the main floor toward a side corridor Sam hadn’t noticed before. They passed the restrooms and continued to an unmarked door. Vincent produced a keycard, swiped it, and pushed the door open.

The room beyond was small but well-appointed, clearly designed for private business discussions. A desk, two leather chairs, and nothing else. The music from the main floor became muted the moment Vincent closed the door.

“Please, sit,” Vincent said, gesturing to one of the chairs as he moved behind the desk.

Sam sat, forcing himself to appear relaxed despite the adrenaline now coursing through his system.

“Brandy mentioned you’ve expressed interest in our VIP services,” Vincent began, settling into his chair.

“That’s correct,” Sam replied. “I bring business clients to Miami regularly. I’m always looking for ways to provide premium experiences.”

“What interests you about VIP?” Vincent asked, his eyes studying Sam’s face.

Sam leaned forward slightly, maintaining eye contact. “When I’m entertaining high-value clients, I need to know they’re receiving service that matches their expectations. From what I understand, VIP offers that level of service.”

Vincent nodded slowly. “VIP access requires careful vetting. It’s not simply about having money to spend, though that’s certainly part of it. We’re looking for compatibility with the environment, an understanding of discretion, and the ability to maintain appropriate boundaries.”

“I understand,” Sam said. “I work with executives and senior decision makers regularly. Discretion is part of my business.”

“Your spending tonight suggests you understand the value of premium service,” Vincent observed. “And your clients are clearly enjoying themselves. That demonstrates you know how to facilitate a positive experience.”

Sam simply nodded, not wanting to oversell.

Vincent opened a drawer and removed a business card, placing it on the desk between them. “For clients who demonstrate the right qualities, we can expedite VIP approval. Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday evenings are available for new members.”

Sam reached for the card but didn’t look at it yet, keeping his attention on Vincent. “And what would that entail specifically?”

“A five-thousand-dollar access fee per visit,” Vincent explained. “That covers entry to the VIP floor. Any additional services like private dances and drinks are charged separately.”

“Monday to Wednesday,” Sam repeated, as if considering the logistics. “What about Friday or Saturday?”

“Those nights are reserved for established VIP members only,” Vincent said firmly. “We don’t make exceptions.”

Sam processed this restriction, his mind working through the implications. Weekends would be the premium nights, certainly, when the biggest spenders came through, but he had no idea what Evie’s actual schedule was. Elysium operated seven days a week. For all he knew, she worked Tuesday and Wednesday. Or Monday through Wednesday. Hell, she might work every night for all he knew.

Sam nodded slowly, then glanced down at the business card for the first time. Vincent’s name, title, and a phone number. Nothing else.

“I appreciate you taking the time to discuss this with me,” Sam said, slipping the card into his wallet. “Let me think about it. The Monday to Wednesday timeline might not align with when I typically have clients in town, but I’ll review my schedule and get back to you.”

Vincent’s expression showed mild approval, as if Sam’s measured response confirmed he was the right type of client. “Sounds good. Take your time. When you’re ready to move forward, call that number. We’ll arrange everything.”

He stood, indicating the meeting was concluded. Sam rose as well.

“Thank you for the opportunity,” Sam said, extending his hand.

“Thank you for bringing quality clients to Elysium,” Vincent replied, shaking his hand firmly. “We appreciate professionals who understand what we offer.”

Vincent led him back through the corridor to the main floor. They parted near Sam’s table, Vincent disappearing into the crowd while Sam returned to his seat.

Sam’s heart was still racing as he sat back down. He’d done it. He’d gotten approval for VIP access. Five thousand dollars and he’d be upstairs, where Evie worked, where he could finally see what she was actually doing.

The thought sent a thrill through him that he immediately tried to suppress. This was about protecting Joe, he reminded himself. This was about getting the truth.

But beneath that justification, another voice whispered that he was going to see what Joe’s perfect wife has become.

“Everything okay?” Kiran asked.

“Just some VIP membership discussion,” Sam replied, keeping it vague. “Nothing urgent.”

Jonas leaned in, lowering his voice. “Are you seriously considering VIP? That must cost a fortune.”

“Worth exploring for future client entertainment,” Sam said, deflecting. “But tonight’s about celebrating our deal.”

By 1 AM, his clients were ready to leave, thoroughly satisfied with their night.

Kiran declared it the best strip club he’d ever experienced.

“Nothing in Boise even comes close,” he insisted as they walked toward the exit.

“Doesn’t even compare,” Jonas agreed, slightly unsteady on his feet.

“I’ll probably expense the entire night,” Zheng admitted, which from him was the ultimate endorsement.

As they approached the door, Sam glanced back at the VIP staircase one final time. The same bouncer stood guard, a barrier between Sam and whatever secrets lay beyond.

Outside, they joined the line at the valet station.

“Sam, seriously, thank you for tonight,” Jonas said. “That was a lot of fun.”

“My pleasure,” Sam replied, shaking hands with each of them in turn. “Glad you guys enjoyed it.”

“Best client entertainment ever,” Kiran added, grinning. “You’ve set a very high bar.”

“We should finalize those contract details Monday morning,” Zheng said, ever the professional even after hours of drinking. “Nine AM still work for you?”

“Absolutely,” Sam confirmed. “I’ll have the final documents ready for signatures.”

A black Escalade pulled up, their Uber. Jonas opened the door, then turned back. “Have a good night, Sam.”

“You guys have a safe ride,” Sam replied.

“See you Monday,” Jonas called out as he climbed into the vehicle.

The Escalade pulled away, leaving Sam alone at the valet station. When his Porsche arrived moments later, Sam handed the young man another fifty and slid behind the wheel.

He sat motionless for a moment, engine idling, and pulled Vincent’s business card from his wallet. Monday to Wednesday only. The restriction felt designed to keep him away from whatever happened on the real money nights.

He started the engine and pulled away from Elysium, a plan already forming in his mind. If Monday to Wednesday were his only options, then Monday to Wednesday it would be.

Sam guided his Porsche into the valet lane at Elysium, checking his watch as he slowed to a stop. It was 8:45 PM Wednesday night, his third visit to the club in less than two weeks.

“This is seriously upscale,” Frankie said from the passenger seat. “Not like the places by the airport.”

“That’s why we’re paying premium,” Sam replied, shifting into park. “Different class of establishment.”

Jimmy leaned forward from the back seat. “Better be worth it at these prices. My ex-wife’s alimony doesn’t pay for itself.”

The valet approached, and Sam stepped out, handing over his keys with a fifty-dollar bill. His coworkers exited the vehicle, adjusting their jackets and straightening ties. Both men had dressed appropriately, Frankie in a charcoal suit that made him look more conservative than he typically behaved after a few drinks, Jimmy in navy with a pocket square.

Sam had selected these two as his companions for tonight. Frankie Jones, senior account executive, late thirties, married with two kids in private school. Jimmy Hansen, VP of Sales, early forties, twice-divorced, perpetually searching for wife number three while claiming he wanted nothing serious. Both men knew Miami's nightlife scene well enough not to appear out of place, but neither had ever experienced Elysium's VIP section.

"Remember, we're celebrating the Boise deal closing," Sam reminded them as they walked toward the entrance. "Plus our strong Q2 numbers. Completely justifiable business expense."

"Team building," Jimmy agreed with a grin. "Very important for morale."

"My kind of morale," Frankie added.

They stood in the short line outside Elysium.

"So, what made you think of this place again?" Frankie asked as they waited.

Sam had his answer ready. "I'm trying to develop premium client entertainment options. When we close deals, taking clients to Capital Grille isn't enough anymore. I want to offer experiences they can't get in Boise or Cleveland or wherever they're from. VIP access here gives us that edge."

"Smart," Jimmy nodded. "The Boise guys couldn't stop talking about this place."

"Exactly. Word of mouth from happy clients is the best marketing we can't buy."

Sam had spent the last two days selling them on Elysium as the perfect base of operations for client entertainment. Elysium provided exclusive access, networking opportunities, sophisticated atmosphere beyond typical strip clubs. The pitch had worked. Both men were eager to evaluate the VIP experience for themselves.

Once inside, Sam steered them directly toward the VIP staircase, not bothering to pause for drinks or watch the dancers on stage. He'd been mapping this approach since Monday morning when he'd called the number on Vincent's card, expressing interest in membership.

He'd picked Wednesday because it made operational sense. Wednesday should have more dancers working than Monday or Tuesday. More dancers meant better odds of seeing Evie.

Marcus stood at the base of the stairs, a mountain in human form. Arms crossed over his massive chest, expression impassive, he guarded the VIP access point.

“Good evening,” Sam said, stopping at the podium where Marcus stood behind a mounted tablet. “Sam Stafford. We have VIP access arranged through Vincent.”

Marcus’s eyes flicked over the three men, assessing. “IDs, please.”

They produced their driver’s licenses. Marcus examined each carefully, comparing faces to photos, then tapped something on his tablet.

“Wait here a moment,” he said.

Marcus stepped back, speaking quietly into what appeared to be a radio clipped to his lapel. Sam caught fragments, “Stafford party of three” and “first time VIP access” before Marcus’s voice dropped too low to hear.

Two minutes stretched into three, the wait feeling endless. Finally, Sam spotted Vincent emerging from the crowd, navigating through dancers and patrons.

“Sam,” Vincent called, extending his hand with a warm smile. “Welcome back to Elysium.”

They shook hands, Vincent’s grip firm and confident.

“These are my colleagues. Jimmy Hansen and Frankie Jones.”

Vincent greeted each man individually. “First time in our VIP section, gentlemen?”

Both nodded.

“We have some brief paperwork to complete before you head upstairs,” Vincent explained. “Standard procedure for all new members. Should only take about ten minutes. If you’ll follow me?”

Vincent led them away from the staircase toward the same side corridor Sam had visited on Friday night.

The office appeared exactly as Sam remembered, small but tasteful, with a desk and leather chairs.

“Please, have a seat,” Vincent gestured to the chairs as he moved behind his desk.

He opened a folder containing several documents, the top page bearing Sam’s name.

“As I mentioned when we spoke Monday, VIP membership requires certain agreements,” Vincent explained, sorting papers into three stacks. “Nothing unusual, primarily focused on privacy and conduct expectations.”

He slid a document toward each man. “This is our standard non-disclosure agreement. It prohibits photography or recording of any kind within the VIP section, prevents sharing

information about other guests or their activities, and restricts discussion of club operations with non-members.”

Sam scanned the document, noting the professional legal language. This wasn’t some hastily drafted waiver. Corporate attorneys had crafted these protections.

“Violation results in permanent ban and potential legal action,” Vincent continued. “We take our members’ privacy extremely seriously.”

Jimmy raised his eyebrows but remained silent as he read.

Vincent slid a second document toward each man. “This is our membership agreement. It outlines that access is limited to approved nights, the club reserves right to revoke privileges at any time, guests are responsible for their behavior and any damages, and inappropriate conduct with staff results in immediate expulsion.”

Sam nodded.

Jimmy glanced up from his reading. “Guess we’re in the big leagues now,” he joked, his voice betraying a hint of nervousness.

Sam signed his name on each designated line, watching as Vincent witnessed and dated all signatures. Vincent then filed the originals in a cabinet behind his desk.

“Now for the financial structure,” Vincent said, returning to his seat. “The entry fee is \$5000 per person, so \$15,000 total for your group tonight.”

Sam felt his stomach tighten slightly despite having prepared for this number. \$5000 just to walk upstairs, just to look for Evie.

Vincent turned his computer monitor toward Sam. “I’ll charge the card you provided when we spoke Monday. Please verify the amount is correct.”

Sam nodded at the \$5,000 figure displayed on screen. Vincent processed the transaction, waited for confirmation, then turned to Jimmy and Frankie.

Jimmy pulled out his card immediately.

Frankie did the same, and within minutes Vincent had processed all three transactions.

“Perfect. Everything’s in order.”

For a brief, disorienting moment, Sam confronted the reality of what he was doing.

\$15,000 disappeared in less than two minutes. \$10,000 of that was Jimmy and Frankie’s money, corporate expenses they’d approved for “client entertainment research.” They

thought they were helping Sam develop business resources. They had no idea they were funding his investigation into his best friend's wife.

The deception created a queasy feeling in his stomach.

"Shall we?" Vincent stood, gesturing toward the door.

They returned to the VIP staircase where Marcus still stood guard. Vincent nodded to him, and the security guard stepped aside, gesturing for them to ascend.

Sam's pulse quickened. He was moments away from entering the space where Evie potentially worked.

A thought struck him suddenly. Evie would see him the moment he walked upstairs.

There would be no anonymous observation, no watching from a distance.

What would she do? Would she ignore him, pretend not to recognize him, maintain her cover identity while silently panicking? Would she pull him aside the first chance she got and demand to know what the fuck he was doing there? Would she assume he'd already told Joe and was there to confront her publicly, to expose her in front of everyone?

If her FBI story was real, his presence could compromise her cover with the criminals she was supposedly investigating. They might notice her reaction to seeing him, might start asking questions that unraveled whatever identity she'd constructed.

If the FBI story was bullshit, his presence would force her to either maintain the lie in person, to look him in the eyes while pretending to be someone else, or finally admit the truth about what she was really doing here.

Either way, there was no scenario where she'd be happy to see him.

Sam forced himself to think it through logically. Evie was too smart to have a huge reaction. She wouldn't blow her cover, FBI or not. If she saw him, she'd likely maintain her dancer persona. Maybe she'd give him a subtle look of warning or find a way to pull him aside privately later, but she wouldn't panic publicly. She was too intelligent for that, too self-controlled.

He'd come this far, constructed elaborate justifications, paid the fees, brought coworkers as cover. Whatever happened when Evie saw him would happen. He'd deal with the consequences.

With each step upward, Sam's anticipation built. His heart rate increased, breath shortened. This was it.

At the top of the stairs stood a large door. Sam pushed it open and stepped through into Elysium's inner sanctum.

The sensory shift was immediate and dramatic. The thunderous music from downstairs became a sophisticated background presence, reduced to a volume where normal conversation was possible. The lighting transformed from the main floor's strobing chaos to an ambient glow that flattered everyone it touched. The entire atmosphere exuded exclusivity and intimacy.

The VIP section was smaller than the main floor but felt more spacious due to superior design and lower occupancy.

Sam's eyes swept the space immediately, hunting for Evie.

Approximately twenty guests occupied various seating areas, some in pairs, others in small groups. Sam counted six dancers circulating among them, engaged in conversation.

Sam's gaze darted from face to face, examining each dancer carefully. No blondes, no one resembling Evie. He scanned a second time to be certain, studying each woman more thoroughly. Nothing.

The disappointment was palpable. He'd spent \$5000 to get through that door. He'd constructed elaborate justifications, brought two coworkers as cover, built this night up as the moment everything would finally become clear. And she wasn't here.

Or maybe she was in the middle of a private session with some client right now. Or maybe there was a dressing room back there, some backstage area where dancers prepared between appointments or took breaks. Just because she wasn't visible in the main VIP lounge didn't mean she wasn't somewhere in this section.

The logic steadied him.

Vincent had followed them upstairs and now gestured toward an elegant bar at the far end of the room. "I suggest you start there. Get drinks, meet some of our dancers in a social setting before booking any private time. It's the recommended approach for first-time guests."

They moved to the bar where Vincent introduced them to George, the bartender.

"Macallan 18, neat," Sam ordered.

"Whiskey sour," Jimmy said.

"Vodka tonic," Frankie added.

While George prepared their drinks, Vincent offered guidance on VIP etiquette. "Our dancers will approach when they're available. It's perfectly acceptable to decline politely if you don't feel a connection. When you do want private time, simply ask the dancer directly and she'll quote her rate and availability."

He gestured toward a hallway across the room. "The Lotus Rooms are through there. Sessions typically run thirty minutes to two hours, depending on preference and budget." Vincent checked his watch. "I need to handle some matters on the main floor. Enjoy your evening, gentlemen. Flag down any staff member if you need anything, and Marcus is at the door should any issues arise."

With that, he descended the stairs, leaving them at the bar with their freshly prepared drinks.

Jimmy immediately began surveying the room, his interest obvious. "This is more like it," he murmured, eyes tracking a brunette in a silver dress. "This place just feels exclusive." Frankie appeared surprisingly at ease, sipping his vodka tonic. "Worth the premium compared to those places on Biscayne," he commented. "Different atmosphere."

Within five minutes, a brunette approached their group. She wore a dark blue dress that managed to be both elegant and provocative.

"Good evening," she said. "I'm Wendy. Welcome to Elysium VIP."

She carried herself with the confidence of a hostess at a five-star restaurant, professional but warm.

"First time upstairs?" she asked, her smile directed at all three men.

Sam nodded. "Yes. I'm Sam, and these are my colleagues Jimmy and Frankie."

"Welcome," Wendy smiled, her attention moving between all three men. "Are you visiting Miami or local?"

"We're locals," Sam explained. "Celebrating a successful business quarter."

"Well, congratulations." Wendy's smile widened. "What industry?"

"Software sales," Jimmy answered. "Just closed our biggest quarter in three years."

"That's impressive." Wendy shifted her weight, angling herself slightly toward Jimmy.

"How long have you been in sales?"

"Close to ten years," Jimmy said.

"I bet you've got stories," Wendy replied.

Jimmy launched into an anecdote about a difficult client. Frankie added commentary, and Wendy laughed at the appropriate moments, asked follow-up questions that kept Jimmy talking.

Sam sipped his Macallan, half-listening to Jimmy's story while scanning the room again. Still no blondes. His attention drifted back to Wendy. She had to know the other dancers' schedules, their specialties, who worked which nights.

"So how long have you been here?" Frankie asked when Jimmy's story concluded.

"Almost three years," Wendy said. "Long enough to be one of the veterans upstairs."

"VIP seems like a whole different world from downstairs," Jimmy observed.

"It really is," Wendy agreed. "Different atmosphere, different clientele, different expectations. Everything's more refined up here."

Sam saw his opening. "Vincent was saying the dancers up here are pretty carefully selected. I imagine you've got variety to match different tastes."

"Absolutely," Wendy replied. "Management's particular about maintaining good diversity. We've got different ages, different looks, brunettes like myself, redheads, blondes. Different personalities too. Some dancers are more outgoing and playful, others more reserved and intellectual. Guests tend to gravitate toward whoever matches their energy."

This was his moment. Sam took a sip of his Macallan. "Speaking of blondes, are there any working tonight? I've always had a preference."

Wendy laughed. "We do have blonde dancers, actually. Two who work VIP regularly. But neither is here tonight, unfortunately. They both work Thursday through Saturday."

Sam struggled to maintain his neutral expression as his mind raced. Thursday through Saturday. Two blondes. One had to be Evie.

"Two blondes? That's good to know. Are they pretty different from each other, or similar type?"

"They're quite different," Wendy replied. "Both are among our most beautiful dancers, though. One has been here longer, the other is newer but exceptional at what she does." Newer but exceptional. Evie had supposedly been doing this for about two months. That would make her the "newer" blonde, wouldn't it? And if she'd advanced to VIP that quickly, she'd certainly be described as "exceptional."

“The newer one sounds interesting. What’s she like?”

Wendy smiled, as if she’d picked up on his heightened interest. “She’s very popular already. Very intelligent, great conversationalist. A lot of our clients appreciate her.”

The description fit perfectly. Evie was intelligent, could hold conversations about anything. She’d always been able to engage with anyone, make them feel heard, make them feel important. Of course she’d be “very popular” here. Of course, clients would “appreciate” her.

The sick feeling in Sam’s stomach intensified even as his cock stirred at the confirmation. It was probably her, had to be her. Joe’s wife was working VIP at Elysium, dancing for men, doing whatever “exceptional” meant in this context, and judging by the prices Wendy had quoted, Evie was making serious money doing it.

Sam nodded. “They sound lovely. Maybe I’ll have to come back Thursday or Friday then.”

“Thursday is sometimes available for newer members if you arrange it in advance but Fridays and Saturdays are usually reserved for our established VIP members, gentlemen who’ve been coming here for years. There’s kind of a waiting list situation for those nights.”

And there was his problem. He had Wednesday access but Evie almost certainly worked Thursday through Saturday. He needed Thursday approval somehow, while Friday and Saturday seemed nearly impossible to access.

Jimmy interrupted, leaning closer to Wendy. “Are you available for a private dance? I’d love to experience the full VIP treatment.”

Wendy’s attention shifted immediately. “I’d be delighted. I offer thirty minutes in a Lotus Room for \$800, or an hour for \$1500.”

Jimmy’s eyes widened. \$1500 for an hour was steep even by Miami standards, but his desire won out. “You only live once,” Jimmy declared. “Let’s do thirty minutes.”

“Wonderful,” Wendy said, her hand resting lightly on his forearm. “I have another commitment soon that should take thirty to forty minutes. But I could reserve a room for you after that? Say, around 10:30?”

Jimmy’s eagerness dimmed momentarily at the delay, but he nodded. “Yeah, that works. I’ll wait.”

“Perfect.” Wendy’s smile brightened. “In the meantime, enjoy the atmosphere. I’ll come find you when I’m ready.” She touched his shoulder once more before gliding away toward another cluster of guests.

“Guess I’m waiting,” Jimmy said, settling back against the bar with his drink.

“Gives you time to pace yourself,” Sam observed. “You don’t want to peak too early.”

Frankie laughed. “Spoken like a man who’s done this before.”

They stood in comfortable silence for several minutes, observing the room. Another dancer approached, tall with dark hair and striking features, introducing herself as Jade. She engaged all three of them in conversation initially, but her attention naturally gravitated toward Frankie, who responded to her questions about his work with surprising animation.

After about ten minutes of conversation, Jade glanced at a slim watch on her wrist. “I have a session starting in a few minutes, but I’d love to continue this conversation later.” She looked directly at Frankie. “Would you be interested in booking time with me? I offer thirty minutes for \$800, or an hour for \$1500.”

Frankie hesitated only briefly before nodding. “Thirty minutes sounds good.”

“Excellent.” Jade’s smile widened. “I should be available around eleven. Is that okay?”

“Sure,” Frankie agreed.

“Perfect. I’ll find you when I’m free.” She touched his hand briefly before departing toward the hallway where the Lotus Rooms were located.

“This place is something else,” Jimmy said, his eyes tracking Wendy across the room where she was now speaking with an older gentleman in an expensive suit. “The main floor doesn’t even compare.”

“Different clientele entirely,” Frankie agreed. “You can actually have a conversation up here.”

They ordered another round of drinks. Sam nursed his Macallan slowly while Jimmy and Frankie grew progressively more animated, their initial nervousness replaced by the confidence that came from knowing they’d secured time with their preferred dancers. Around 10:25 PM, Wendy reappeared, touching Jimmy’s shoulder. “I’m ready for you now.”

Jimmy straightened immediately, setting down his drink. "Let's do this." He shot Sam and Frankie a triumphant look before following Wendy toward the hallway.

"And then there were two," Frankie commented, watching them disappear.

Sam checked his watch. "Jade should be finding you soon."

"Yeah." Frankie seemed more nervous now that his appointment was approaching. "This is a first for me."

"Just relax and enjoy it," Sam advised. "That's what you're paying for."

Twenty minutes later, Jade appeared beside Frankie. "Ready?"

Frankie drained the last of his drink and stood. "Ready."

Sam watched them head toward a different Lotus Room, then settled more comfortably against the bar. This was exactly what he'd wanted, time alone to observe without having to maintain conversation.

Sam noticed that the guests varied considerably. Some were clearly regulars, greeted by name by multiple dancers and staff. Others, like Sam's group, were obviously new, their body language betraying their unfamiliarity with the environment despite expensive clothing and confident demeanors.

A little while later, a petite dancer with short dark hair approached. "I'm Doe," she said, her gaze settling on Sam. "You look like you could use some company."

Sam made his decision. If he was going to understand what Evie was really doing up here, he needed firsthand experience of what these private sessions actually entailed. Plus, sitting alone at the bar while his coworkers enjoyed their expensive appointments would look strange, might raise questions from management about why he'd paid \$5000 just to nurse whiskey and watch from a distance.

"I'd love some company," Sam replied, gesturing to the empty stool beside him. "Can I buy you a drink?"

Doe's smile widened as she slid onto the stool. "Vodka soda, please." She angled toward him. "And you are?"

"Sam," he replied, extending his hand.

"Nice to meet you, Sam." She shook his hand. "I'm Doe."

Sam flagged down the bartender and ordered her drink along with another Macallan for himself. While they waited, Doe angled herself toward him, one hand resting lightly on

the bar between them.

“First time upstairs?” she asked.

“That obvious?”

“You have that look,” she said with a smile. “Like you’re trying to figure out if this place is real or some elaborate movie set.”

“Something like that,” Sam admitted. The bartender delivered their drinks, and Sam raised his glass slightly. “To new experiences.”

Doe touched her glass to his. “I like that attitude.” She took a sip, her dark eyes studying him over the rim. “So what brings you to Elysium? Business? Celebration?”

“Both, I guess. My colleagues and I closed a major deal last week. Seemed like the right kind of place to celebrate properly.”

“Good choice.” Doe set her drink down. “VIP is definitely the way to experience Elysium. The main floor is fine for what it is, but up here...” she gestured around them, “everything’s more intimate. More personal.”

“I’m getting that impression,” Sam said. He paused, then decided to take the opening she’d provided. “To be honest, I’m trying to understand what makes this level different. Beyond the obvious atmosphere upgrade.”

Doe’s expression showed appreciation for his directness. “You want to know what you’re actually paying for.”

“Exactly.”

“Well,” Doe leaned closer, her voice dropping slightly even though the nearest guests were several feet away, “downstairs, everything’s transactional. You pay for a dance, you get a dance. Three songs, standard moves, minimal contact. It’s... efficient.”

“And up here?”

“Up here, we take our time. Thirty minutes, an hour, sometimes more. It’s not just about the physical performance. It’s about connection, conversation, creating an experience that feels less like a transaction and more like...” she paused, searching for the right word, “an encounter between two people who genuinely enjoy each other’s company.”

Sam nodded slowly, processing this. “That makes sense. More girlfriend experience than strip club experience.”

“Exactly.” Doe’s smile suggested he’d understood precisely what she was selling. “Some clients want that emotional component as much as the physical one. Maybe more.”

Sam took a sip of his whiskey, using the moment to consider his next question. “Do you work a regular schedule? Or is it more flexible up here?”

“I’m here Wednesday through Saturday,” Doe replied. “Those are the busy nights. Wednesdays and Thursdays are usually businessmen entertaining clients or celebrating deals, like you. Fridays and Saturdays are more... established clientele. Regulars who’ve been coming for years.”

“Interesting business model,” Sam observed. “Segmenting the customer base like that.”

“Management’s very strategic about everything,” Doe agreed. “They know their demographics, what different clients want on different nights.” She finished her vodka soda and set the glass aside. “Speaking of which, are you interested in booking some private time? I’m available now if you’d like to experience what VIP really offers.”

This was the moment Sam had been building toward. “What are your rates?”

“Thirty minutes is \$800. An hour is \$1,500.” Doe’s delivery was completely matter of fact, no apologetic qualification or justification. This was simply what her time cost, the same as Wendy and Jade.

The price was steep but if this was what he needed to do to understand what Evie’s sessions involved, it was worth it. And honestly, sitting here alone while his coworkers enjoyed their appointments had started to feel awkward.

“Let’s do thirty minutes,” Sam decided.

“Perfect.” Doe stood, extending her hand. “Follow me.”

Sam left cash on the bar for their drinks and followed Doe across the VIP lounge toward the hallway he’d noticed earlier.

Doe led him to the third door on the right, opening it and gesturing for him to enter first.

The Lotus Room was substantially larger and more luxurious than the rooms downstairs. A circular bed occupied the center, covered in plush burgundy fabric that looked like velvet. Behind it, a curved sofa upholstered in black leather formed a semicircle that could easily seat ten people.

The lighting was ambient and flattering, recessed fixtures creating pools of warm illumination while leaving the corners in shadow. The walls featured more of the original artwork Sam had noticed in the main lounge, abstract pieces in golds and deep reds.

What caught Sam's attention most was what the room didn't have. No obvious cameras in the ceiling corners. No two-way mirrors on the walls. No visible security monitoring equipment of any kind.

Doe closed the door behind them. The music from the lounge became completely inaudible, the soundproofing creating absolute privacy.

"Make yourself comfortable," Doe said, gesturing to the sofa. "I'll get the music started."

Sam lowered himself onto the leather sofa, which was softer than it looked. He watched as Doe moved to the control panel, her fingers dancing across what appeared to be a touchscreen. Soft music began playing, something with a sensual rhythm but not overwhelming volume.

"Can I ask you something?" Sam said as Doe returned to the center platform.

"Of course." She stepped up onto the platform, the elevation putting her at a perfect height for Sam's viewing angle from the sofa. "That's part of what you're paying for. Conversation, connection, whatever you want to talk about."

"I noticed there don't seem to be any cameras in here." Sam kept his tone casual, just an observation rather than a question with weight behind it. "Is that standard for these rooms?"

"The Lotus Rooms are completely private. No cameras, no recording, no monitoring. What happens between you and me stays between you and me."

"For legal reasons?" Sam guessed. "Or client comfort?"

"Both," Doe replied. She began swaying gently to the music, her movements subtle and controlled. "A lot of our clients are... prominent. They value discretion. Having cameras would undermine that trust."

Sam nodded slowly. So Evie could do whatever she wanted in these rooms with no surveillance. No record of her activities beyond what she chose to tell whoever asked.

"Makes sense from a business perspective," he said. "Trust is everything in this kind of environment."

"Exactly." Doe's hands moved to the zipper at the back of her dress. "Any other questions before we get started?"

Sam had about a hundred questions, but most of them couldn't be asked directly without revealing too much about his actual motivations. He settled on something that felt natural enough. "What are the boundaries? What's allowed and what isn't?"

Doe smiled as she slowly lowered her zipper. She let the dress slip off her shoulders but held it against her chest. "You can touch me anywhere I guide your hands. If I move your hands somewhere, that means it's okay. If I move them away from somewhere, that means it's not."

"So it's situational," Sam observed. "Different for each dancer, each session."

"Exactly." The dress fell away, revealing a black lace bra and matching thong underneath. "Every dancer has different boundaries. Every session is different depending on chemistry, comfort level, what feels right in the moment."

Sam filed this information away. So there were no universal rules, which meant Evie could be doing anything from relatively tame to extremely intimate depending on the client, the night, her mood, whatever factors she used to make those decisions.

Doe stepped approached him. She stood directly in front of where he sat, then reached forward to loosen his tie. She pulled it free slowly, then draped it over the back of the sofa.

"Let's get you more comfortable," she said softly.

Her fingers moved to the buttons of his shirt, working them open one by one from top to bottom. Sam sat still, letting her undress him, his heart rate increasing with each button she released. When she reached the last one, she pulled the shirt from his pants and pushed it off his shoulders. Sam leaned forward slightly, allowing her to remove it completely. She folded it with care and set it on the sofa beside his tie.

"Better," Doe murmured, her hands moving to his bare chest. Her palms were warm against his skin as she ran them over his pecs, down his stomach. "Much better."

She reached behind her back and unhooked her bra, letting it fall away to reveal her breasts. They were small and perfectly shaped, her nipples already hard.

Her hands moved to his belt, working the buckle open. Sam watched as she unbuttoned his pants, then slowly lowered the zipper.

"Lift up," she instructed softly.

Sam raised his hips and Doe pulled his pants down to his ankles. The vulnerability of the position registered immediately. This was far more intimate than any lap dance he'd experienced downstairs, far more personal than he'd anticipated.

Doe hooked her thumbs into the sides of her thong and slid it down her legs, stepping out of it gracefully. She was completely naked now, standing in front of him without any

self-consciousness or hesitation.

She straddled his lap, her naked body settling against him. Sam felt the heat of her skin through the thin fabric of his boxers, felt her breasts press against his bare chest as she leaned into him.

“Relax,” she whispered against his ear. “Just feel.”

She began moving her hips in slow circles, grinding her pussy directly against his cock through his boxers. Sam’s hands instinctively moved to her waist, gripping her as she continued the motion. His cock hardened rapidly, the friction intense despite the barrier of fabric between them.

Doe’s lips found his neck, placing soft kisses along the side before moving to his earlobe. She took it gently between her teeth, her breath hot against his skin. Her hands tangled in his hair, holding him in place as she continued kissing and nibbling at his neck. “You feel so good,” she murmured, though Sam couldn’t tell if the words were real or fake.

The grinding intensified, Doe’s movements becoming more focused. She was rubbing herself directly against the ridge of his erection, her pussy sliding along the length of his cock through the increasingly damp fabric of his boxers. Sam realized with a start that the moisture wasn’t just from him. She was wet.

Her lips moved from his neck to his collarbone, kissing and licking as her hips maintained their rhythm. One of her hands left his hair to trail down his chest, her fingernails scratching lightly across his stomach before returning to grip his shoulder.

“Touch me,” she whispered. “Anywhere you want.”

Sam’s hands, which had remained relatively stationary on her waist, began exploring. He slid them up her sides, feeling the curve where her ribs narrowed before expanding again at her chest. He cupped her breasts, his thumbs brushing over her hard nipples, and Doe arched into the touch with a soft moan.

His hands moved lower, gripping her ass as she ground against him. The flesh was firm and warm, and he squeezed harder than he’d intended. Doe responded by increasing the pressure of her grinding, her pussy sliding faster along his cock.

“Fuck,” Sam breathed.

“That’s it,” Doe encouraged, her lips returning to his neck.

The combination of her naked body against his, the wetness of her pussy separated from his cock by only thin fabric, her mouth on his skin, her hands in his hair, was overwhelming in a way he hadn't prepared for.

This wasn't a lap dance. This wasn't even an "experience." This was foreplay, intimate and intense and designed to make him lose control. And it was working.

If Doe was willing to do this, if this level of intimacy was standard in VIP rooms, then what was Evie doing? How far did her sessions go? Did she also grind naked against clients like this? Did she also kiss their necks and whisper encouragement? Did she also get wet while she rubbed herself against strangers' cocks?

"I'm going to cum if you keep doing that," Sam managed, the words coming out strangled.

"I know," Doe whispered against his ear. "It's okay. You can let go if you want to."

But Sam didn't want to. Not here, not like this.

"I'm good," he said, his hands moving to still Doe's hips. "Just... give me a second."

Doe eased back, reducing the direct pressure while maintaining her position on his lap.

"You sure?"

"I'm sure," Sam lied. His cock throbbed, his boxers soaked with precum and whatever moisture Doe had left on him.

Doe smiled, seeming to understand something he didn't say. "Okay. But you're missing out."

She resumed her movements, though with less intensity now. Her hands traced patterns across his chest and shoulders, her body swaying against his in a rhythm that was sensual without being overwhelming. She kissed his neck again, softer this time, then his jaw, his cheek, coming dangerously close to his lips before pulling back.

The music shifted to a new song, and Doe checked the slim watch on her wrist.

"We've got about five minutes left," she said. "How do you want to spend them?"

"Like this," Sam replied, his voice rough. "This is perfect."

Doe settled more firmly against him, her arms wrapping around his neck, her breasts pressed flat against his chest. She moved slowly now, almost lazily, her pussy still sliding against his cock but without the urgency from before. It felt oddly intimate, more like cuddling than performing.

They stayed like that for the remaining minutes, Doe's naked body against his mostly naked one, her movements gentle and unhurried until the music finally faded.

She climbed off his lap and reached for her thong, stepping into it and pulling it up. She retrieved her bra and fastened it, then slipped back into her dress. The transformation from naked to clothed took less than a minute.

Sam remained on the sofa, his cock still achingly hard beneath soaked boxers. He felt dazed, overwhelmed by what had just happened.

"So," Doe said, turning to face him with a smile. "What did you think of your first VIP experience?"

"Intense," Sam managed. "Way more than I expected."

"Good intense or bad intense?"

"Good," Sam admitted. "Definitely good, amazing even."

"I hope you'll come back," said Doe. "Thursday through Saturday are even better if you can get access to those nights."

Sam's attention sharpened despite his disoriented state. "Why's that?"

"More energy, more dancers, better atmosphere." Doe returned to where Sam still sat on the sofa. "Plus some of our best performers only work those nights. If you're looking for the complete VIP experience, weekends are where it's at."

Sam stood, pulling up his pants and fastening them. He reached for his shirt and pulled it on, his fingers fumbling with the buttons.

Once his shirt was buttoned, Sam pulled out his wallet. He counted out eight hundred-dollar bills, then added an extra two hundred as a tip.

"Thank you," Doe said. "That's very generous of you."

"You earned it," Sam replied.

Doe unlocked the door and opened it, checking the hallway before gesturing for Sam to exit first. "I hope to see you again soon, Sam."

"You will," Sam said, though he knew his next visit wouldn't be for Doe.

He made his way back to the main lounge on unsteady legs, his mind reeling. He'd come here to understand what Evie was doing, and now he had his answer.

This level of intimacy, this kind of contact, this was what happened in VIP rooms. No cameras, no rules, no boundaries beyond what the individual dancer chose to enforce in

the moment. And if Doe was willing to grind naked against him, to kiss his neck, then Evie was probably doing the same.

Or worse.

Sam reached the bar where Frankie was already seated, nursing a fresh drink and looking thoroughly relaxed.

"There you are," Frankie said when he spotted Sam. "How was it?"

"Exactly what I paid for," Sam replied, which was both true and completely inadequate to describe what had just happened.

Jimmy appeared a few minutes later, his tie loosened and his expression satisfied.

"Gentlemen," he announced, "that was worth every fucking penny."

"Easy for you to say," Frankie muttered, staring into his drink. "My wife would kill me if she knew what this cost. She thinks I'm at a boring sales conference dinner."

"What she doesn't know won't hurt her," Jimmy replied with a shrug. Then he laughed, shaking his head. "That's what I told wife number one. And wife number two. Clearly I'm a slow learner."

"The eternal optimist," Sam observed.

They compared notes about their sessions in vague terms, none of them providing explicit details but all clearly satisfied with their investments. Frankie seemed torn between guilt and satisfaction, nursing his drink while occasionally glancing at his phone as if expecting an accusing text. Jimmy showed no such conflict, already discussing when they should come back. Sam participated in the conversation on autopilot, nodding and making appropriate comments while his mind remained fixed on what he'd just experienced.

This was what Evie was doing. Maybe not with every client, maybe not every night, but this level of intimacy was available in these rooms. And according to Wendy, Evie was "exceptional" at what she did.

Sam's cock, which had finally started to soften, stirred again at the thought.

He was coming back on a Thursday. Whatever it cost, whatever it took to get Thursday approval, he was coming back.

And when he did, he was booking Evie.